

Machiavellianisms and governments in Portuguese America: two analyses of ideas and political practices

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Abstract

This article describes two studies regarding political practices and ideas that are relevant to the context of Portuguese America and its possible relations with the opusculum *The prince*, by Niccolò Machiavelli. In the general government of the Count of Óbidos (1663–1667), some similarities with the advisement written by the Florentine secretary can be observed. However, during the administration of the famous Count of Assumar, in the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro (1717–1721), a document was produced, and its ideas of power are strongly associated with the classic culture. However, this was not a reason for its coauthor to be distant from the condemned renaissance author. Both cases indicate the pertinence of analyzing the ideas by Machiavelli in the scope of Portuguese monarchy and its literate culture, be it by the approximation between types of government or be it because of a strategy that probably aimed at dissimulating its inspiration.

Keywords: Machiavellianism; Portuguese America; political practices and ideas.

Maquiavelismos e governos na América portuguesa: dois estudos de ideias e práticas políticas

Resumo

Este artigo versa sobre dois estudos de práticas e ideias políticas pertinentes ao contexto da América portuguesa e suas possíveis relações com o opúsculo *O príncipe*, de Nicolau Maquiavel. No governo-geral do conde de Óbidos (1663–1667), verificam-se algumas semelhanças com os conselhos escritos pelo secretário florentino. Por sua vez, em meio ao governo do conhecido conde de Assumar na capitania de São Paulo e Minas do Ouro (1717–1721), produziu-se um documento cujas ideias de poder são fortemente associadas à cultura clássica. Nem por isso, seu coautor fazia-se distante do repudiado autor renascentista. Os dois casos supõem a pertinência de se analisarem as ideias de Maquiavel no âmbito da monarquia portuguesa e de sua cultura letrada, seja pela aproximação entre modos de governar, seja por uma estratégia que visava, provavelmente, dissimular a sua inspiração.

Palavras-chave: maquiavelismo; América portuguesa; práticas e ideias políticas.

Maquiavelismos y los gobiernos en la América portuguesa: dos estudios de las ideas y prácticas políticas

Resumen

En este trabajo se analizan dos estudios sobre las prácticas y las ideas políticas relevantes para el contexto de la América portuguesa y sus posibles relaciones con el folleto *El príncipe*, de Nicolás Maquiavelo. En el gobierno general del conde de Óbidos (1663–1667), hay algunas similitudes con las recomendaciones escritas por el secretario florentino. Mientras tanto, en el gobierno del notorio conde de Assumar en la capitania de São Paulo y Minas do Ouro (1717–1721), se elaboró un documento con ideas de poder fuertemente asociadas con la cultura clásica. Pero no por ello su coautor se apartaba del repudiado escritor renascentista. Los dos casos suponen la relevancia de examinar las ideas de Maquiavelo bajo la monarquía portuguesa y su cultura literaria, sea por el acercamiento entre los modos de gobernar, o por una estrategia destinada a ocultar, probablemente, su inspiración.

Palabras clave: maquiavelismo; América portuguesa; prácticas y ideas políticas.

Machiavélisme et les gouvernements dans l'Amérique portugaise: deux études d'idées et de pratiques politiques

Résumé

Dans ce travail, deux études sur pratiques et idées politiques seront analysées dans le contexte de l'Amérique portugaise et ses possibles relations avec l'opuscule de Nicolo Machiavelli, *Le prince*. Dans le Gouvernement Général du conde de Obidos (1663–1667), on voit certaines similitudes avec les conseils écrits par le Florentin secrétaire. À l'époque du gouvernement du conde de Assumar à la capitainerie de São Paulo et Minas do Ouro (1717–1721), un document de discussion a été produit, dont les idées étaient fortement corrélées à la culture classique. Pour autant, le coauteur se faisait lointain du repudie auteur de la Renaissance. Les deux cas supposent la pertinence de analyser les idées de Machiavel dans le contexte de la monarchie portugaise et sa culture, soit au niveau de la similitudes des modes de gouverner, soit au niveau de une stratégie visant à dissimuler sa inspiration.

Mots clés: machiavélisme; l'Amérique portugaise; pratiques et idées politiques.

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A letter written in Paris by D. Vasco Luís da Gama, Marquis of Niza and ambassador of John IV, to his friend in Rome, D. Vicente Nogueira, expresses the interest of Portuguese noble men in Machiavelli in the 17th century. In the letter, the marquis recalled that, in Lisbon, many nobles had read the mentioned author “without license or scruple”.¹ The accusation made sense, because about two years earlier the bishop and grand inquisitor, D. Francisco de Castro, had annulled all of the ecclesiastical licenses for reading and owning “books by heretic authors, suspects of faith, or condemned by some other legitimate respects”.² Until the first half of the 18th century, even religious men who were authorized by the Inquisition to read forbidden books could not own Machiavelli’s works. The writings of the Florentine author should be kept “in secrecy and locked so that they would not reach the hands of others”.³

It was risky to publically defend the ideas by Machiavelli in the Portuguese world. Owing to the Inquisition’s vigilance, admirers of the Florentine secretary mostly expressed their enthusiasm in a private environment. And those who spoke openly about Machiavelli in Portugal, in the 17th and 18th centuries, did so with criticism, to show how dangerous it would be if his ideas were to “contaminate” the behavior of sovereigns and men in general. The author was accused of putting the princes’ interests above religion and their subjects. Therefore, those who defended politics based on Christian moral did not hide their opposition. In the second half of the 17th century, when the noble from the Court of John IV, Luís Abreu de Melo, criticized the princes who privileged their interests to the detriment of the well-being of their vassals, defined this “mistake” as being “machiavellist, unworthy of a catholic procedure”.⁴ In the following century, father Rafael Bluteau associated the word “machiavellist” to the followers of Machiavelli, author of political books that diffused “pernicious”⁵ dogmas. These opinions forged “Machiavellism”, which reported the use of malicious political practices so that governors would remain in power. The word was incorporated into the routine to describe someone who is manipulative, cynical and evil, people who work on all occasions aiming at their own convenience and utility.

However, after we place the work by Machiavelli in his own context, comparing it with that of other authors and written under the “art of the State”, it is possible to give Machiavellism a wider interpretation, connected to a more pragmatic and/or violent way of ruling, which, during the Portuguese overseas expansion in the modern time, could not explicitly associate its government protagonists with the advice from the Florentine author. However, this type of

¹Letter, 27/09/1647, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP), code 2667, fl. 159-160v.; João Carlos Gonçalves Serafim; José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho (orgs.), *Um diálogo epistolar*. D. Vicente Nogueira e o marquês de Niza (1615-1654), Porto, Afrontamento, 2011, p. 121.

²Provision, 30/08/1645, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Conselho Geral, book 213, sheets 453-457.

³Pledge, 11/11/1704, Biblioteca da Ajuda (BA), code 54-IX-31, nº 28; Despach, 11/02/1705, BA, code 54-IX-31, n. 28.

⁴Luis Abreu Mello, *Avizos pera o paço offerecidos a Rodrigo de Salazar, & Moscoso*, Lisboa, Officina Craesbeckiana, 1659, p. 70.

⁵Rafael Bluteau, “Machiabelista”, In: *Vocabulário portuguez & latino*, vol. 5, Lisboa, Oficina de Pascoal da Silva, 1716, p. 234.

government, which was considered to be unscrupulous and not so Christian, was fought by the principles of the Inquisition and the catholic reformation, being formally opposed as machiavellist. Therefore, this environment is only apparently hostile to Machiavelli's ideas, whose influence was usually disguised behind more acceptable references and readings. So, it is possible to place the forbidden author in the debate about the legitimacy of the interests of princes, which became more known after receiving the work by Cornelius Tacitus and the discussions about the reasons of the State in the second half of the 16th century. In his trips throughout the European courts in the same period, Giovanni Botero heard the nobility discuss about the "Reasons of the State and quote both Machiavelli and Tacitus".⁶

This interpretation also allows to associate theories about the conservation of the power of princes to case studies, by inserting the work of some modern governors in the debate. In the Portuguese America from the 17th and 18th centuries, would it be possible for a governor to be inspired by the teachings of Machiavelli and other authors who reflected about the "art of the State"? How is it possible to measure the probable influences or coincidences between the ideas of these authors and the *modus operandi* of governors in Colonial Brazil? From both experiences, the article places governmental practices and ideas of two powerful men in the discussion about the conservation of the prince, made immortal by Machiavelli. First, by the government of D. Vasco Mascarenhas, 1st Count of Óbidos and vice king (1663-1667) who had strategies to maintain and increment the general government of the State of Brazil. Afterwards, by examining the speech about the rebellion that took place in Vila Rica, in 1720, which was attributed to D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal, future 3rd Count of Assumar (then, 1st marquis of Alorna), governor of the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro (1717-1720). The attempt is to consider the political culture subjacent to the text, in which Machiavelli was only once recalled, pejoratively, by the term "Machiavellism", related to rebellions. But many other references were invoked in the document to justify violent actions through the texts.⁷

The Count of Óbidos in Portuguese America

In June, 1663, the Count of Óbidos arrived in South America as the vice king of Brazil. Having been a governor in several Portuguese cities, and vice king in the State of India (1652-1653), the count stated he had been sent by D. Afonso VI to give "new shape to the government of this State", restoring him with "everything the variety of times had made him lose".⁸ After his arrival, he wrote that all things would have "different terms" and that all governments would be

⁶Luis Reis Torgal; Rafaela Longobardi Ralha (eds.), *João Botero. Da razão de Estado*, Translation by Rafaela Longobardi Ralha, Coimbra, Inic, 1992 [1589], p. 1; Saúl Martínez Bermejo, *Translating Tacitus: the reception of Tacitus's works in the vernacular languages of Europe, 16th-17th centuries*, Pisa, Plus, 2010, p. 11-15.

⁷Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 121.

⁸Letter, 05/12/1663, Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil (BNB), *Documentos Históricos* (DH), vol. IX, 1929, p. 133-137.

“subject to my orders”⁹ But the complaints against his actions were rapidly acknowledged by the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino). According to them, the governor did not distribute jobs and crafts according to the king’s orders. Even though vassals received the right to temporary occupation (servitude) or property of a craft from D. Afonso VI, the vice king denied them and replaced the individuals who had been chosen by the king with his own clients or men of trust.

The actions of the new governor in Brazil caused impacts on the American overseas conquest and on the European kingdom. His obstruction to royal benefits unbalanced the distributive justice of the king and the payment of the vassals, thus prompting complaints to the kingdom. Some servants seemed to be aware of the vice king’s overstatements and went to Portugal to claim for their benefits. An example was Alvaro de Azevedo, who, in 1663, had been assigned by the king to be field commander (mestre de campo) in a company from Bahia. After travelling from Portugal to Brazil, Azevedo’s patent was denied by the Count of Óbidos. Then, the field commander (mestre de campo) returned to the kingdom to complain about the vice king in the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino), requesting that royal orders should be fulfilled. In Lisbon, Azevedo accused the Count of Óbidos and his procedures harshly.¹⁰

*Opinions forged “Machiavellism,” and such a word
denounced the use of malicious political practices
by governors to remain in power*

The matter of provisions also displeased the court of Relations in the State of Brazil, which was the most important Justice institution in this conquest. In November 1663, the ministers of Relations wrote to D. Afonso VI, feeling outraged due to the provisions made by the Count of Óbidos, regarding the positions of doctor and surgeon of the court. According to Relations, instead of the people who had been chosen by the ministers in internal elections, the count offered the jobs to other individuals of his trust, thus usurping the jurisdiction of the respectable court.¹¹ Besides, in June 1664, the magistrate Manuel de Almeida Peixoto wrote to the king denouncing the actions of the Count of Óbidos. According to Peixoto, the vice king had not only denied him the position of Crown and Treasury procurator, but also threatened him with prison and of being sent to the kingdom.¹² About two months later, the chancellor Jorge Seco de Macedo wrote to the king and criticized the Count of Óbidos due to his

⁹Letter, 06/09/1663, BNB, DH, vol. IX, 1929, p. 123-124.

¹⁰Consultation, 22/11/1663, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), Conselho Ultramarino Avulsos (CUA), Bahia, Luísa da Fonseca (LF), box 17, doc. 1972.

¹¹Letter, 30/11/1663, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 17, doc. 1983.

¹²Letter, 06/06/1664, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 18, doc. 2019.

behavior toward the ministers of Relations, for not fulfilling royal orders and for persecuting all of those who were not satisfied with his behavior.¹³

Because of such criticism, the vice king worked against his accusers. In the last two years of his mandate, the Count of Óbidos ordered the arrest of seven individuals who had sent letters to the Crown criticizing his procedures. In July 1665, the former Treasury's major provider, Lourenço de Brito Correa, his son, and three other captains were arrested in Bahia and sent to the kingdom without any evidence. The Count of Óbidos justified the arrests by accusing them of conspiring against his government. According to the vice king, the alleged conspirators, led by Lourenço Correa and by the chancellor of Relations, Jorge Seco de Macedo, sent letters against him to the kingdom, thus weakening his reputation. After the fleet left with five suspects, the vice king announced the discovery of other conspirators, and the main one was the already mentioned magistrate of Relations, Almeida Peixoto. According to the Count of Óbidos, Manuel Peixoto, the abbot of the abbey São Bento da Bahia, and other secular or ecclesiastical men, had also sent letters against his government to the kingdom; therefore, they were direct accomplices of the first conspirators. As a result, the vice king began to persecute the new opponents.¹⁴

Threatened by the vice king, in August 1665, the magistrate was removed from his duties in Relations, moving to the school of the Society of Jesus in Bahia. Little after that, the vice king suspended Peixoto's revenues.¹⁵ Pursued by the Count of Óbidos, the magistrate wrote to D. Afonso VI and denounced the abuse committed by the vice king of Brazil. According to him, the count persecuted all of those who were against his government, even clergymen who openly criticized him during their lectures. He would also have humiliated the chancellor Lourenço de Brito Correa during his arrest, because he was forced to go through the center of the city while being taken by the soldiers to the ship that would take him to the kingdom, so that his punishment could be witnessed by everyone. The Count of Óbidos would also have sent men to the house of Correia, who were armed with rifles and bows and shot toward Correia's residence.¹⁶ The vice king ordered other arrests. In 1665, he arrested the aforementioned field commander (mestre de campo) Álvaro de Azevedo. As mentioned earlier, he had travelled to Portugal to complain about the vice king. When he returned for the American conquest, the field commander (mestre de campo) was arrested in Morro de São Paulo, in Bahia.¹⁷

In May 1666, the secretary of State in Brazil, Bernardo Vieira Ravasco, was also arrested by the vice king. Ravasco was the brother of father Antônio Vieira and secretary of State in Brazil since 1646. In the reign of John IV, he had much prestige in the Lisbon Court due to his family relations and position as the

¹³Letter, 04/08/1664, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 18, doc. 2019; Stuart Schwartz, *Burocracia e sociedade no Brasil colonial: a suprema corte da Bahia e seus juizes 1609-1751*, Translation by Maria Helena Martins, São Paulo, Perspectiva, 1979.

¹⁴Letter, 06/08/1665, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 18, doc. 210.

¹⁵Resolution, 25/08/1665, BNB, DH, vol. VII, 1929, p. 229-230.

¹⁶Letter, 25/09/1665, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 18, doc. 2110.

¹⁷Letter, 31/07/1666, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 19, doc. 2145.

secretary of State. Even though he still worked in the secretariat of State during the reign of D. Afonso VI, Ravasco seemed to not be considered so important anymore. Therefore, his salary and patrimony were contested.¹⁸ After being arrested for unknown reasons, he wrote to the king and his minister requested for freedom, but got no response. The secretary accused the Count of Óbidos of deviations in the Royal Treasury and persecution.¹⁹

According to Evaldo Cabral de Mello, the Count of Óbidos also influenced the arrest of the governor of Pernambuco, Jerônimo de Mendonça Furtado, and also sent him back to the kingdom.²⁰ The governor, who was a political opponent and major critic of the power of the vice king, since the latter started to rule, rejected his authority. In October 1666, months before the end of Furtado's triennium, the officials of the chamber in Olinda wrote to the count and announced the arrest of Mendonça Furtado.

After commenting the "news," the vice king seemed to be surprised by the action of the chamber mates and stated he had never imagined his government would witness "such a great mess and disorder".²¹ In spite of the written reprehension, the Count of Óbidos did not take any action against the representatives of the chamber. After the governor was deposed and on his way to the kingdom, there was no chance he would reconstitute this position. The deposition of Furtado marked the end of his attempts to control the neighboring regions to his captaincy, as well as his offensive attitude against the power of the Count of Óbidos. When the vice king wrote to the officials of the chamber of Penedo about them not fulfilling his orders because they were afraid of the deposed governor, in a sarcastic tone, he reminded them they were freed "from the excuse that you used, for being afraid of the governor [...] if they would not dare to do what I said".²²

Even though the king and his minister, the Count of Castelo Melhor, approved of the Count of Óbidos, criticism weakened his government and his reputation. Besides the complaints against his practices of distributing positions, the count did not present proof to justify the arrests he had made. But when his mandate ended, in June 1667, the Count of Óbidos returned to the kingdom in the following year with no punishment. In 1672, the ministers in the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino) analyzed his procedures while governing Brazil and considered him to be innocent.²³ The Count of Óbidos then returned to the Royal house and served the Court as an equerry-major for queen Maria Francisca Isabel de Saboia, until his death in 1678.

¹⁸Pedro Puntoni, "Bernardo Vieira Ravasco, secretário do Estado do Brasil. Poder e elites na Bahia do século XVII", *Novos Estudos Cebrap*, n. 68, 2004, p. 107-126.

¹⁹Letter, 10/04/1667, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 19, doc. 2209.

²⁰Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A fronda dos mazombos: nobres contra mascates, Pernambuco, 1666-1715*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora 34, 2003 [1995], p. 31.

²¹Letter, 07/10/1666, BNB, DH, vol. IX, 1929, p. 262.

²²Letter, 06/11/1666, BNB, DH, vol. IX, 1929, p. 263.

²³Opinion, 04/05/1672, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 21, doc. 2.467; Consultation, 04/05/1672, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 21, doc. 2.466; Consultation, 06/08/1674, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 22, doc. 2.597.

Machiavellist Count of Óbidos?

How can we interpret this government in light of discussions about the art of the State and the arguments by Machiavelli? According to the Florentine secretary, if a governor wished to remain powerful, it would be necessary for him to “know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity”.²⁴ Therefore, a prince could not literally fulfill all of the rules for a good administration, because he was usually “forced” to act against “charity, faith, humanity, and religion”.²⁵

In Portuguese America from the 17th and 18th centuries, there are examples of governors that confirm these premises, on the pretext of the preservation of the conquest or their ambitions. Violence was used by them to appease the *res publica*, and public punishment was imposed to rebels and mutineers.²⁶ Colonial Brazil also witnessed abuse coming from governors, who punished vassals based on no evidence — and such excessive behaviors were mostly the result of personal ambitions of the governors, political motivation, or family conflicts. A rather common action was arresting the alleged guilty party and sending this person to the kingdom so they could be placed in the prisons of Lisbon.²⁷

The practices of the administration of Count of Óbidos enable us to approximate this case to the reflections by Machiavelli. Considering the model of prince elaborated by the author, the Count of Óbidos also used his power and worked to favor his own interests. At distributing positions, the vice king decided on his own who would be contemplated and disrespected the prerogatives of the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino) and the royal authority. Besides, the Count of Óbidos prioritized people he chose to the detriment of vassals that had been named by the king. In his government, he arrested, exiled, and persecuted opponents without any concrete evidence. How is it possible to explain this political pragmatism? Would he have been one of those noble readers of Machiavelli? Despite the lack of documents registering the relationship of the vice king with the texts, a brief analysis of ideas and concepts that were present in his letters allows us to reflect about the theoretical origins of his actions.

Coming from catholic education and military career, the Count of Óbidos was a Portuguese noble from the 17th century who conciliated political issues and personal faith. Such an aspect was observed among several European governors at the time, as well as in sites of Portuguese overseas conquests. Despite the importance of religion and its values in the Iberian politics in the 17th century, the private devotion of governors did not stop them from working pragmatically, using force when necessary. In the case of Count of Óbidos, such

²⁴Nicolau Maquiavel, *O príncipe*, Translation by Olívia Bauduh, São Paulo, Nova Cultural, 1999 [1513], cap. XV, p. 73.

²⁵*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 111.

²⁶As in the revolt against Salvador Correia in Rio de Janeiro, in 1660. Antonio Filipe Pereira Caetano, *Entre a sombra e o sol: a revolta da cachaça e a crise política fluminense (Rio de Janeiro, 1640-1667)*, Maceió, Q-Gráfica, 2009.

²⁷Letter, 02/09/1648, BNB, DH, vol. LXV, 1944, p. 341; Letter, 27/08/1649, BNB, DH, vol. LXV, 1944, p. 346-347.

strength was observed at several instances. In a letter addressed to the governor of Pernambuco, Francisco de Brito Freire, about an expedition to enter *Quilombo dos Palmares*, he defended the need to act with “full strength” against the rebels in the *mocambos*, because, facing the failure of previous expeditions, it would be necessary to use strong solutions for this journey and preserve the reputation of royal weapons. According to the vice king, when the person in charge of the expedition observed the resistance of fugitive slaves, he should “burn” the population, consuming everything “so that no memories would be left from the destruction...”. The count also warned Brito Freire about the need for the captain in charge of the expedition to be aware of *quilombolas* subdued to royal troops. Therefore, he would be fair and not lack “catholic mercy, and not even military duty, because during clemency, surrender is facilitated”²⁸

According to the Florentine secretary, if a governor wished to remain powerful, it would be necessary for him to “know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity”

Besides the pragmatism that is characteristic of the governors in conquests, the actions of the Count of Óbidos seem to have been influenced by the type of government and political scenario of the kingdom. Complaints about the vice king regarding his control over the distribution of positions in Brazil were similar to those against the minister of the Portuguese king, Count of Castelo Melhor, in the same period. Since his ascend to power, in 1662, Luís de Vasconcelos e Sousa had named his allies for positions in the royal house and courts of the monarchy. In this sense, the Count of Óbidos reproduced the kingdom’s government in Portuguese America, becoming close to the power style implemented by the scrivener of D. Afonso VI,²⁹ whose political culture was distant from the example of ideal governor spread by traditional literature mirrors for princes. Such affinity may explain his permanence in the colonial government for about one year besides the habitual triennium, regardless of the opposition of the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino) and the complaints against his procedures. Despite the similarities, it is better to avoid interpreting the Count of Óbidos as a mere executor of the politics from the minister Castelo Melhor and pay attention to the influence of his personal motivations and the need to maintain his position as a governor.

²⁸Letter, 09/09/1663, BNB, DH, vol. IX, 1929, p. 127-128.

²⁹Vinicius Orlando de Carvalho Dantas, *O conde de Castelo Melhor: valimento e razões de Estado no Portugal seiscentista (1640-1667)*, M.A. dissertation, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, 2009.

The personal experience of the Count of Óbidos was also important for his “Machiavellism”, because the problems of his passage through India played central role in his political behavior in the Brazilian government. The threats he received in Asia, his deposition from the position of vice king in Goa, and the fact of being arrested marked his history. It was necessary not to repeat the same mistakes from the past. Therefore, D. Vasco Mascarenhas arrived in Brazil with the Indian experience on his mind, as suggested by some sections of his letters. In a letter addressed to friar João de Cristo, after mentioning the arrivals of ships coming from India to Brazil, the vice king complained about the constant presence of Indian matters in his life.³⁰ After explaining to the governor of Pernambuco the problem about the uncertainty regarding the position of governors, he mentioned the examples of his deposition from the government of Goa and the execution of Charles I Stuart.³¹ In 1665, as mentioned earlier, the count arrested five individuals who complained about his procedures and sent them to the kingdom. The justification to punish the alleged conspirators in advance was to avoid the same outcome of his government in India, so that he could remain being a governor. In his accusations against the leader of the so-called rebellion, he stated he had acted against the negligence of the Crown regarding the punishment of rebellions in the Portuguese Empire, which had not punished the guilty parties for his deposition from the government in India.³² Therefore, the Count of Óbidos was aware of the need to work objectively, on behalf of the conservation of the Overseas Council (Conselho Ultramarino) and also for personal reasons. The four years of his government in Brazil witnessed these situations. Even though there were intersections between the actions of the count and the princely model of Machiavelli, his “Machiavellism” seemed to be mainly a result from his personal experience: the experience in the State of India taught him the best way to maintain his position as a governor.

So, the conduct of the vice king was influenced by three main elements: the need for political pragmatism from the governor of a conquest, who should be energetic when necessary; the connection with the reformist government from the Count of Castelo Melhor, which would ensure he would have higher margin of intervention; and the previous experience in the vice kingdom of India, where the count was deposed and confronted by local elites. With political practice, the vice king assimilated the machiavellic idea that to stay in power, he should control institutions and stray the opponents. In the modern time, if the ideas by Machiavelli, Tacitus, and the debates about the reason of the State were essential to guide powerful men, the experience and knowledge accomplished by governmental practice were equally important. But the knowledge and the opinions of overseas governors were also registered in texts to justify their political actions. The document to be analyzed is a paradigm of this reading.

³⁰Letter, 11/06/1665, BNB, DH, vol. IX, 1929, p. 238-239.

³¹Letter, 05/12/1663, BNB, DH, vol. IX, 1929, p. 133-137.

³²Letter, 06/08/1665, AHU, CUA, Bahia, LF, box 18, doc. 2100.

The Count of Assumar and the 1720 rebellion

Born in Portugal in 1688, D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal came from a noble family that had been ascending since the Bragança dynasty in 1640. As a teenager, he accompanied his father to Catalonia, during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1713). There, he fought for several years and became a battle general. After the war, the Almeidas mortgaged their properties to pay for debts that had been made abroad. The need to raise funds may partly explain the nomination of D. Pedro Miguel, in 1717, for the government of the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro, at the age of 29.³³ Experienced in war and graduated in European letters, he arrived to Minas to establish foundries and to reinforce the collection of taxes, in a context that was essential for the Portuguese monarchy. However, it was also very conflictive to his government, because this fact created discontentment, fragile alliances, and competitive groups. Even though he was not familiar with the colonial environment, the count negotiated with local leaders. They were ambiguous agents of the Crown and themselves, from the kingdom (or *emboabas*), involved in internal commerce and/or mining, and some of them were lords of slaves, farms, and cultivation.³⁴

But rebellions against taxes and rates, which also claimed the power of the chamber, and the dragons of the paid troops, replacing the regulations of the local sovereign, asked for the control over weighing the gold. It began because of the strategies of intimidation toward the governor and the ombudsman, and because of riots, especially in Vila Rica, caused by masked men.

Practically captive in his palace in the neighboring village of Ribeirão do Carmo, with no support from the men who accepted the demands of the rebels, without violence, the future count accepted the claims at first and pretended to forgive the movement, by replacing the ombudsman. The Count of Assumar then began to be pressured to leave the government, while the local sovereign, Pascoal da Silva Guimarães, distributed new job positions in Vila Rica. However, by using a spy, D. Pedro Miguel took the action to reprehend this third riot that was happening in Minas — the two other ones remained unpunished. So, he put together the troop of dragons and part of it was supposed to block the path to Vila Rica. Besides, he arrested the key members of the movement, who were led to Rio de Janeiro or the prison in Vila do Carmo, and some of them were sent to Lisbon afterwards. Finally, in July 1720, D. Pedro Miguel arrived in Vila Rica, with the main members of the neighboring village, the dragons, and approximately 1.500 black men. He ordered to burn down the houses of Silva Guimarães. After a “summary trial” — without establishing a justice council with the ombudsman or any magistrate, and

³³Diogo Barbosa Machado, *Bibliotheca lusitana hiftorica, critica e cronológica*, tome 3, Lisboa, Ignacio Rodrigues, 1752, p. 552-553; Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 28-36.

³⁴Alexandre Torres Fonseca, “A revolta de Felipe dos Santos”, *In: Maria Efigênia Lage de Resende; Luiz Carlos Villalta (eds.), História de Minas Gerais: as Minas setecentistas*, vol. 1, Belo Horizonte, Autêntica/Linha do Tempo, 2007, p. 549-566; Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *op. cit.* p. 59-139.

without consulting with the king — he had Felipe dos Santos hung and quartered, thus committing a serious offense toward the monarchy.

The *Political and Historical Speech about the Sublevation in Minas*, in 1720, was attributed to D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal and to Jesuits José Mascarenhas and Antonio Correia, his protégés, in order to defend this infraction committed by the Portuguese noble. To capture the political culture of this record as support for the actions and the power of the future Count of Assumar, besides understanding the possible doses of continuity and/or heterodoxy with regard to the immediate context, it is first necessary to compare the period of time this noble man acted in the Portuguese monarchy. Studies focusing on the 17th century characterize the Portuguese monarchy with several spaces for decision and normative instances and show political and legal autonomy of bodies, magistrates, and institutions, besides giving its government a polycentric profile. From this point of view, the Crown would be a group of organs and interests, instead of a homogeneous place for social intervention, holding competitive instances and conflicts of jurisdiction.³⁵

However, in the first decades of the reign of John V of Portugal, there were some changes in the way matters were dealt with in the realm and how Brazil was ruled. Since the late 17th century, the power of the Portuguese monarchy went through a process of centralization, which was indicated, for instance, by the fact that the Courts were not summoned, or due to the ostracism of the State Council, replaced by a restrict circle of royal counselors, mainly secretaries. For Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, such a quiet mutation of the “baroque monarchy” — with new central designs and connections with peripheral power — was not linear. The author comes across the revitalization of traditional institutions, such as the Courts, in the process that opposed the constitutional restoration after 1640, in relation to the prior reformism of the count-duke of Olivares. But after the war with Spain and the dispute of political factions, marked by episodes such as the government of Castelo Melhor, a new political model triumphed again. This model was different from the corporative pluralism that had prevailed in the years immediately after the enthronement of the Bragança family and right after the deposition of D. Afonso VI.³⁶

Therefore, the historian reacts to the idea of institutional and political continuity in Portuguese monarchy. After the stabilization of the dynasty in 1668, there was a new configuration of centers of power, which coincided with the affirmation of social elites. In the late 17th century, noble men, many landlords, and commanders were living in Lisbon, far from the times of ducal Court in Vila Viçosa. With the aristocratic consolidation during the regency of Peter, the greats (counts, marquises, and dukes) were distinguished from provincial nobility. Most superior positions in the kingdom would be taken by Court nobility,

³⁵Antônio Manuel Hespanha, *As vésperas do Leviathan: instituições e poder político. Portugal - séc. XVII*, Lisboa, Almedina, 1994; Pedro Cardim, “Administração e governo: uma reflexão sobre o vocabulário do Antigo Regime”, In: Maria Fernanda Bicalho; Vera Lúcia Amaral Ferlini (eds.), *Modos de governar: idéias e práticas políticas no império português. Séculos XVI a XIX*, São Paulo, Alameda, 2005, p. 45-68.

³⁶Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, “A consolidação da dinastia de Bragança e o apogeu do Portugal barroco (1668-1750)”, In: José Mattoso (dir.); Antônio Manuel Hespanha (eds.), *História de Portugal: o Antigo Regime*, vol. VIII, Rio de Mouro, Lexicultural, 2002, p. 267-282.

except for magistrates and diplomatic positions. Therefore, political and institutional pluralism decreased, and the polarization between the Court and the province was characteristic of this monarchy, with little expression from intermediate political bodies.

The Courts gathered four other times, and the duration of regency and reign of Peter II of Portugal was characterized by the central administration still in the first years of John V of Portugal. This profile was different from that adopted from the 1720s onwards, when the king began to discuss matters with secretaries of State, specially the State Council, apart from the councils. Nonetheless, the periods had some aspects in common: stability of external political ideas in the dynasty and decreasing internal conflicts, which emphasized the role of the king. The policy of benefits went through important inflection, with less titles and the crystallization of the royal and noble elites. So, it was a more stable cycle, which recalled a model of political decision-making, even with the aristocratic predominance and the restoration of councils. The Atlantic priority prevailed in the overseas scope, supported by the British alliance and by the relative Portuguese separation from European conflicts. External peace made the domain over colonial regions easier.

In this sense, relations with the Spanish neighbor were unchangeable due to the territorial proximity in Europe and in South America. Besides, expenses with the Portuguese embassies in the European continent were high, which led Portugal to be treated similarly to other catholic monarchies by the Holy See, as it had been before 1580. The upgrade from royal chapel to patriarchal chapel and the effort to conquer the cardinal title for the Lisbon prelate accompanied the redefinition of society in the Court of John V, involving precedence conflicts and expatriation of nobles. Rituals and practices of monarchy legitimization were reformulated in this reign, with the appearance of new representation poles, such as the convent and palace of Mafra, which was a visible expression of such a cultural investment. The spectacular representation of power was an aspect of the reign of John V.

Literary academies also provided subsidies to understand the connections between erudite knowledge, power structure, and Portuguese overseas conquests. The Royal Academy of Portuguese History, founded in 1720 — of which D. Pedro Miguel would be part of — was a special case for developing a line of knowledge about the overseas history. For Íris Kantor, there was a new reason of State, more secular in relation to political and theological principles that, at another time, supported the Portuguese expansion.³⁷ The necessary preservation of commercial routes between the Indian and the Atlantic oceans and the discovery of gold in Brazil led to a

³⁷Isabel Ferreira da Mota, *A Academia Real da História: os intelectuais, o poder cultural e o poder monárquico no séc. XVIII*, Coimbra, Minerva, 2003; Íris Kantor, *Esquecidos e renascidos: historiografia académica luso-americana (1724-1759)*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2004.

more articulated action of the Crown to defend its dominance in America. Thus, a new territorial perception was demonstrated, made concrete in a group vision about geography and history of the overseas and the reign.³⁸ But this great space was going through a delicate moment. The War of the Spanish Succession — in which D. Pedro Miguel had fought — influenced French invasions in Rio de Janeiro in 1710 and 1711, besides the episodes in the Mascate War (1709–1711), in Pernambuco.³⁹ The insurgence was also marked by conflicts, such as the War of the Emboabas, in Minas,⁴⁰ the riots of Maneta, in Bahia, in 1711, and the rebellion of Vila Rica, in 1720 — focus of the *Historical Speech*....⁴¹

At this time of political changes, the matter of applying the proper punishment was frequent in administrative correspondence: for instance, the unequal treatment provided by Pedro de Vasconcelos e Sousa to both riots in Bahia, when the new governor general changed his mind about increasing taxes and forgave the rebels in the first riot, but harshly punished the leaders of the second riot by expatriating them to Africa.⁴² In the Mascate War, the attempt to deal with rebels was important for the final pardon granted to plantation owners by interpreting the changes in Pernambuco as disagreement, instead of treason.⁴³ Therefore, the royal power of overseas domains was redefined, as well as its prerogatives and government, when incarnated by American representatives. Only the king could punish and forgive vassals.⁴⁴ However, before major administrative changes were made, the work of D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal in the government of the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro was added in the confluence of these factors, as well as the elaboration of the mentioned document.

³⁸Iris Kantor, *Esquecidos e renascidos: historiografia acadêmica luso-americana (1724-1759)*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2004, p. 267; Luciano Raposo de Almeida Figueiredo, "Antônio Rodrigues da Costa e os muitos perigos de vassallos aborrecidos (notas a respeito de um parecer do Conselho Ultramarino, 1732)", In: Ronaldo Vainfas; Georgina Silva dos Santos; Guilherme Pereira das Neves (eds.), *Retratos do império: trajetórias individuais no mundo português nos séculos XVI a XIX*, Niterói, EdUFF, 2006, p. 187-203; Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *Oráculos da geografia iluminista: Dom Luís da Cunha e Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon D'Anville na construção da cartografia do Brasil*, Belo Horizonte, Editora da UFMG, 2012.

³⁹Maria Fernanda Bicalho, *A cidade e o império: o Rio de Janeiro no século XVIII*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2003, p. 257-298; Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A fronda dos mazombos: nobres contra mascates*, Pernambuco, 1666-1715, Rio de Janeiro, Editora 34, 2003 [1995].

⁴⁰Adriana Romeiro, *Paulista e emboabas no coração das Minas: idéias, práticas e imaginário político no século XVIII*, Belo Horizonte, Editora da UFMG, 2008.

⁴¹Laura de Mello e Souza, "Motines, revueltas y revoluciones en la América portuguesa de los siglos XVII y XVIII", In: Enrique Tendeter; Jorge K. Lehuedé (eds.), *Historia general de América Latina*, vol. IV, Madrid, Trotta/Unesco, 2000, p. 459-473; Luciano Raposo de Almeida Figueiredo, "O império em apuros. Notas para o estudo das alterações ultramarinas e das práticas políticas no império colonial português, séculos XVII e XVIII", In: Júnia Ferreira Furtado (eds.), *Diálogos oceânicos: Minas Gerais e as novas abordagens para uma história do império ultramarino português*, Belo Horizonte, Editora da UFMG, 2001, p. 197-254; Carla Maria Junho Anastasia, *Vassallos rebeldes: violência coletiva nas Minas na primeira metade do século XVIII*, Belo Horizonte, C/Arte, 1998.

⁴²Maria Fernanda Bicalho, "Inflexões na política imperial no reinado de D. João V", *Anais de História de Além-mar*, vol. VIII, 2007, p. 44-45.

⁴³Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *op. cit.* p. 433; Rodrigo Bentes Monteiro, *O rei no espelho. A monarquia portuguesa e a colonização da América 1640-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2002, p. 231-277.

⁴⁴Maria Fernanda Bicalho, *op. cit.* p. 45.

Words in action

Despite the fact that this document is analyzed by the Brazilian historiography, especially to consult facts regarding the rebellion of 1720, it is important to analyze the text again to understand more of its ideas and political use. We are faced with a document that was based on eloquently disposed arguments about power, glory, inopportune actions and calculation, with positive or negative connotation by dealing with riots and conspiracies. In this range, maybe it is convenient to forget about the alleged predominance of more straight cultural legacies, enabling all sorts of influences and readings.⁴⁵ It is also time to change the focus from the rebellion of 1720 and its main actors to emphasize other references in this *Historical Speech...*: approximately 300 references, from the classical era until approximately the time it was written, comprehending a considerable scope of ideas, values, and spaces. So, let us analyze a commented quantitative survey in this world of authors (Chart 1), characters (Chart 2), and situations “beyond Minas”, reported in the document, which consists of 134 pages in the published version.

Chart 1. Authors in the Political and Historical Speech about the Sublevation in Minas in 1720

Authors	Number of quotes	Percentages (total of 132)
Cicero	15	11.36
Nicolas Caussin	8	6.06
Tacitus	6	4.54
Camões	6	4.54
Virgilio Malvezzi	5	3.78
Francisco Sá de Miranda	4	3.03
Ovid	4	3.03
Sallust	4	3.03
Solorzano Pereira	4	3.03
Bartolus de Saxoferrato	3	2.27
Friar Juan Márquez	3	2.27
Plato	3	2.27
Seneca	3	2.27
Others	64	48.48

From the first column, it is possible to observe the number of authors that were cited and/or identified in the document. They can be divided in two groups: the first one, which mostly narrated the rebellion, and the second one, with justifications for the punishment.⁴⁶ Even though the second group mostly invokes authorities, with 105 authors, 27 of them are also mentioned in

⁴⁵Luís Reis Torgal, *Ideologia política e teoria do Estado na Restauração*, Coimbra, Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, 1981-1982, 2 v.; Pedro Cardim, “Religião e ordem social. Em torno dos fundamentos católicos do sistema político do Antigo Regime”, *Revista de História das Idéias*, vol. 22, 2001, p. 133-174.

⁴⁶Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 59-139; 140-193.

the first group. And there was no greater reference in the *Historical Speech...* than that of Marcus Tullius Cicero, character from the late Roman Republic. The library of the marquis of Alorna had 14 indiscriminate volumes in his collection, but he possibly took part in the literate baggage of Antonio Correia and José Mascarenhas. In the 18th century, and much sooner, Cicero was a powerful argument of authority and his presence reminds us of the eloquence, which the *Historical Speech...* conceived as a rhetorical piece. But Cicero was equally a man of action and government, consul of the Republic and member of the Roman senate. The theme is further discussed, in an attempt to identify a line of political ideas present in the analyzed text.

We are faced with a document that was based on eloquently disposed arguments about power, glory, inopportune actions, and calculation

The second author that appears most in the document is the French Jesuit Nicolas Caussin, called Causino in the *Historical Speech...*, absent in the letter to the bishop or the library and inserted in the scope of strengthening the 17th-century oratory in France.⁴⁷ Caussin was inspired by the Ciceronian *prudencia*, so the orator should adapt the *ingenium*, the subject, and the circumstances of the auditorium; Cicero is also associated with the eclecticism present in the writings of this Jesuit, which approached a hieroglyphic tradition. For this confessor of Louis XIII, the sacerdotal and sword nobilities would have access to this sacred language. As expressed in the book *Corte Santa*, first published in 1638, whose Spanish tradition is mentioned in the *Historical Speech...*, Caussin was also known for his harshness against Jansenists and, based on his quotes in the document, he defended the severity and “empire” toward crime, scandals and insolence from rough and rebel people. Would this be an appropriation of marginal ideas from this author, in the repertoire of books from the secretaries of Assumar? Or would the esotericism in the books by Caussin, present in some passages of the *Historical Speech...*, play its role in such political culture?⁴⁸

Afterwards, the document shows the “great master of princes”, as the text qualifies Tacitus.⁴⁹ In the library of D. Pedro Miguel, there was a volume of *Anais*, in Latin or a translated version, because the Roman historian invaded

⁴⁷Marc Fumaroli, *L'âge de l'éloquence: rhétorique et “res literaria” de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1994 [1980], p. 279-298.

⁴⁸Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 71; 98.

⁴⁹*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 163.

the literate and editorial European world in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁵⁰ His analyses about Roman emperors are filled with reflections about prince-
dom in the time of Tiberius, who was turned into a tyrant also by the actions
of the minister Sejano. The connections between Tacitism and Machiavellism
are complex; both authors have several points in common in the way they
observe power. However, Tacitus (unlike Machiavelli), by making negative
comments about the abuses of imperial autocracy, provided the govern-
ment of the modern time with subsidies, using the convenient and presti-
gious character of an ancient, republican, and pagan author. This author is
invoked in the *Historical Speech...* in favor of promptness and celerity fac-
ing the seditions by several statements in Latin, some of them together with
Sallust, by punishing the Spanish jurist Juan Solorzano Pereira.⁵¹

The *Historical Speech...* also applauds Luís de Camões, the soldier-poet
that was absent from the letter addressed to the bishop and from the library,
with pieces from The Lusiads, intermixing the narrative that was some-
times not mentioned.⁵² The lines had ornamental and symbolic value by
invoking Vasco da Gama's journey to India and the glories of the remark-
able Portuguese men who inherited ancient epopees, with heroes and gods
inspired in classical pieces. In the early 18th century, Camões had expres-
sive role in the Lusophone identity, thus giving an epic and imperial tone
to the document.⁵³

"Marquis Virgil" or Virgilio Malvezzi, the Bolognese author who was
often translated to the main European languages and Latin, is also pres-
ent in the *Historical Speech...* In his political biographies, inside a more
abstract narration, there are some considerations, turning the protagonist's
data into suppositions.⁵⁴ The famous Francisco de Quevedo admired these
strikes of effect and translated *Il Romulo* to Spanish in 1632. Therefore, the
count-duke of Olivares met Malvezzi in Madrid, in 1636, to celebrate the tri-
umphs of his regimen and included him in diplomatic missions and coun-
cils of the monarchy.⁵⁵ In the *Historical Speech...*, marquis Virgil is invoked
to talk about the reputation of the prince, more important than the "State"
and life itself, about the worthlessness of law without strength to punish
or to state rebellion as a crime against the prince or the governor.⁵⁶ But not
only authors and books would be important to capture visions of world and
power in the examined text.

⁵⁰Saúl Martínez Bermejo, *Translating Tacitus: the reception of Tacitus's works in the vernacular languages of Europe, 16th-17th centuries*, Pisa, Plus, 2010.

⁵¹Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 163-165; 172; Vinícius Orlando de Carvalho Dantas, *O conde de Castelo Melhor: valimento e razões de Estado no Portugal seiscentista (1640-1667)*, M.A. dissertation, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, 2009, p. 59-60; 70-71.

⁵²Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *op. cit.* p. 100; 147; 153; 156; 161-162.

⁵³Vitor Aguiar e Silva (eds.), *Dicionário de Luís de Camões*, São Paulo, Leya, 2011, p. 42-45; 341-345; 923-933.

⁵⁴Mercedes Blanco, "Quevedo lector de Malvezzi", *La Perinola. Revista de investigación quevediana*, n. 8, 2004, p. 77-108. Available from: <<http://hdl.handle.net/10171/5603>>. Access on: January 6, 2013.

⁵⁵John H. Elliott, *El conde-duque de Olivares*, Translation by Teófilo Lozoya, Barcelona, Crítica, 2004 [1986], p. 40; 594; 605; 629-632.

⁵⁶Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *op. cit.* p. 150; 172; 186; 189-190.

Chart 2. Characters in the Political and Historical Speech about the Sublevation in Minas in 1720

Characters	Number of quotes	Percentages (total of 134)
Jupiter	6	4.47
Saint Peter	5	3.73
Moses	4	2.98
Hercules	3	2.23
Agesilaus	3	2.23
Catiline	2	1.49
Constantine	2	1.49
Apollo	2	1.49
Augustus	2	1.49
Philip of Macedon	2	1.49
Julius Caesar	2	1.49
Mars	2	1.49
Maximilian I	2	1.49
Mercury	2	1.49
Volcano	2	1.49
Proteus	2	1.49
Others	91	67.9

In ancient Rome, Jupiter was the god of daylight, sky, lightning and thunder, the most important divinity in that pantheon, originated from the common mythical patrimony of the Indo-European peoples but assumed personal features. His temple was raised in the Capitollium. Under his protection, consuls thanked him for the conservation of the Republic and their victories. In imperial times, governors identified themselves as his incarnations.⁵⁷ It was a strong allegory of power that symbolized values, myths, and past facts. Since the Renaissance, European prints and books interpreted Hesiod, Horatio, and Ovid — all mentioned in the *Historical Speech...* In the royal libraries of John V, there were many pictures and books with images (written and/or visual) of Jupiter and Hercules —; combats of the demigod with Lernaean Hydra and the lion were the favorite ones for Count of Assumar deal with the riots.⁵⁸ In the *Historical Speech...*, Jupiter is invoked as a god that is prone to consent or indignation in the statement made by Cicero against Catiline, by defending that he should have been banned from Rome or, in a mistaken association, by mentioning the Aesop's fables about "Jupiter" and the snake — actually, Zeus.⁵⁹ But the numberless allusions to lightning, thunders, storms, and other

⁵⁷Junito de Souza Brandão, *Dicionário mítico-etimológico: mitologia e religião romana*, Brasília, Editora da UnB; Petrópolis, Vozes, 2008 [1993], p. 189-193.

⁵⁸Baltasar de Victoria, *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, vol. I, Barcelona, Juan Pablo Marti; Francisco Barnola, 1702, p. 92-95 e vol. II, p. 78-85; Marie-Thérèse Mandroux-França (eds.), *Catalogues de la collection d'estampes de Jean V, roi de Portugal par Pierre-Jean Mariette*, vol. II, engravings 27 e 223, vol. III, engraving 200, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Fundação Casa de Bragança; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1996.

⁵⁹Laura de Mello e Souza (eds.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 139; 152; 157-158.

climatic phenomena were impressive and were generally used to define the strong power of princes.

From pagan to Christian analogy. Connections between the names of D. Pedro Miguel and Saint Peter were frequent and common in the sermons of the time and in the laudatory documentation of the Royal Academy of Portuguese History — of which Count of Assumar would be part of from 1736 onwards. It is a known fact that the count celebrated the saint of the day in a world where words and things go together hand in hand.⁶⁰ The use of biblical examples was an expressive moral argument, which granted respect to the document as a piece of defense. Besides, the text counted on the collaboration of two other clergymen. With these similitudes, Moses was closer to the public personality of the Count of Assumar in his manifestations of strength, rigidity, and punishment to rebels, especially in the episode concerning the golden calf, mentioned at the end of the *Historical Speech*...⁶¹ The percentage of the biblical characters mentioned in the text is of approximately 13%, balancing the Old and New Testaments and a few Egyptian and Persian examples. However, the classic world is present with 53% of the characters in the *Historical Speech*..., divided into Greeks (6%), Romans (22%), and mythology (25%). The medieval time comprehends only 4% of the characters, while the modern world involves more than 25% of them.

By extending this attempt of periodization and aggregation to the set of mentioned and/or identified authors, the prevalence of the Classic World is even clearer: biblical authors account for 1.5%, ancient Greeks, with more than 11%, and pagan Latin characters, with almost 36%. Patristic writings correspond to 6% of the document, while scholastic, saints, and “medieval” jurists account for 9% in the entire *Historical Speech*... Finally, the authors of the modern time account for 36%, in a total of 132 remissions. If we group all of the historic references of the document by contexts and times, comprehending authors, characters, and situations, we see that in a total of 300, Greek-Roman Antiquity stands out, with 48%; biblical references account for 8%; Middle Ages, 9%; and Modern time, 32%.

However, if classicism characterizes the tendency of the analyzed text, the aspect would not be exclusive of this source, thus constituting a sign of erudition and authority that is inherent to that time; these values are also present in the literate Portuguese aristocracy of the 16th century. However, these numbers aimed at not only observing the strength of references to authors, characters, and Portuguese situations — including overseas possessions — but also revealing scarce references to the Portuguese world, accounting only for 8% of the total of 300 historical references in the document, except for the context of the rebellion in Minas. Therefore, we should consider this aspect — the appreciation toward classic references — to the set of historical situations exposed

⁶⁰Michel Foucault, *As palavras e as coisas: uma arqueologia das ciências humanas*, Translation by Salma Muchail, São Paulo, Martins Fontes, 2002 [1966], p. 23-61.

⁶¹Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 192-193.

in the *Historical Speech...*, to observe theoretical and empirical choices and go into the core of its reasoning.

Crimes and punishment

The last measurement refers to 33 historical situations mentioned in the document, which shows the conduct to be adopted in the application of the punishment and in punishing rebellions. In it, biblical episodes reach 12%; ancient Persia, 6%; ancient Greece, 15%; ancient Rome, 21%; and medieval Europe, 3%. Situations from Modern time comprehend 42%, and half of these last events took place in Europe whereas the other half took place in the colonial world (Spanish and Portuguese). Therefore, in this case, there are more modern examples than ancient ones. However, from the beginning of the second part, the *Historical Speech...* refers to these modern situations — such as the quote about *Quilombo dos Palmares* —⁶² and the last ten pages of its most recent edition are impressive because of massive and ordered remission, despite being mixed with a few ancient examples or statements by medieval jurists. The episodes that were mentioned in these pages can be grouped in the following thematic blocks.

Concerning religious wars in France, the text recalls the restlessness in Marseille in the reign of Henry III, when the governor had the rebels hung; some of them were thrown out of the palace window.⁶³ Also, while the catholic league was prevalent in Paris, the duke of Mayenne arrested and executed the suspects of a murder and their bodies were exposed.⁶⁴ The Amboise conspiracy is also mentioned, about the time when the royal cavalry set the neighborhood on fire.⁶⁵ This information was taken from the Spanish version of the book written by the Italian author Henrico Caterino D'Avila.⁶⁶

About the Pazzi conspiracy, in Florence, the *Historical Speech...* emphasizes the repressed attempt of this family of bankers to take over the power of Lorenzo de' Medici, in 1477, by recalling the bodies hanging out of the windows of the government palace, among which were of the archbishop of Pisa, and of Francesco and Giacomo Pazzi.⁶⁷

In the Hispanic monarchy, in 1521, the document emphasizes the rebellion of the *comuneros*, which was ended after some of its main “motors”

⁶²Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 150-151.

⁶³*Ibidem*, p. 181-182.

⁶⁴*Ibidem*, p. 182; Arlette Jouanna et al., *Histoire et dictionnaire des Guerres de Religion*, Torino, Robert Lafont, 1998, p. 1088-1091.

⁶⁵Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *op. cit.* 1994, p. 183; Arlette Jouanna et al., *op. cit.* p. 647-648.

⁶⁶Enrico Caterino Davila, *Historia de las guerras civiles de Francia*. Translation and additions (from 1598 to 1630) of Basilio Varen de Soto, Anvers, Juan Bautista Verdussen, 1713, p. 17-20; 207-208; 397-398.

⁶⁷Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 182; Christopher Hibbert, *Ascensão e queda da casa dos Medici: o Renascimento em Florença*, Translation by Hildegard Feist, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1993 [1974], p. 107-118.

were violently punished.⁶⁸ Or, in the same year, in New Spain, there was a reference to a sublevation against Hernán Cortez, who entered the house of a rebel with his guards and was hung that same night; his body was exposed out the window.⁶⁹ In 1521, another riot might have taken place, although it was not identified; it was supposedly in the Canary Islands, when the main “leaders” were hung at the governor’s command.⁷⁰

In the Portuguese monarchy, in the *Historical Speech...*, the subject is the Restoration War (1640–1668), by the sentence of the Count of Ericeira, after reporting the actions of D. Francisco de Souza, in 1641; the village of Barrancos was burned down because its inhabitants did not defend the square constantly. This reminds us of a rebellion from 1720.⁷¹ In another section, the comparison between both contexts is brought up again, by justifying the repulse toward more violence facing the anticipated punishment imposed by the future Count of Assumar, similarly to that defended by the ambassador Francisco de Souza Coutinho about releasing the infant D. Duarte de Bragança.⁷² In “Angola”, also in 1521, there was a sublevation that was soon punished.⁷³ In Brazil, close to the events in Minas, the document refers to a crime that took place in Sergipe during the administration of D. João de Lencastre (1694–1702), when a colonel set the house of Antônio de Faria on fire. Finally, the *Historical Speech...* refers to an investigation of the magistrate Belchior da Cunha Brochado, in Rio de Janeiro, around 1688, who set on fire wood shops, as well as to the government of Francisco Xavier de Távora (1713–1716), who ordered to burn the farm of José Gurgel.⁷⁴

So, it is time to assume a line of analogy in the interpretation of the *Historical Speech...*, without ruling out its other significances and resignification. This definition will be included in the Roman examples and, for that, Cicero is analyzed again, especially the politician and the man of action, the council of the *res publica* that considered his speech, after making four statements in the senate, in favor of punishment without a formal

⁶⁸Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 182-183; Antonio Miguel Bernal, Josep Fontana; Ramón Villares (eds.), *Historia de España: monarquía e império*, vol. 3, Madrid, Crítica/Marcial Pons, 2007, p. 82-88.

⁶⁹Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 183; Antonio de Solís, *Historia de la conquista de Mexico: población, y progresos de la América setentrional*, book 5, Brussels, Francisco Foppens, 1704, p. 560-562; Tzvetan Todorov, *A conquista da América: a questão do outro*, Translation by Beatriz Moisés, São Paulo, Martins Fontes, 1988 [1982], p. 112-113.

⁷⁰Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 183.

⁷¹*Idem*, *Ibidem*, p. 183-184; Luís de Menezes, *História de Portugal Restaurado*, tomo 1, Lisboa, João Galvão, 1679, p. 230.

⁷²Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 187; Gustavo Kelly de Almeida, *Herói em processo: escrita e diplomacia sobre D. Duarte de Bragança (1641-1649)*, M.A. dissertation, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, 2011, p. 16; 22-23; 85-87.

⁷³Laura de Mello e Souza (org.), *op. cit.* p. 183. Angola did not exist in the 16th century. Maybe the document referred to Congo de Afonso (1506-1543) and the neighboring realms Loango or Ndongo, with weak Portuguese occupation.

⁷⁴Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 185.

trial in case of a rebellion. Because of the persuasive power of the orator, the episode would become a paradigm for fates in Rome. To sum up, in the middle of the 1st century BC, matters resulting from the expansion of the Roman territory reflected on the senate, and the *optimates*, connected to patrician families, were different from the *populares*, who colluded with the common people.⁷⁵ Lúcio Sérgio Catilina, a noble that had been a judge in Rome and governor in Africa, after being put aside in two elections of the council, joined Publius Lentulus and others and began to conspire by making promises to those who were not satisfied in the capital and in the province. The plot was denounced to Cicero, a *homo novus* from the enriched, however, plebeian family that had gained power in Rome due to his political and oratory talents.

The Italian peninsula, in the early 16th century, was also a busy place due to the hard submission of inhabitants and threats from Spain and France

In November of 63 BC, Cicero pronounced a series of statements: in the temple of Jupiter in the presence of Catiline himself, asking him to leave Rome;⁷⁶ afterwards, he informed the senate about the exile of the rebel; and then, he revealed the discovery of a plan that included gathering soldiers, massacring the *optimates*, and burning up Rome, besides making an alliance with Gallic people who were not satisfied with the Roman oppression.

In December, the senate was gathered to decide the sentence of the leaders of the conspiracy. In the session, Julius Caesar, who was then the *pontifex maximus*, spoke in favor of life imprisonment for Lentulus and his followers. But Cicero, in his fourth catilinarian, defended death penalty to all and claimed this would be the most efficient remedy for the Republic. The efficient rhetoric of Cicero made way for the speech of Cato, in favor of the capital punishment for the rebels without trial. The opposite speeches from Caesar and Cato were then redefined, with the sentence of Sallustius, a historian who was a protégé of Caesar.⁷⁷ However, Cicero soon rewrote and publicized his four catilinarians, known as his major political action to defend the country. Lentulus and four other rebel leaders were strangled; Catiline died one month later in combat. Because of his intercession in favor of the capital punishment given to the prisoners, Cicero was

⁷⁵Charles Matson Odahl, *Cicero and the Catilinarian conspiracy*, New York/London, Routledge, 2011.

⁷⁶*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 272-274; Cicero, *As catilinárias*, Amilcare Carletti (ed.), São Paulo, Leud, 2000 [1999].

⁷⁷Luciano Canfora, *Júlio César: o ditador democrático*, Translation by Antonio Mendonça, São Paulo, Estação Liberdade, 2002 [1999], p. 81.

afterwards temporarily exiled from the senate and Rome, at first, with no power to change such drastic measures.

In the *Historical Speech...*, Cicero is called to defend the value of public faith as the cornerstone of justice; or to talk about the duty of the princes to resist the crowd and the immoral ones; or to fight against the lack of punishment in Roman conspiracies, in order to ensure the values of the Republic by applying any solution to solve something; or to advocate for the cause of “necessity” as being superior to human and legal court. When weapons made laws silent, they should be used by the governor.⁷⁸ Even though the name of Catiline is only written in the *Historical Speech...* twice, these sentences were decisive to define the tone of the document, which turned rebels into villains in Minas, comparing them to ancient Roman rebels, therefore, defending that stronger punishment than that allowed by law should be used for them. Therefore, we are faced with speeches that come from two different contexts and times, brought together by the political use of the first made by the second. Cicero spoke to obtain the maximum penalty for the accused; however, the *Historical Speech...* was rewritten after the punishment, by turning Pascoal da Silva Guimarães, Manuel Nunes Viana, Felipe dos Santos, and the inhabitants of Minas into villains. Nothing was mentioned about the reception of the *Historical Speech...* attributed to the Count of Assumar, as a manuscript, in the scope of the Portuguese monarchy. No one know who read it or if it has had an influence on the fate of D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida, for his exile from the Court after this episode. Nothing was known until the document appeared in the late 19th century in Lisbon.

Dissimulated Machiavelli

So, it is time to relate the use and the political culture of this text to the ideas of Machiavelli and other authors involving the *arte dello Stato*. There are several inflections that relate this context and its main document source to the content of *The Prince*. The Italian peninsula, in the early 16th century, was also a busy place, due to the hard submission of inhabitants and the threats from Spain and France. If after the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1715, Minas had been more protected from external invasions; the intrinsic value of gold preserved Portugal from international greed, besides the danger from riots. *The Prince* and the *Historical Speech...* defended the emphatic manifestation of the sovereign power in his regions: a prince that could be more feared than loved and bellicose, who could maintain his “state” not only for administrative measures — characteristic of some modern European States in the 17th and 18th centuries — but also for personalized and strong assertive actions toward the vassals, choosing weapons over laws. These sections of the analyzed document are closer to the famous Chapter 17 in Machiavelli’s book, which discusses if the prince should prefer to be loved or feared:

⁷⁸Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 108; 145; 154; 158; 169; 175; 179; 181; 189.

The princes should understand, once and for all, that they may cause more damage to the republic by being merciful, and that, in certain occasions, the harsher they are, the more merciful they become; because severity that punishes some is mercy that absolves many; [...] Neither can rely on and trust good vassals a prince who forgive the bad, when there is no doubt that forgiving the bad means losing the good; and also experience shows that nothing humiliates and knocks down the insolence of rebel hearts as the formidable voice and hideous view of tragic success.⁷⁹

It is not strange that miners ignore there is a king that dominates this country, since his ray has never been seen [...], because by not punishing the bad, he is not in fact a prince, he is the representation and the shadow of a prince. Because it is true that royal decency is not related to the scepter, nor attached to the crown, but instead, to the strikes of the sword, to the sound of artillery, to the trotting of the horses and to the crowd of infants, because only when forces are feared, sovereignty is despotic.⁸⁰

From Florence of the Medici family to Vila Rica of the Bragança dynasty, the social and political inclusions of Machiavelli and the future Count of Assumar were different because of the periods when both texts were written. The former was then a secretary in times of political difficulties; the latter was a noble governor of a captaincy, trying to justify his inappropriate orders. However, neither Machiavelli nor D. Pedro Miguel tried to sum up the profile of an Italian Renaissance prince or the usual behavior of the kings of Portugal in their respective times. As it is known, the Florentine secretary wrote a small book, which was afterwards dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, published only in 1532. Till now, the fate of the manuscript defending the Count of Assumar in the Court of the Bragança family is unknown.

As mentioned earlier, D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal, at the time of the rebellion of 1720, adopted a more arbitrary line of government in the Portuguese monarchy, even though he was also able to make pacts and partnerships. However, the future Count of Assumar felt resentful for his mere position of captaincy governor, at a time of silent changes in political practices. D. Pedro Miguel needed support to swiftly punish the rebels of the sublevation, which he interpreted as an offense against royal power and himself. So, he asked the past for help, like Machiavelli.

In the *Historical Speech...*, the ideas of *The Prince* are present, for instance, in the dissimulation observed in the actions of the governor to repress the riot. This type of stratagem was not exclusive to the councils of the Florentine secretary. However, dissimulation would be further confused with a flaw from Machiavellism,

⁷⁹Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.), *Discurso histórico e político sobre a sublevação que nas Minas houve no ano de 1720*, Belo Horizonte, Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994, p. 138.

⁸⁰*Idem*, *Ibidem*, p. 148. Ver Michel Senellart, *Machiavélisme et raison d'Etat*. XIIe-XVIIIe siècle, Paris, PUF, 1989 e *As artes de governar: do "regimen" medieval ao conceito de governo*, Translation by Paulo Neves, São Paulo, Editora 34, 2006 [1995], p. 47-63; 225-259.

especialmente em ambientes católicos que costumam atacar Machiavelli. Além disso, a prevalência de autores clássicos observada em ambas as fontes foi disseminada ao longo do tempo moderno. No entanto, o determinismo geográfico para explicar o perigo dos habitantes de Minas poderia ser mais facilmente relacionado às escrituras de Botero do que as de Machiavelli.⁸¹ Como observado, o documento trouxe múltiplas significâncias e leituras, mas sempre favorecendo a hostilização de subleítimos e a legitimidade da repressão. É por isso que um aspecto precisa ser enfatizado: o valor da violência e do medo. Isso é uma característica de várias escrituras de D. Pedro Miguel, estando muito presente no pequeno livro sobre principados, mesmo quando o assunto é abordado com comentários e dicotomias pertencentes à moral cristã, como no caso da *Historical Speech*...

É impossível confirmar se o futuro Conde de Assumar leu e/ou foi inspirado pelo pequeno livro que incentivava punições prematuras, cenas de efeito, e medo dos vassallos em relação aos governantes. Como mencionado, Machiavelli era proibido no antigo regime português, e nunca seria formalmente presente na biblioteca do depois nomeado marquês de Alorna, ou elogiado em qualquer carta ou tratado escrito. No entanto, se neste artigo inferimos a constante resignificação e apropriação de leituras, autores e obras em um documento erudito e inteligente, construído para favorecer a violência antecipada, também é plausível assumir o uso “machiavellico” e instrumental da tradição clássica publicada na *Historical Speech*... como uma maneira de disfarçar as escrituras do secretário florentino. Porque, afinal, usando as palavras do conselho de Cícero, ou pela sentença de puristas romanos, como Tácito e Sallústio, desde o século XVIII em Portugal, ideias que eram muito semelhantes às do príncipe machiavellico foram publicizadas, em termos da busca por poder, glória e fama. Tais ideias poderiam apenas ser explicitamente associadas a Machiavelli em escrituras sobre antimachiavelismo — isso foi frequentemente enfatizado de acordo com os padrões da Inquisição portuguesa e o índice de livros proibidos.

Muito mais difícil e complexo é investigar a incidência oculta de ideias de poder relacionadas aos livros de Machiavelli nos contextos do tempo moderno que não o mencionam, exceto por uma perspectiva de oposição. Ou até mesmo considerar sua leitura estereotipada, adotando um machiavelismo não assumido em um contexto que era adverso, inicialmente, por estar mais conectado à lógica de pactos políticos de neoescolástica e inspiração católica. No entanto, a partir desses dois estudos de caso, observamos que nos séculos XVII e XVIII, práticas políticas e ideias de certos governantes na América portuguesa não estavam tão distantes do debate sobre o poder dos príncipes, imortalizado pelo famoso autor — por causa do exagerado pragmatismo político das ações do Conde de Óbidos, ou por defender a violenta punição aplicada por D. Pedro de Almeida Portugal. Com as observações e análises realizadas aqui, é necessário ser cuidadoso e descartar a hipótese do uso correto das escrituras do florentino.

⁸¹Rodrigo Bentes Monteiro, *O rei no espelho. A monarquia portuguesa e a colonização da América 1640-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2002, p. 179-187; 293-307.

author, as if they were a *vace-mecum* for the actions of governor. However, if it is not possible to prove the direct influence of Machiavelli in these cases; it is possible to identify ideas and practices of power that are very similar to those studied by the Florentine author. To sum up, it is possible to observe the existence of “machiavellisms,” as antimachiavellism is itself conceived of the term “machiavellism,” even though it was so fought against in the Portuguese world. As recalled by the illustrious Portuguese Luís António Verney, in the 18th century, Machiavelli talked only of “what was practiced every day in courts and other parts.”⁸² Owing to this simple and clear vision, European princes and overseas governors were faced with similar problems in their administrations. By the way, this comparison between such distant scenarios in space and time was present in the writings of Machiavelli. Therefore, in his own way, the Florentine author compiled contemporary and past situations, looking for lessons that could be used to better advise the governors.

⁸²Luís António Verney, *Verdadeiro método de estudar para ser útil à República, e à Igreja*, vol. 2, Valencia, Oficina de Antonio Valle, 1746, p. 84.



Study by the painter Antonio Parreiras (1860-1937) on the painting *Julgamento de Felipe dos Santos*, painted in 1923 after a request from the government of Minas Gerais. The painting was destroyed in 1959, in the fire of the Legislative Assembly of Belo Horizonte. The image is inserted in the scope of heroism of the rebel from 1720, during the Brazilian republic. To the right, there is the figure of D. Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal, sitting down, whose political ideas were the base of his government in the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro, and the composer of the Historical Speech... In the background, the smoke from the fire in the Ouro Preto mount. Dimension: H 88.4 x W 148.2 cm - H 104.4 x W 164.5 x E 6.3 cm (with a frame). Governo do Estado do Rio de Janeiro/Secretaria de Estado de Cultura/Fundação Anita Mantuano de Artes do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - Funarj/Museu Antonio Parreiras, Niterói (RJ).