

# The historical importance of the manuscripts of the Public Library of Évora. The example of the correspondance of D. Manuel do Cenáculo (1724-1814)

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**Resumen:** La Biblioteca Pública de Évora tiene una rica colección de los manuscritos reunidos por el fundador de la institución, el arzobispo D. Manuel do Cenáculo, que fueron catalogados por Cunha Rivara en el siglo XIX. Una parte importante de esta colección se compone de patrimonio bibliográfico del fundador, y en particular la correspondencia enviada por varias personalidades nacionales y extranjeras. Sin embargo, el Catálogo de la Correspondencia, obra de Armando Guzmão, no cataloga algunos de los fondos de la correspondencia. En el presente trabajo se examinan dos códices que no han sido catalogados. Por tanto, se trata de cartas inéditas y poco conocidos por los investigadores, que fueron enviadas al arzobispo Cenáculo, entre 1772-1803, por Joaquim Sá, Profesor de latín en el Colegio de Nobles de Lisboa y Alexandre Manuel, Secretario de la Oficina de Censura Real. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo destacar la importancia histórica de este tipo de fuentes primarias, es decir, el valor documental para entender la coyuntura política al final del Antiguo Régimen, las reformas educativas del gobierno de Pombal, la censura de libros y eventos culturales, la vida cotidiana y las mentalidades en Portugal en el siglo XVIII.

**Palabras clave:** Fuentes históricas, correspondencia, cultura política, libros, censura.

**Abstract:** The Public Library of Évora has a rich and important collection of manuscripts assembled by its founder, the Archbishop D. Manuel do Cenáculo and cataloged by Cunha Rivara in the nineteenth century. A substantial part of this collection includes the bibliographic heritage of the founder and the correspondence sent to him by several national and foreign personalities. Nevertheless, part of the correspondence fund is not included in the Correspondence Catalogue that Armando Guzmão assembled. The current work examines two codices of unpublished letters that were not cataloged and were,

thus, far unknown to the researchers. The letters were sent to the Archbishop Cenáculo between 1772-1803, by Joaquim Sá, Regius Professor of Latin at the College of Nobles of Lisbon and, by Alexandre Manuel, Secretary of the Royal Censorship Bureau. This work aims to highlight the historical importance of this kind of primary source, namely the documentary value to understand the political conjuncture at the end of ancient regime, the educational reforms of the government of Pombal, the censorship of books and cultural events, everyday life and mentalities in the eighteenth-century Portugal.

**Keywords:** Historical sources, correspondence, political culture, books, censorship.

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The Public Library of Évora was founded in 1805 on the initiative of the Archbishop D. Manuel do Cenáculo. The institution is, therefore, over two hundred years old and one of the most important libraries in Portugal because of its bibliographic collection and for being one of the first libraries to open its doors to readers. In fact, the statute of 1811 ensured presence reading three times a week to all interested. Throughout the nineteenth century, the library ensured reading to mostly citizens that consisted primarily of students.

The aim of this essay focuses on a substantial part of the collection of manuscripts collected and assembled by the founder of the library. As we have said before, two large codices of unpublished and non-cataloged letters have been studied, which were sent to the Archbishop Cenáculo between 1772-1803 by Joaquim José da Costa Sá, Regius Professor of Latin at the College of Nobles of Lisbon and by Alexandre Faria Manuel, Secretary of the Royal Censorship Bureau.

## 1. The manuscripts of the Public Library of Évora

The initial bibliographic funds of the Library of Évora were built with the books left by D. Joaquim Xavier Botelho de Lima and the many thousands that D. Manuel do Cenáculo brought from Beja. It is also known that the estate of D. Manuel do Cenáculo was not limited to books and that the library received other valuables belongings to the collection that the Bishop gathered throughout his life, such as natural products, coins, paintings and archaeological pieces –“antiques” as they were called at the time<sup>1</sup>.

In a letter addressed to the Prince Regent, the Archbishop declares 40,000 volumes that include printed books and manuscripts. The post-mortem inventory judge, José

<sup>1</sup> Regarding the coins, the Archbishop left an inventory which attests to its importance and value, see Vaz, Francisco, “A Fundação da Biblioteca Pública de Évora”, in Vaz, Francisco and José António Calixto, *D. Frei Manuel do Cenáculo Construtor de Bibliotecas*, Vale de Cambra, Caleidoscópio, 2006, p. 63.

António de Leão, assessed the collection of books at 50,000 volumes. José Silvestre Ribeiro estimated a similar number that included the existing books at the Palace of the Bishop. According to Tulio Espanca, however, the original Library Fund consisted of 25,000 printed volumes and manuscripts from the personal donation of Cenáculo and 2,314 books more left in the Court by the earlier prelate D. Joaquim Botelho Lima<sup>2</sup>.

Given the diversity of numbers and the fact that statistics, called Political Arithmetic then, were in its infancy and the absence of a systematic catalogue of bibliographic funds, it is very difficult to reach an exact number based on the collected data. As a working hypothesis, we take numbers of Cenáculo as the most credible ones since they do not contradict the post-mortem inventory. The detailed report of Cunha Rivara in 1845 confirms these numbers and provides an inventory of the biblioteconomic collection, stating that the library had 50,000 printed volumes, 2,000 codices, approximately 6,000 coins and medallions and "a fine Gallery of paintings with over 300 panels, a small and interesting Museum of nature products, rare art and monuments of antiquity"<sup>3</sup>. Augusto Simões, librarian since 1863, also referred to the collection at the time when Cunha Rivara became a librarian saying that the library contained "upwards of thirty thousand printed volumes, nearly two thousand manuscripts, codices, illumination books, paintings and other works of art and nature"<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, Augusto Simões corroborates numbers that are close to those of Cunha Rivara and those mentioned by the judge at the inventory of Cenáculo. One thing is indisputable: the great size and value of the estate left by Manuel do Cenáculo. In order to provide a better perception of the rarity and size of the bibliographical collection, we should mention the valuable collection of Bibles and biblical commentaries, mainly the multi language bibles in Latin, Hebrew, Chaldean and Arabic, the versions of the *Vulgate*, the Bible translations into Spanish, Portuguese, Ethiopian, German and English<sup>5</sup>.

The organization and cataloguing of manuscripts were the work of the librarian Cunha Rivara, who held this position between 1838-1855. The *Catalogue of Manuscripts of the Public Library of Évora* receives the approval of the historiography and to this day is an obligatory reference for the consultation of manuscripts<sup>6</sup>. In a first 400-page volume, he gathered documents referring to the overseas territories, mainly America, Asia and Africa. The second volume was published in 1868 and included literature; the librarian adopted the classification by Brunet, dividing the catalogued papers of literature in nine sections: Grammar, Rhetoric and Oratory, Poetry, Drama, Mythology, Epistolography, Anecdotes and Novels, Dialogues and Philology. The volume has more than 700 pages,

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p.59 .

<sup>3</sup> Rivara, Cunha, 1845, in Cerico, Pedro Caturras da Silva, *Cunha Rivara, um Bibliotecário Romântico*, Dissertation for a Masters degree in Information Sciences, Évora, Universidade de Évora, 2007, pp. 88-89.

<sup>4</sup> Augusto Simões, in Vaz, Francisco, "A Fundação..." *op. cit.*, p. 69. We have updated the spelling in this citation and in others maintaining the original spelling in the titles only.

<sup>5</sup> Vaz, Francisco, "A Fundação..." *op. cit.*, pp. 70-73.

<sup>6</sup> Cerico, Pedro, *Cunha Rivara ... op. cit.*, p. 98.

the section of Epistolography being the largest, since the correspondence addressed to D. Manuel do Cenáculo occupies more than 200 pages. The third volume covers the History and the fourth contains news of codices and papers relating to the Sciences, Arts and Crafts.

The correspondence comprised the thousands of letters that D. Manuel do Cenáculo received from national and international correspondents; the drafts and copies of letters and other documents written by him or by his secretary, as shown in the following table.

**TABLE 1: Cenáculo's Manuscripts**

MANUSCRIPTS	INDEXED DOCUMENTS	TRANSCRIPTS
Letters from Gusmão catalogue	4269	176
Letters and other unpublished documents from various correspondents	1612	-
Letters and other texts, Cenáculo autographs (including diary) <sup>7</sup>	1134	248
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7002</b>	<b>424</b>

SOURCE: Guzmão, Armando Nobre de, *Catálogo da Correspondência dirigida a D. Fr. Manuel do Cenáculo*, Évora, 1944-1948, t. I-VI; and Vaz, Francisco (coord.), *Os Livros e as Bibliotecas no Espólio de D. Frei Manuel Do Cenáculo*, Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, 2009, pp. 49-634.

The catalogue by Armando Guzmão follows the organization that Cunha Rivara and Teles de Matos had adopted to describe the correspondence addressed to Manuel do Cenáculo. For instance, it arranges the letters according to the correspondent and in alphabetical order. Despite not having catalogued all correspondents, the catalogue is a remarkable piece of work due to the amount of summarized documents and transcripts. Its historical value was pointed out by the librarian as a determinant for its completion, nothing that the letters reveal the efforts of Cenáculo to acquire works for Portuguese libraries<sup>8</sup>. It does not illustrate us as to the criterion of the transcriptions made, but a simple analysis reveals the privileged place given to the roles of books, letters from booksellers and the agents of Cenáculo. A large proportion of transcripts are from foreign correspondents (70 transcripts, 40% of the total).

Likewise, a recent study catalogued the letters of Cenáculo and other documents, which are in the Library of Évora, the Library of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon and

<sup>7</sup> Vaz, Francisco, *Os Livros e as Bibliotecas... op. cit.*, p.11. This number includes the autograph letters of D. Manuel do Cenáculo in the library of the Academy of Sciences and in the National Library of Portugal.

<sup>8</sup> «We learn, from this correspondence, of the fabulous sums spent to enrich or create Portuguese libraries, ordering all the best printed and manuscript works from the main points of Europe». Guzmão, Armando, *Catálogo da Correspondência ... op. cit.*, t. 1, p. 15.

the National Library, and have transcribed letters and other important documents on the field of book history and reading<sup>9</sup>.

Now, we are going to reinforce the historical importance of these bibliographic funds and see how these letters are also an important source to other fields of history, literature and pedagogy.

## 2. The example of the correspondence

In the current study, we take as examples two important epistolography funds of D. Manuel do Cenáculo, which have not been catalogued by Armando de Guzmão and have therefore passed unnoticed to historiography. These are the letters that Joaquim José da Costa Sá and Alexandre Faria Manuel wrote to the Bishop of Beja. Both cases reveal one of the characteristic traits of this type of document: the correspondence aimed at establishing client relationships, which are a characteristic of pre-industrial societies<sup>10</sup>. The patron gives rewards in the form of cash or access to paid positions, sponsorships to publish works, etc. In exchange, the client gives favours that he knows to be to the patron liking: he sends books, acts as a mediator in transactions and demonstrates by acts and words his appreciation. In moments of distress, he does not avoid from appealing to the generosity of the patron. On this last point, note the following passage in a letter from Joaquim Sá:

As I had promised to your Revered Excellency, I am sending the *Introduction of Literary Annals*, but not *Morellio* at this time<sup>11</sup>, (...). If it pleases your Excellency, and should it be possible, I would be most grateful if your Revered Excellency gave António José Correia six coins and half of the Property that Rolland allocated to me, so he can withdraw José ring to sell it as he needs the money. I deeply regret to bring the matter to your Revered Excellency attention and it is not fair to concern your Revered Excellency with our troubles because we owe very many benefits, many favours, and much gratitude to you Revered Excellency. I have received 144,000 réis from Rolland's allowance, which leaves 139,164 réis from a total of 283,164 réis of the said Property<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Vaz, Francisco (coord.), *Os Livros e as Bibliotecas...*, op. cit., pp. 49-634.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, Peter, *Sociologia e História*, traduzido por Fátima Martins, Lisboa, Afrontamento, 1990, 68-70.

<sup>11</sup> This concerns the author Jacobo Morellio, or Morelli, author of Latin codices and works on classical Antiquities. The work in question can be: *Codices manuscripti Latini Bibliothecae Naniaene a Jacobo Morelli relati*, Veneza, 1776.

<sup>12</sup> Letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1781, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim José da Costa Sá a D. Frei Manuel do Cenáculo*, fl. 65. In this work all transcriptions of the letters addressed to D. Manuel do Cenáculo were translated in English from the original letters in Portuguese language. Réis (Kings) is the old Portuguese currency.

The protocol and the complimentary manner in the endlessly repeated treatment of “Revered Excellency”, as well as the construction at the end of each missive, is part of the ritual in which the client demonstrates by words his total respect, loyalty and subordination<sup>13</sup>. There is, therefore, a mutual interest in maintaining a regular correspondence; this means of communication contributes to the strengthening of that patronage that is a structured trait of the society in the political context of the end of the old regime.

## 2.1 The letters of Joaquim Sá to Frei Manuel do Cenáculo

We begin our analysis with the first correspondent Joaquim José da Costa Sá (1740-1803). He was a Regius professor of Latin Grammar and one of the most distinguished Latinists, like his patron António Pereira de Figueiredo. At the time of the Marquis of Pombal, and by the hand of D. Manuel do Cenáculo, he held the position of Regius professor of Latin in the College of Nobles. This position was withdrawn from him in late 1777 in the context of the political change that occurred with D. Maria I, which he regretted in a letter addressed to his protector<sup>14</sup>. He was a Correspondent Member of the Academy of Sciences and appointed as Officer of the Secretariat of the Navy and Overseas Businesses on 2nd, November 1799. He married the cousin of Cenáculo, Ana do Nascimento Rosa de Oliveira Villas-Boas, with whom he had eight children. In addition to this numerous progeny, he left a large number of literary works, in particular the translations of classics: Horace, Phaedrus, Cicero, Terence and Virgil. He produced French and Italian dictionaries, works of educational instruction, lessons in Latin, *The Christian Education*, and a work of physical nature about a theme that at the time roused curiosity in Lisbon: *Nouvelles aerologiques*, Lisbon, 1784. He was also the author of the *Study Plan for the Government and Direction of the Academia Real da Marinha e Commercio* created in the city of Oporto, which was commissioned by the Minister of the Navy, D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, but as Inocêncio da Silva said “the plan was never adopted”<sup>15</sup>.

Joaquim Sá wrote 117 letters to Bishop Cenáculo, all from Lisbon dated between 1775 and 1803<sup>16</sup>, in which he sometimes enclosed other documents. In these letters, some

<sup>13</sup> Virtually all letters of Alexander Faria Manuel end with the following protocol: Dear and most Revered Lord / I kneel / I kiss the hand of Your Excellency / Your most humble servant Alexandre Ferreira de Faria Manuel. Letter dated 1<sup>th</sup> of January 1772, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-10, *Correspondência de Alexandre Ferreira Faria Manoel a D. Frei Manuel do Cenáculo*, fl. 128. The letters of Joaquim Sá end as follows: His Most Revered Excellency Bishop President / Your Excellency’s servant the most respectful and obliging / Joaquim José da Costa and Sá. BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim... op. cit.*, fl. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> of December 1777, BPE, CXXVIII / 1-1, *op. cit.*, fl. 33.

<sup>15</sup> Silva, Inocêncio da, *Dicionário Bibliográfico Português*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1858-1923, t. 4, pp. 97-102.

<sup>16</sup> José Anastácio da Costa Sá, a brother of Joaquim Sá, was a frequent correspondent of Cenáculo who, in addition to his works provided the Bishop of Beja with information about the literary news, including statistical data on trade in Portugal, news of the French Revolution, and of the main events in Lisbon and

of which are in Latin and the books and the exchange of works were of constant theme. The novelty is the support granted to the Bishop in the publication of some works from 1794 to 1798<sup>17</sup>. This support is also documented in the letters of Cenáculo to Friar Vicente Salgado and Friar Plácido Barroco<sup>18</sup>.

The letters of Joaquim José da Costa Sá deserve a detailed study because of their relevance to philology and teaching of Latin. The letters provide details about the education at the College of Nobles, public acts examinations and adopted works. Inevitably, once Cenáculo abandoned the Court and left for Beja, these letters were important to keep the Bishop informed and abreast of the most important things that happened in Lisbon. In fact, some of the missives provided a detailed description of the intrigues and news from the Court. For example, one of them reports that Francisco Costa had been arrested due to an accolade he had made to the Marquis of Alorna<sup>19</sup>.

One aspect that we would like to point out is that in his missives Joaquim Sá gives an account of his activities as Latinist and translator of classic works and modern texts in Italian and French. In a letter dated in Lisbon on 19<sup>th</sup>, February 1798, for instance, he reveals that the Duke had asked him to translate the *Civil Economy* by Antonio Genovesi, an author who at the time influenced the thought of the elites in Portugal, since his books were adopted in philosophical and legal education<sup>20</sup>. It is likely that this translation fitted into the plans of the newly established Academy of Sciences of Lisbon, interested in disseminating useful knowledge and the latest works on economics.

There is no shortage of news, in the letters of Joaquim Sá, about important translations such as the translation of the Bible by António Pereira de Figueiredo. Incidentally and since Joaquim Sá held António Pereira de Figueiredo as a reference in his literary work, he provides many details about the works and projects of his mentor<sup>21</sup>.

even a critic to the work of Campomanes. Cf. BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-1, *Correspondência Joaquim...* op. cit., fl. 444 to 445. José Anastácio da Costa Sá was an Officer in the Secretariat's Official business of the Navy and Overseas José Anastácio da Costa Sá was the Secretariat's Official business of the Navy and Overseas and author of translations of poetic works of Racine, of an epic poem, Elementary Principles of diplomatic art, Lisbon, 1797 and modern Atlas, for the use of the Portuguese Youth, (1812). Silva, Inocêncio da, *Dicionário Bibliográfico...* op. cit., t. 4, pp. 220-221.

<sup>17</sup> "The work of your Revered Excellency *Piedade Christã* is in my hands without any orders; which makes me suspicious", BPE (Public Library of Évora), Codex, CXXVIII/1-1, *Correspondência Joaquim...* op. cit., fl. 173v. Blames the difficulties raised by the revolutionary situation in France for the delays in publications.

<sup>18</sup> Vaz, Francisco (coord.), *Os Livros e as Bibliotecas...* op. cit., 2009, p. 68 and 184.

<sup>19</sup> "(...) so insolent and insulting in its principles, in addition to a thousand false citations, which almost under the same principles the nobility might place, and remove our princes from our Throne". Letter dated 2<sup>th</sup> of February 1781. *Ibidem*, fl. 107.

<sup>20</sup> Vaz, Francisco, *Instrução e Economia. As ideias económicas no discurso da Ilustração Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Colibri, 2002, p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> "Father Pereira works in the Version of the Old Testament and has presented three Dissertations to the Academy about the origin of the People of Spain; about the etymology of the words Spain and Lusitania, and its spelling; materials for the fabric of National History". Letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1781, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII 1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim...* op. cit., fl. 62. Other translations by António Pereira de Figueiredo referred to are: Latin Law of New Christians (letter dated 1<sup>th</sup> of January 1775, in which he says that he will send a copy of this work). In this same letter, he says he has been admitted as a member of the Academy of Sciences, and it was in that capacity that he planned some literary works, in addition to the

The letters are an important source to assess the literary context and its development in the late 18th century, as well as the affirmation of a neoclassical tendency in the literary canons and the purism in the way one writes and speaks<sup>22</sup>. Scholars in the field of literature and the translation of classic works will find many documentation and information in these letters. Similarly, the keen interest in Antiquities, archaeological pieces, gravestones and inscriptions are in agreement with one of the interests of the Bishop of Beja and announce the romantic mindset that was beginning to make itself felt in the Western world.

With regard to pedagogy, the testimonies of Joaquim Sá about the teaching in the College of Nobles stand out. The sequence in the correspondence allows us to confirm that, in Pombal time, the institution was in terms of education the “jewel of the Crown”, even after the reformation of the University of Coimbra had stripped the College of the novelty of scientific education. The College that gathered the cream of national nobility continued to be the object of a special attention with the presence of the Court in public occasions, namely in the opening of the scholastic year.

The letters of Joaquim da Costa Sá are a good source for understanding the life of a “professional of humanities” in the late 18th century and the expedients used to ensure his and his family livelihood. Following his dismissal from the position of Professor of Latin in the College of Nobles and before he got the nomination for the post of Secretary of the Ministry of the Navy (1799), Joaquim Sá had to resort to working as translator and reviewer of texts. He became involved in the printing of the works of Bishop Cenáculo, serving as a go-between with publishers, sending proofs of the texts for the Bishop to revise and reporting on the progress of the printing.

As a translator, his work was mostly about translating Latin texts to Portuguese or revising Latin texts to correct errors, such as the revision of the Constitutions of religious orders that he complained were full of errors and required immense correction. In addition to the Latin translations, he also translated some French works.

It is worth noting that the books are a constant topic in practical all letters and the main topic in many. Therefore, they also show us the literary tastes and reading practices of the ecclesiastical elite and of the clientele, who lived around that elite and that managed to gravitate in the circles of the nobility of the Court. Conversely, and in order to oblige the patrons, this clientele developed good connections with booksellers in order to obtain books and information about the literary news for their protectors.

Like others, Joaquim Sá acts as the intermediary of Cenáculo in buying and selling books in Lisbon bookshops, including Bertrand and Borel<sup>23</sup>. Sometimes the news was not encouraging, as in July 22, 1780, when he reports that he had spoken to Bertrand about

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translation of *Civil Economy* by Genovesi. In a letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> of September 1781, he says that the printing of *Épocas* by father Pereira is progressing. In another letter dated 31<sup>th</sup> of January 1783 he writes about the brilliant performance of Father Pereira at the Academy on the previous Sunday.

<sup>22</sup> Gonçalves, Maria Filomena, “Recreação filológico-linguística com a geração de Cenáculo”, *Revista de Letras*, nº 12, (2007), p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> Vaz, Francisco (coord.), *Os Livros e as Bibliotecas... op. cit.*, p. 17.



the copies of *Memorias Históricas* (*Historical Memories*) that Cenáculo had mentioned, and that he had been told "that absolutely nothing is selling"<sup>24</sup>.

The constant presence of books also demonstrates the reality of a print culture, together with the persistence of a taste for manuscripts, which were still used (as his own letters) in small impact works, or in the ones that had not reached the press yet, such as flyers, handwritten journals or poetry, some of which written by Sá himself or by the brothers, and guided by the practice of patronage mentioned before<sup>25</sup>.

In an attempt to deepen our research on this intense literary exchange, we made an inventory of the comments relating to books, readings and the publishing activity referred to the letters of Joaquim Sá. Sometimes the topic is the main or, even, the unique subject in the correspondence, as for example in the letter on 24<sup>th</sup>, March 1794, in which he reveals that he had been appointed censor of the *Latin Grammar* written by a monk of St. Jerome and a professor in Bethlehem. He further tells that he was still working on the *Lectiones Latinitatis* by Broeder<sup>26</sup>, with a Portuguese version, and that they were "excerpts from several Greek and Roman Authors"; he puts Latin for the use of the University of Oxford. He promises to send a clear idea of the work and added he says he was in possession of Cenáculo book *Piedade Cristã* (*Christian Piety*), without any order. He concludes the letter stating that there was much delay in permitting several works, relating it to the sensitive nature of the Court in relation to the French. He states that his mentor, António Figueiredo, had spent the morning reading the book *Memorias Históricas* on the day before the authorization for the publication<sup>27</sup>.

We registered 164 entries relating to readings, libraries and books. The largest category is that of printed books and other texts and we have included pamphlets and public notices in this category. We organized this information starting with the reading practices, which are just three: one of them recounts the reaction of Queen Mother crying when reading Cenáculo pastoral that Joaquim Sá took to the court, after having them "*bound with golden paper covers, with painted paper guards and polished gold leaves*"<sup>28</sup>.

With regard to libraries, there are references to the foundation of the Royal Public Library in 1797 and especially to the generous donation by D. Manuel do Cenáculo, which consisted of a valuable bibliographical collection, in particular a 12th-century manuscript

<sup>24</sup> Letter dated 22<sup>th</sup> of July 1780, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim... op. cit.*, fl. 67.

<sup>25</sup> For example, when he sent a copy of a Latin Elegy, that brother José did about Literary style stating that if he had to license to print, as well as was a licensed the one that brother had done on the birthday of Serene Princess Dowager. Letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1792, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII 1-1 *op. cit.*, fls.165-166.

<sup>26</sup> Christian Gottlob Broeder (1744-1819), German philologist and Latinist.

<sup>27</sup> BPE, Cod. CXXVIII/ 1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim... op. cit.*, fls. 173-174. In the next letter he gives more detailed information about the work of Broeder, which he says can be divided into two parts: lessons of Latinity, and lessons of eloquence. He promises to send by mail whatever evidence there was.

<sup>28</sup> BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-1, *op. cit.*, letter dated 21<sup>th</sup> of November 1780, fl. 82. The other two references are to his master Father Antonio Pereira de Figueiredo, who had read the historical memories of Cenáculo during the whole of conference of the censorship Board. Idem, encyclical letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1794, fl. 88.

of the Bible, the New Testament edited by the English printer Baskerville and Arabic-Oriental manuscripts. In addition to these items, the donation included a collection of maps, antiques and monetary donation of 2,100 pieces. All these valuables aroused the curiosity of the Lisbon intellectual elite and of the Court; according to Joaquim Sá were all *hiantibus oribus*<sup>29</sup>.

Joaquim Sá dedicates five letters (1796-1801) to the creation of the Royal Public Library. The letters are a good source to assess the impact of the Bishop's donation and to understand how this trait of the Old Regime, in which the donations had the underlying intention to obtain gains for the benefactor, became normal practice. In fact, José Sá's letters show that this donation involved the endeavours of the Minister of State, D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, to obtain a pecuniary income for Manuel do Cenáculo in the form of payment of salaries for the position of Chairman of literary subvention, in Pombal's time<sup>30</sup>, and to the appointment of Cenáculo as Archbishop of Évora in 1803<sup>31</sup>.

The religious texts, Bibles and Bible versions, either original or translated are predominant in both printed and manuscript book references. With regard to works of religion and religious instruction, the letters are full of references to the bibliography of D. Manuel do Cenáculo: *Cuidados Literários (Literary Cares)*, and works on the Province of the Third Order of St. Francis. As we said, the references to the classics and translations of classic authors denote the importance that classicism had both in academic teaching and in the readings of intellectual elites. The references in the letters are to the following: Cicero, Horace, and Nepos. There is also reference to European anthologies or collections in this field of the classics: Chompré *Collection*, Latinist and Jesuit, and the aforementioned *Lectiones Latinitatis* by Broeder.

Another aspect that the correspondence of Joaquim Sá portrays is the various aspects of family life: financial difficulties, diseases, the attitude towards children, or towards affection. These descriptions support the value of this kind of historical sources in the context of micro-history, which has had recent developments in French and Italian historiography, with the work of Jacques Revel and Giovanni Levi, among others, and has been established as an alternative to classic social history, inherited from the *Annales*<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-1, *op. cit.*, letter dated 25th of May 1797, fl. 92

<sup>30</sup> Pereira, José Esteves, *O Pensamento Político em Portugal no Século XVIII*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1989, p. 75; and Vaz, Francisco (coord.), *D. Manuel do Cenáculo: Instruções Pastorais, Projectos de Bibliotecas e Diário*, Porto, Porto Editora, 2009, p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> "I immediately handed to my Minister your Excellency's letter; and at a favourable time I hope I repay Your Excellency's love by requesting your interests that are pending". Letter dated 2<sup>th</sup> of October 1801, BPE, Codex, 1-1, fl CXXVIII/1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim... op. cit.*, fl. 111.

<sup>32</sup> Levi, Giovanni, "Sobre microhistoria", in Burke, Peter et al., *Formas de Hacer História*, Translated by José Luis Gil Aristu, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1996, p. 119-143. See also the balance made by Revel, Jacques (coord.), *Jogos de Escala: a experiência da microanálise*, Translated by Dora Rocha, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1998. This book assembles ten studies by French and Italian historians, which state that micro-history is opposed to a perspective of macro-historical analysis and against the idea of a plan as the main structural aspects responsible for the modeling of micro social phenomena. In this way, some of the approaches are the biography of humble people, everyday life and popular cultural events;

This portrait of the micro-history, or if we prefer of each person existential drama is recurrent in the correspondence of Alexander Manuel Faria, which we will discuss later. In respect to affection, in particular to marriage, Joaquim Sá explains to his protector in one of his missives how he decided to marry, in 1782, asking Cenáculo for his blessing:

I wished to leave to England but Mr Joaquim de Oliveira opposed and delayed the project. By operating around me effective and favourable actions, harmony developed between us, which narrowed the communication and familiarity and in time originated *a reciprocal and innocent affection* between his eldest daughter Miss Ana Maria and myself (...). But, as these cannot lead to happiness without your Revered Excellency's blessing, favour and protection, I have decided as promised to communicate my intentions to your Revered Excellency; should your Revered Excellency deign to approve and bless them, I may feel happy and fortunate<sup>33</sup>.

It follows from the letter and the way it describes the affection for his future wife, that marriage resembled a kind of contract, in accordance with the wishes and interests of the father of the bride and certainly with the bridegroom interest. In other words, the marriage appears to be a good arrangement that reinforces the client bonds with the protector, who also was a relative of the bride. Hence, Joaquim Sá asks for the agreement and blessing of Cenáculo given the situation of dependence in which he saw himself. More than pleasing the parents, he wishes to please the patron and seeks his endorsement. If ever there was love in this relationship, it is reflected in the expression *a reciprocal and innocent affection*. The birth of the first child and the invitation addressed to D. Manuel do Cenáculo to be godfather of little José reinforce the client ties with Cenáculo.

## 2.2 The correspondence of Alexandre Faria Manuel

The other fund that we looked into is the set of letters by Alexandre Ferreira Faria Manuel with a total of 111 documents, dated between 1772 and 1786<sup>34</sup>. Little is known about Alexander Manuel and the biographical news we can attain come from the letters and documents sent to D. Manuel do Cenáculo. Faria Manuel held the office of Secretary of the Directorate of Studies at the Censorship Board, while the Bishop of Beja was its Chairman. After the dismissal of Cenáculo, he quickly fell into disgrace and was even accused of diverting the Board books. He was jailed in Limoeiro and later expelled from Lisbon to the village of Rabaçal.

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these approaches involve the use of sources such as diaries and correspondence.

<sup>33</sup> Letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> of September 1782, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-1, *Correspondência de Joaquim... op. cit.*, fl.130.

<sup>34</sup> Of these 111 documents, 97 are letters sent to Frei Manuel do Cenáculo between 1772 and 1786 and the rest are annexed documents and letters to various personalities.

The letters of Alexander Manuel cover the years in which D. Manuel do Cenáculo held the Office of President of the Royal Censorship Board (1770-1777)<sup>35</sup>, and the ensuing period of the early years of the Queen Maria Government. We can divide this correspondence in three distinct periods. The first one runs through till May 1777; the second period runs until the arrest of the Secretary of the Board, in which he describes with such detail the accusations directed at him and his arrest in October 1777. The last period covers the years in exile or retreat in Rabaçal and then, in his farm in Ameixoeira.

Until 1777 Alexandre Manuel informs the President of the Censorship Board about the main issues discussed at the “conferences”, which were devoted to an analysis of the works submitted to censorship and other issues concerning pedagogical and literary life. As it is known, the Board not only censured everything published in the Kingdom, but also had jurisdiction over the teaching and educational institutions, such as the College of Nobles and the Lower Studies classes<sup>36</sup>. Hence, there were plenty of matters concerning postings of teachers, teaching licenses, and licenses for foreign teachers to visit their homeland. Similarly, the public events, festivals, sermons, and other matters of a similar nature fell under the scrutiny of the censorship. For instance, in one of the first letters the Secretary informs that a request to sell talcum of various colours, for Carnival celebrations, had reached the board and that request had not been approved<sup>37</sup>.

In some cases (5) he sends the drafts of what happened in each of the conferences, and in others he described in a letter (7) the most important decisions. In either case, his testimony makes it possible to monitor the activity of the censorship, perceiving the issues that raised more discussion and the ones that were immediately denied the indispensable authorization for publications. Amongst the latter were the works and sermons related with secrecy, as Pombal suspected an undercurrent that congregated the higher clergy against his Government and centralizing policy<sup>38</sup>. One of the assignment of the Board involved issuing special licenses to certain people insofar they could read the books deemed prohibited<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> From 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1768, D. Manuel do Cenáculo is Ordinary Deputy to the Royal Censorship Board and from 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1770 he was appointed President, a position he held until the end of the Pombal Consulate 1777. Cf. Marcadé, Jacques, *Dom Frei Manuel do Cenáculo Vilas Boas. Évêque de Beja, Archevêque d'Evora (1770-1814)*, Paris, Portuguese Cultural Center-Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1978, p. 59-79.

<sup>36</sup> The decision of an «eight-month License, which his Majesty granted to John António de La Bella Professor of Experimental Physics at the College of the nobles to be able to go to Italy, his country» was communicated by letter that the Marques de Pombal handed to the Board. Letter dated 23<sup>th</sup> of January 1772.

<sup>37</sup> Letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1772, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-10, *Correspondência de Alexandre Ferreira...* *op. cit.*, fl. 133-134.

<sup>38</sup> Vaz, Francisco, *D. Manuel do Cenáculo...* *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>39</sup> António Pereira de Figueiredo argued in a conference that once it was the Board's jurisdiction to pass the licenses, ‘the petitions from people or Communities that requested a license to read banned books should be registered’. The proposal was considered unnecessary, since the requests were registered and the dispatch was attached to the letter dated 23<sup>th</sup> of January 1772. BPE, Cod. CXXVIII/ 1-10, *Correspondência de Alexandre Ferreira...* *op. cit.*, fl. 12.

The testimony of Alexander Manuel reports on the difficulties to understand where the powers of the Censorship Board started and ended, for example the issue raised by the blind in Lisbon requesting that street vendors should not be allowed to sell books and papers. The matter went as far as having the representative of the blind ask the Minister to arrest a street vendor. The case resulted from the fact that blind people had exclusivity in the peddling of books, which was important for their survival. The vendor was arrested and appealed to the Board, which raised the question of whether the Board had jurisdiction over the matter or it should be under His Majesty. After much debate the matter was sent to the Minister to decide if the street vendor should be free and wait on the decision of the Chairman of the Board on what to do with the petitions<sup>40</sup>.

The second period of the letters of Alexander Manuel refers to the first months of the government of Queen Maria I, when the change in policy produced in the Censorship Board the traditional changes in appointments and nominations. In those days, like today and when power changes, the acolytes also change. Therefore, several intrigues and accusations to the work of the Secretary of Board of Studies begin to arise from the end of April and coinciding with a period of illness of Alexandre Manuel. The teachers of Rhetoric of Beja complained that the Secretary abusively charged 1,080 réis for school textbooks and that a Secretariat officer, who according to Alexandre Ferreira was keen to take his job, made public that the Secretary had improperly charged 480 réis for student certificates<sup>41</sup>. Later, it followed the worst accusations of misuse of books. On May 10th a man called Manuel António, nicknamed *Filho da Velha* (son of an old woman) submitted to the Board a petition against the Secretary, stating that "*he had included 16 originals in the Licenses some of which were in your Excellency's possession and others I sold*"<sup>42</sup>. Nevertheless, the most serious accusation was put forward by the bookseller Rolland. He submitted an application to the Board to make the Secretary pay for a list of books that Rolland had submitted to the Board for a license and that had never been returned<sup>43</sup>.

The accusation to Rolland also involves the Bishop of Beja, because some are noted as being in the possession of Cenáculo in the list that Alexandre sends his patron. The bookseller Rolland was also one of the witnesses that would eventually incriminate the Secretary, who lost his job and was sent to prison and deported from Lisbon. According to this list, the misappropriation of books was estimated at 132,000 réis; the Bishop of Beja pledged to pay for the Bocacce, edited in London and with figures<sup>44</sup>, valued at 19,200

<sup>40</sup> "Everyone talked again and finally I had to inform the Minister: The petitions are in my power, awaiting You Excellency's will and resolution in this matter". Letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1772, BPE, Cod. CXXVIII 1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 26.

<sup>41</sup> Letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> of May 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> of May 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 18-19.

<sup>43</sup> "Because Roland says he handed such books, and if they are not returned immediately I must pay for them". Letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 26 -28.

<sup>44</sup> We believe that this is a work by Bocaccio, probably the *Decameron*, in handwritten version; according to the data presented is difficult to identify the author and work, which is the most expensive of the group,

*réis*, therefore the remaining would be charged to the Secretary. A quantitative analysis of the list allows the gathering of important data for the History of the Book, in particular as regards to selling prices of foreign works.

**TABLE 2: List of Books presented by Rolland to the Censorship Board**

Nº	Author/ Work	Vols. Work	Vols. total	Format	Price per title	Total Price
4	Dogenes Moderne	2	8	8	800	32.000
1	Contes de La Fontaine	2	2	8	12.000	12.000
1	Bocacce, Fig. Londres (m)	5	5	8	19.000	19.000
2	Filoshopie de La Nature	4	8	12	1.440	2.880
6	Belicaire de Marmontel	1	12	12	600	3.600
6	Letres Persanes	2	12	12	720	4.320
4	Questions sur Le Enciclopedie	9	36	8	7.200	2.8800
3	Antiquite de voile	3	9	12	1.800	5.400
6	Histoire Philosophique des Andes	6	12	4	4.000	24.000
Total		34	104		47.560	132.000

SOURCE: BPE, Codex, CXXVIII 1-10, fl. 26- 28.

We must take into account the statement of Alexander Ferreira about Rolland was exaggerating the price of each work, because according to the market prices the list should have been valued only at 89,800 *réis*. In any case, a library with 9 foreign works, and 34 volumes was not within the reach of many purses, especially if the works had figures, such as the fables of *La Fontaine* that the letter states are printed. In his letter Rolland asks if the Bishop has the books in his possession<sup>45</sup>.

The question refers to the Board organization and its activity of censorship of works, confiscation by Customs and also the sale of books, which often duplicates they were bought by booksellers or even by paper shops. Consequently, it follows from the correspondence that the Board sold many books, especially the duplicate ones and that there was no rigorous accounting of books released, not even of those taken from the Board as the Bishop Cenáculo used to do. Note the following passage:

The Archbishop added that Father Tomás had told him that His Excellency frequently took books, and that when he left he sent some Copies; I replied that it had not been some copies but three cars and some men loaded. The Archbishop replied: I asked

certainly because of the figures.

<sup>45</sup> Letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 26-28.

Father Tomás if there was a list of the books taken and returned, and he told me no; and it was bad procedure having Books taken without making a note so that when they were returned, you could check if some were missing. I replied: did not the Lord Bishop of Beja expect that people would have a low opinion of him and might suspect he had unduly kept something. He swallowed hard and told me: there is also news that some have been sold. I answered that is certain; and the money? He asked me! I will deliver it; I said again. I sold many of the duplicate books used the money and now I will pay them. He continued it was very bad that these things were not noted. I replied: I can see many things that have not been noted<sup>46</sup>.

Thus, even the Secretary confirms the badly regulated procedures in taking books away and in returning them and he himself sold many books. Even so, the charges against the Secretary disappear after a few months until the end of September, and he kept his job then. Nevertheless, in October he was accused, arrested on the second of that month and released around the 27<sup>th</sup>; he tried to flee on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, but was captured in Mértola and taken back to jail. He left to serve his sentence 30 leagues from Lisbon, choosing the Rabaçal village, where he arrived on 19<sup>th</sup> November<sup>47</sup>.

The description he makes in his letters to Cenáculo about the judicial process against him shows larger deviations of books. It involved the funds from Jesuit libraries, largely transferred to the Censorship Board, which would be the core to create the library of the Board planned by Cenáculo and later moved to the Royal Public Library in 1797. Regarding these Jesuit books, Alexandre Manuel conveys the idea that they had little value and that in fact there were not so many as people had said or thought:

It was evident and certain that the total of books from Portuguese Jesuits Bookstores submitted to the Board were not worth thirty thousand *cruzados*, and that no Book Merchant would pay 20,000 *cruzados* for all of them. In order to prove this point I argued with the example of Livraria de Coimbra, which is the most complete and remarkable amongst the Portuguese Jesuits. Deputies Friar Joaquim and Xavier and examined its contents and they did not finding a single Portuguese history book, nor Portuguese poetry, nor a Prosody, nor any Book of theology, or Beautiful modern Letters; but only old books on theology, etc. Therefore, they requested the Board to exempt them from examining more Jesuit Bookstores<sup>48</sup>.

Other books were also subjected to a closer scrutiny given the natural curiosity they caused in the learned public. We refer to the banned books that the Board confiscated at the customs and were subsequently sold in secrecy. The words of Alexander Manuel demonstrate this point:

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<sup>46</sup> Letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> of Jun 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> of November 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 75.

<sup>48</sup> Letter dated 3<sup>th</sup> of November 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-10, *op. cit.*, fl.69-70. The *cruzado* (cross) was old Portuguese currency equivalent to 400 *réis*.

Talking again about banned books, and books sold replied: I have no doubt that banned books from the Board have been sold, and also others I don't know of. Because it is true and there can be no doubt that about three years ago a man who has paper and bookstore in Casa do Rubi near Arsenal, told Father Bernardo de Couto, who is Chaplain at St. Anthony, that an officer of the Censorship Board had handed him a bag of books to sell. Upon examination of the books, he (José) had found out that all were banned books and for this reason he had returned them. He added that I was an eye-witness to the fact that at that store there were some books that had certainly been extracted from the Censorship Board, and that I had told the same José to tell, whoever had handed him the books to sell, that after seeing the books I had said they had been stolen from the Board. Moreover, the matter should be investigated because it was not fair that I should be accused of what another person had done<sup>49</sup>.

The exile of Alexandre Manuel in the village of Rabaçal lasted six months and coincided with the beginning of the third phase of his correspondence with the Bishop of Beja. The letters are full of "micro-history" already mentioned, with a vivid description of his financial difficulties, always hoping for and often receiving some monetary donation from Cenáculo, and descriptions of his ailments that advancing age was naturally accentuating as well. When he had bladder problems in Lisbon, he reached to the point of frequently having to resort to the surgeon. This and other problems worsened in Rabaçal. Hence, these letters explain to us how people lived with their ailments and how they felt helpless and alone, how they finally lived with the pain, and how medicine often aggravated the problems<sup>50</sup>.

The letters he later wrote in his farm in Ameixoeira, near Lisbon, convey his family and home style. The many debts he contracted and the payment of penalties imposed brings the expected effect: the lenders asking for the forfeiture of all his assets<sup>51</sup>, and therefore the requests for increasing support. A careful reading of the letters raises the suspicion of some blackmail on the part of Alexander Manuel. In fact in one of them, he mentions that he is sending a list: "I do not send your Excellency this list and this letter, as someone who claims a debt; but rather as someone who begs a charity"<sup>52</sup>. Some months later Cenáculo donation arrives: "Thursday 17 of this month I received twenty eight coins from the most Revered General Counsellor, for which I kiss Your Excellency's feet as a demonstration of my gratitude<sup>53</sup>". This would not be the last because others followed, given that in addition to the confiscation of furniture, Alexandre Manuel was threatened

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<sup>49</sup> Letter dated 3<sup>th</sup> of November 1777, BPE, Codex, CXXVIII/ 1-10, *op. cit.*, fl. 69.

<sup>50</sup> Letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1777, BPE, Cod. CXXVIII/1-10, fl. 77.

<sup>51</sup> «During the seizure they took even dirty washing; they did not leave a single chair for my wife. They took the only mattress off her bed leaving her only the straw under mattress: Here you can learn what these gentlemen did; they left nothing but clothes and lady's dresses». Letter dated 23<sup>th</sup> of March 1778, BPE, Cód. CXXVIII/1-10, *Ibidem*, fl. 99.

<sup>52</sup> Letter dated 23<sup>th</sup> of March 1778, Cód. CXXVIII 1-10, *Ibidem*, fl. 82 e 83.

<sup>53</sup> Letter dated 22<sup>th</sup> of September 1778, BPE, Cód. CXXVIII/ 1-10, *Ibidem*, fl. 86 - 87.



with the legal seizure of his farm, which would later be switched to payment of an amount corresponding to six months of income<sup>54</sup>.

All these difficulties added to a description of curious facts and gossip that populations enjoyed giving these documents an added historic value. In addition to the debts and mercilessness of the confiscators, who went as far as taking the doors of the farm, they report the superstitions that population engaged in. For example, one of the letters describes in detail how a monk used to deceive people by saying that the sister was possessed by the devil, with whom he pretended to talk in front of unbelievers<sup>55</sup>.

### 3. Final remarks

The analysis of the two correspondents of D. Manuel do Cenáculo is an example of the historical potential of such sources. The lack of studies in this field has been mentioned<sup>56</sup>. Trans-disciplinary studies, which combine the contributions of several scientific fields including history, literature, pedagogy and information science are also missing. We stress the importance of correspondence and postal services as a means of information and communication in pre-industrial societies, where the news and information developed in spatial and temporal levels quite different from ours. In this context, the post office and the letters were undoubtedly one of the most important means for people to ensure the communication.

The analysis we have done on these two epistolary funds reinforces these ideas. Firstly, the fact that information is important in the lives of men in the societies at the beginning of the contemporary era is often underestimated by historiography. Secondly, it is necessary to make studies of trans-disciplinary nature for a better understanding of the sources.

For historical knowledge, we note that, based on the testimonies of secondary figures and characterized by a subjective discourse which is a feature micro-history, it is always easiest to understand the contexts where the "major events" arose, how they were experienced by contemporaries and what role men played in them<sup>57</sup>. Conversely, at

<sup>54</sup> "I pray for your Excellency's life and health and for the life and health of Mylady Dona Antónia and for the sacred death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And beg your mercy and charity to send me these twenty coins as soon as it is possible, because I have orders to pay the said amount of 91,160 until the 15th of February with pledge of seizure". Letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1780, BPE, Cód. CXXVIII/1-10, *Ibidem*, fl. 98-99.

<sup>55</sup> Letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> of Jun 1779, BPE, Codex, 1-10, fl CXXVIII/1-10, *Ibidem*, fl. 90.

<sup>56</sup> Monteiro, Nuno Gonçalo, *Meu Pai e meu Senhor muito do meu coração. Correspondência do conde de Assumar para seu pai, o Marquês de Alorna*, Lisboa, Quetzal Editores, 2000, pp. 9-22.

<sup>57</sup> About the scale of historical analysis and the possibility of microanalysis for understanding the social and political contexts, see Lepetit, Bernard, "Sobre a escala na História", in Revel, Jacques, *Jogos de Escala...* *op. cit.*, p. 100; and Marques, Oliveira, "História genealógica do homem comum: micro-história ou macro-história?", *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História*, III série, vol. 4 (2003), pp. 173-186.

a time when photography was unknown, realism fulfils the role of image and brings us the witness of attitudes, behaviours and ideas that are usually absent from official sources and books. In this sense, the letters become an important source for the study of everyday life, domestic environments and existential difficulties.