

## Was Queen Catherine of Braganza a collector? Collecting, displaying, consuming in Bemposta, Lisbon

Susana FLOR

*Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal*

**ABSTRACT:** Catherine of Braganza (1638–1705), Infanta of the Portuguese royal house and Queen of England, had her last will drafted in 1699 at the palace of the Counts of Soure in the heart of Bairro Alto, central Lisbon. Six years later, Queen Catherine passed away at her palace at Bemposta, where the will and an attached document titled “General Provisions” were opened. Less than a month later, the “Inventory Deed of the Assets left by the Queen’s death” was drawn up, with the judge magistrate Bartolomeu de Sousa Mexia and the scribe João de Campos de Andrade presiding. Building upon this extensive documentation, which includes the description of the Bemposta Palace, we will endeavor to respond to the question posed in the title, with some background points. Firstly, the collecting tradition of the House of Braganza; secondly, the separation of the assets of the House of Braganza and those of the royal crown (1646); thirdly, the devastating 1755 earthquake.

**KEYWORDS:** collecting, displaying, consuming, Braganza, Baroque.

**¿Era la Reina Catalina de Braganza una coleccionista? Coleccionismo, despliegue, consumo en Bemposta, Lisboa**

**RESUMEN:** Catarina de Bragança (1638–1705), Infanta de la Casa Real Portuguesa y Reina de Inglaterra, hizo redactar su último testamento en 1699 en el Palacio de los Condes de Soure en el corazón del Bairro Alto, en Lisboa central. Seis años después, la Reina Catarina falleció en su Palacio en Bemposta, donde se abrió el testamento y un documento adjunto titulado «Disposiciones Generales». Menos de un mes después, se elaboró la «Escritura de Inventario de los Bienes dejados por la muerte de la Reina», siendo el Juez el Magistrado Bartolomeu de Sousa Mexia y el escribano João de Campos de Andrade. Basándonos en esta extensa documentación, que incluye la descripción del Palacio de Bemposta, nos esforzaremos por responder a la pregunta planteada en el título, con algunos puntos de fondo. En primer lugar, la tradición coleccionista de la Casa de Bragança; en segundo lugar, la separación entre los bienes de la Casa de Bragança y los de la Corona Real (1646); en tercer lu-

**D. Catherine of Braganza era coleccionadora? Coleccionismo, exibição e consumo no Palácio da Bemposta, Lisboa**

**RESUMO:** Catarina de Bragança (1638–1705), Infanta da Casa Real Portuguesa e Rainha de Inglaterra, mandou redigir o seu último testamento em 1699 no Palácio dos Condes de Soure em pleno Bairro Alto, centro de Lisboa. Seis anos depois, a Rainha Catarina falecia no seu Palácio à Bemposta, no qual foram abertos o testamento e um documento anexo intitulado «Disposições Gerais.» Menos de um mês depois era feito o «Auto do inventário dos bens que ficaram por morte da Rainha», sendo Juiz o Desembargador Bartolomeu de Sousa Mexia e o escrivão João de Campos de Andrade. Partindo desta extensa documentação, na qual encontramos a descrição do Paço da Bemposta, iremos ensaiar uma resposta à questão colocada no título, tendo como pano de fundo alguns pontos. Primeiro, a tradição coleccionista da Dinastia dos Bragança; segundo a separação entre os bens da Casa de Bragança e os bens da Coroa Real (1646);

gar, el devastador terremoto de 1755 para la Historia de Portugal.

PALABRAS CLAVE: coleccionar, exhibir, consumir, Braganza, Barroco.

terceiro o terramoto de 1755, devastador para a História de Portugal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: colecionismo, exibição, consumo, Bragança, Barroco.

## 1. Introduction

Catherine of Braganza (1638–1705), Infanta of the Portuguese royal house and Queen of England, had her last will drafted in 1699 at the Palace of the Counts of Soure in the heart of Bairro Alto, central Lisbon. Six years later, Queen Catherine passed away at her palace at Bemposta, where the will and an attached document titled “General Provisions” were opened. Less than a month later, the “Inventory Deed of the Assets left by the Queen’s death” (Rau, 1947) was drawn up, with the Judge being the Magistrate Bartolomeu de Sousa Mexia and the scribe João de Campos de Andrade. Building upon this extensive documentation, which includes the description of the Bemposta Palace, this article aims to analyze the extent to which Catherine of Braganza can be considered a collector, paying attention to some background points. Firstly, the collecting tradition of the House of Braganza; secondly, the separation between the assets of the House of Braganza and those of the Royal Crown (1646); thirdly, the devastating 1755 earthquake for the History of Portugal. The queen’s own words are not elucidative in clarifying concepts such as “collecting,” “displaying,” “consuming,” when referring to her heritage; she only indicates “the manner in which I want everything currently used for the ornamentation of the Palace and for the service of my Chapel to be disposed of.”<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Early life and the collecting tradition of the House of Braganza

Catherine of Braganza (fig. 1 on page 54)<sup>2</sup> was born in 1638 at the Vila Viçosa Palace in Portugal’s Alentejo province, which had been the residence of the Dukes of Braganza since the fifteenth century (Teixeira 1980; Serrão 2015). She was the daughter of the eighth Duke of Braganza João and his Spanish wife Luísa Maria Francisca de Guzmán y Sandoval, of the House of Medina Sidónia, grandees of Spain. Beyond the building, few images remain of the interior decoration of the palace: the paintings

<sup>1</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>2</sup> The publication of all images in this article is authorized by the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa.

in the monumental staircase depict the Battle of Azamor (North Africa), in which Jaime participated as the fourth Duke of Braganza (Cunha 2000).<sup>3</sup> The Music Library Rooms (figs. 2 and 3 on page 55 and on page 57), decorated at the request of the eighth duke, father of Catherine, before his marriage to Duchess Luísa de Gusmão in 1632, can also be visited. It is impossible to trace the fabulous riches present in the ducal palace and recorded in the inventory of Teodósio I, fifth Duke of Braganza (Hallet, Senos 2018), in 1564, with any security. Throughout his life, Teodósio gathered a vast array of pieces that constituted an enviable collection, only comparable to Portuguese royal collections at the time. Within his collection, one would have found an extensive library with specimens printed in Venice, Antwerp, and Paris, Flemish tapestries, furniture crafted from Asian woods, jewels encrusted in fine jewelry pieces, paintings by Portuguese, Flemish, and Italian masters, as well as exogenous *naturalia* worthy of contemplation in the most sophisticated *Kunstkammern* of sixteenth century Europe.

When Catherine was just two years old, a political event transformed her parents' peaceful life and her own, as a consequence. The Duke of Braganza assumed the leadership of the political campaign to claim independence for Portugal from the rule of the Spanish king, Philip IV. João was made King of Portugal and became João IV, the first of the Braganza Dynasty, which put an end to the Union of the Crowns of Spain and Portugal (1580–1640). By January 1641, the whole family had taken up residence in Lisbon in the Paço da Ribeira. However, it was only after six years that the King requested from the Royal Board of the House of Braganza the assets that had remained. Indeed, the fear of Spanish invasions across the Alentejo border led to the transfer of the library of Infante Duarte, fifth Duke of Guimarães (Bouza Alvarez 2003) (instruments, drawings, and portraits), offices, chests, panels, Talavera porcelain, two glass houses, Indian jars, and some furniture. The ducal weapons were kept at Vila Viçosa to better protect Alentejo, now most incorporated into an existing collection at the local castle (Flor 2018).

The rise of the House of Braganza to the throne of Portugal and the sixty years of Spanish occupation brought a sense of carefulness to the governance of King João IV. It is in this context that we see the king adopting a series of protective measures for the ducal house and the heritage of his descendants, ensuring financial independence in case

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of the House of Braganza, see Cunha 2000.

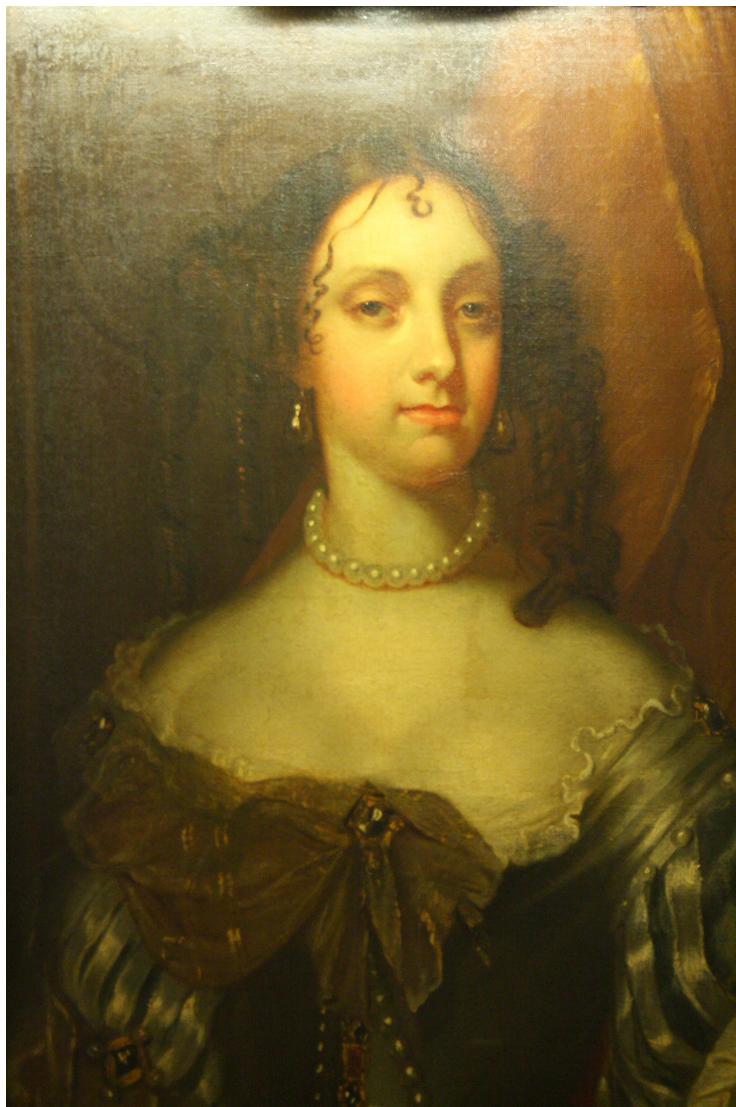


FIGURE 1: Jacob Huysman (atr.) Portrait of Queen Catherine of Braganza Oil on canvas c.<sup>a</sup> 1665 Col. Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa © Author



of any new political upheaval. The first measure was implemented in 1645 when the king separated the crown's assets from those of the House of Braganza, donating the latter to his eldest son, Teodósio, and appointing him Prince of Brazil and Duke of Braganza. From that date onwards, all presumptive heirs to the throne were Dukes of the House of Braganza. The second measure was to secure the financial situation of the Infantes considering the family tragedies suffered, namely the deaths of the heir Prince Teodósio and Infanta Joana in 1653. Infante Pedro received the House of Infantado (which contained the assets of the Portuguese who chose to stay in Spain in service to Philip IV) (Lourenço 1995). Catherine of Braganza received the Island of Madeira, the city of Lamego, and the town of Moura (Sousa 1739).



FIGURE 2: Bernardino della Aqua (atrib.), c<sup>a</sup> 1635 Ceiling of Sacred Music Room © J.Real Andrade / MBCB, Arquivo Fotográfico

To solidify the separation between the ducal house and the Portuguese royal house, many of the assets that went to Lisbon were kept in the palace of the Dukes of Braganza rather than the royal palace of Ribeira. The palace of the Dukes of Braganza in Lisbon was situ-

ated within the ancient wall built in the fourteenth century near Saint Catherine's Gate. This residence was built thanks to a donation made by the Constable of the Kingdom, Nuno Álvares Pereira, to his grandson Afonso, fourth Count of Ourém. It was rebuilt by the fourth duke, Jaime, in the late 1520s. The palace was divided into several apartments with double-arched windows and the garden faced south. In the 1540s, the fifth Duke did construction there, putting up a building with a façade of eleven windows facing the Tagus River and organized into two distinct courtyards. Like the palace at Vila Viçosa, it likely had a multipurpose reception room, an antechamber, chamber, and wardrobe. We know it had a new kitchen with a large chimney, a library lined with maple adjacent to the tower where the duke conducted business, a painted oratory, and two houses, one used to store porcelain (pots and glasses) and the other as an oratory. In the eighteenth century, during the reign of João V, it underwent massive works, and this king added the so-called treasury house (containing rare and valued pieces) and ordered the reformulation of the Braganza House office by Lieutenant Manuel da Maia. This renovation may have been justified by the need for more space to store the collections of a member of the House of Braganza, since João V was the principal heir of his aunt Catherine, as duke of the House of Braganza.

The year of his death in 1750, João V left both the palace in Lisbon and the palace of the Dukes of Braganza filled with one of the finest European collections. Unfortunately, everything succumbed to the Lisbon earthquake, not only at the Ribeira Palace (loss of the royal collections, customs archives, and House of India) but also at the palace of the Dukes of Braganza, located a little further up where Rua do Alecrim is today (fig. 4). The destruction of the treasury and its rare and valuable pieces as well as of the house of Braganza continues to stand in the way of those interested in reconstructing the history of Early Modern collecting.

### **3. Royal wedding between Catherine of Braganza and Charles II (1662) and her return to Portugal (1693)**

On June 23, 1661, Francisco de Mello e Torres (c. 1610–1667), future Marquis of Sande, signed in London the Whitehall Treaty on behalf of the Portuguese crown. The signing of this peace and trade alliance proved to be an important turning point in the political role that Por-



FIGURE 3: Bernardino della Aqua (atr.) c<sup>a</sup> 1635 Ceiling of Secular Music Room © J.Real Andrade / MBCB, Arquivo Fotográfico



FIGURE 4: Gabriel del Barco, detail of a tile panel depicting the Palace of the Dukes of Braganza in Lisbon, 1698–1699. National Museum of Azulejo, Inv. No. 1.

tugal played in Europe after gaining its sovereignty from Spain. The union between Catherine of Braganza and Charles II (1630–1685) is widely interpreted as a pivotal diplomatic achievement of the House of Braganza in the post-Restoration context (Flor 2012).

In May 1661, Charles II's decision to marry Catherine of Braganza was met in Portugal with enormous relief. As soon as the news of their engagement had been announced, the Portuguese crown started the preparations for the wedding festivities and the queen's departure. To this day, the inventory and assets that the queen took to England remain unknown, with a few exceptions, such as the crystal salt cellar gifted to the city of Portsmouth (Oman, 1947). We only know that the dowry payment was made with the delivery of the cities of Bombay and Tangier, money, and sugar resulting from the sale of jewels evaluated by a jeweler sent by Charles II (Flor 2012). It is also not true that Catherine took a shipment of tea chests to London, much less so that those chests contained the inscription TEA, supposedly acronym for the Portuguese words *transporte de ervas aromáticas* (transport of aromatic herbs). We will return to this topic later.<sup>4</sup>

Catherine of Braganza remained in England for approximately three decades, during which she experienced considerable difficulties in the early stages of her integration –challenges not uncommon among foreign consorts. Over time, she gradually adjusted to the heightened visibility of the English court and to the unconventional disposition of Charles II. Although her failure to produce an heir posed a significant dynastic limitation, her position at court was largely maintained through the conditional support of the monarch, who not only confirmed his brother James (II) as his legitimate successor but also intervened to safeguard her during the political and religious turbulence of the Popish Plot (Hutton 1991).

In 1693, Catherine returned to Lisbon after an absence of about thirty years, seven of which (1685–1692) were filled with her constant pleading to her brother, King Pedro II (1648–1706) to return to her homeland. As frequently emphasized by authors who have studied the figure of Catherine, the political situation in England, the persecutions of Catholics, and the fact that she was a queen dowager rather than a queen mother were factors pressuring her to return to Portugal. Moreover, this

<sup>4</sup> According to the researcher Marcos Neves, the emergence of the expression “tea” (as gossip) is first recorded in an Italian blog about Lisbon in January 2012 (2024). This demonstrates that there is nonsense circulating about the history of tea and Queen Catherine. Even today there are ridiculous inventions like this one said and spread by local guides.



point had been foreseen by the 1661 Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, and, since she left no heirs, the emotional process surrounding her return became easier. She was accompanied by a retinue of 109 English and Portuguese servants, 24 coach horses and 20 saddle horses (Troni 2008, Casimiro 1956, Rau 1941).

In the last thirteen years of her life, Catherine dwelt in Lisbon in several palaces, much to the surprise of the general population: the palace of the Royal Estate of Alcântara (1693), the palace of the lords of Gouveia and Riba-Tâmega (1693– circa 1697), the Ribeira Palace, the palace of Corte-Real (around 1699), the palace of the counts of Soure (1699–1700), the palace of Vila Viçosa (1701), and the palace of the counts of Aveiras (1701).

In the early eighteenth century, Catherine of Braganza was already living in what was to be her final residence: the new Bemposta Palace in the parish of the Angels, northeast Lisbon (Nossa Senhora dos Anjos) because she had been entrusted with managing the household of the deceased queen of Portugal, Maria Sophia of Neuburg (1666–1699) (Flor 2022). This is an important point for understanding the new building's origins since it was constructed to benefit Queen Catherine of Braganza's new status. The site chosen was a sunny part of the city, with pleasant winds and an unhindered landscape. An estate that had belonged to the kingdom's chief treasurer was acquired to build the new royal palace, along with 25 small properties for the construction of a closed complex that became known as Bemposta. The year that passed between the decision to build a new palace at Bemposta and the Queen's definitive move to this residence was spent on the purchase of Luís Pereira de Barros's Quinta (1699) and 25 other properties on the Bemposta site, the old Saint Bonaventura's Street between the Campo da Forca and Campo do Curral quarters. Manor houses, small houses with haylofts, workshops, olive oil mills, vegetable gardens, ponds, wells and norias, drying areas, etc. were all acquired at a truly remarkable pace by both Queen Catherine and Pedro II through the judge Bartolomeu de Sousa Mexia.

In January 1701, the royal architect João Antunes oversaw the construction of the new structures and the renovation of the existing buildings (Coutinho 2014). In fact, the speed of building was made possible only by using existing edifices and combining them with new construction, which allowed the queen to move in after little more than a year.

The whole estate acquired by the Queen of England was composed



of houses with one main floor that included seventeen rooms, the most important of which were one irregularly-shaped room, a bedchamber, an antechamber, an oratory, and some smaller rooms. The lower floor included the room where deeds were kept (the office) and the stables. There was also a tower and a royal chapel (Rau 1947, 5–6 and 21–22), the design of which included Baroque decoration such as gilded wood, marble inlays, and jasper figures designed by João Antunes and sculpted by the Italian Carlo Battista Garvo (active 1672–1725). The estate and its gardens would also be a space of great artistic interest with fountains, garden water tanks, iron gates, and stone pillars, hermitages, altars with scenes from the Passion and tiled fronts. A half-moon dovecote was also covered with tiles, as well as the garden walls, which were covered with tiles depicting landscapes (*payses*).

Catherine of Braganza would have invested an enormous amount of money to cover the expenses of the acquisition of the land and the respective deeds and the work, including craftsmen's materials and wages. Unfortunately, the entire building was severely damaged by the earthquake, but even now we can admire part of it, which today belongs to the Military Academy.

#### 4. Was Queen Catherine of Braganza a collector?

To begin addressing this question, we must first examine the vast inventory of movable and immovable assets. In this palace complex at Bemposta, thousands of pieces were gathered. Indeed, according to the inventory published by the historian Virgínia Rau, based on a copy existing in the library of the 1st Duke of Cadaval, we know that on 1 January 1706, Peter II ordered the “Auto do Inventário dos Bens Móveis que ficaram por morte da Sereníssima Rainha de Inglaterra”<sup>5</sup> (*Inventory of Movable Goods remaining upon the death of the Most Serene Queen of England*) (Rau 1947). The list was divided into 29 items.

1. *Joyas e brincos que se vão entregando a Francisco Ferreira Nobre Guarda jóias da Casa de Bragança*

Jewels and earrings entrusted to Francisco Ferreira Nobre, Keeper of the Jewels of the House of Braganza.

<sup>5</sup> See Lisboa, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Ms. 51-VI-27, Contas de negócios pertencentes ao serviço da Rainha D. Catarina de Bragança 1694–1706, ff. 164–249.

See Vila Viçosa, Museu-Biblioteca/ Arquivo Histórico da Fundação da Casa de Bragança, MS. NG 23. Decretos da Casa de Bragança, ducado de Beja e de Vila Real, ff. 15r-16r.

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13. *Ornamentos Pretos*  
Black ornaments.
14. *Almofadinhas dos Altares*  
Altar cushions.
15. *Roupa Branca*  
White clothing.
16. *Livros e mais couzas pertencentes ao Coro*  
Books and other items belonging to the choir.
17. *Cortinados*  
Curtains.
18. *Mais peças do serviço da Capela*  
More items from the Chapel set.
19. *Peças que estão em poder do ditto Thezoureiro da Capella e são da Ermida de S. João Evangelista*  
Items in the possession of the aforementioned Chapel Treasurer, belonging to the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist.
20. *Paços Reaes, propriedades e mais couzas que ficao entregues ao Almoxarife Andre Mendes de Almeyda*  
Royal palaces, properties, and other items entrusted to the Steward André Mendes de Almeyda.
21. *Couzas pertencentes à Caza das Obras*  
Items that belonged to the Works House.
22. *Peças que ficao no Paço entregues ao dito Almoxarife André Mendes de Almeyda*  
Pieces remaining in the palace entrusted to the aforementioned Steward, André Mendes de Almeyda.
23. *Brincos*  
Earrings. [Earrings would be synonymous with any adornment or jewelry, in the shape of a rose perhaps, or brooch or breastpin, or any gemstone used to adorn the chest.]

24. *Louça da Índia*  
Indian China.
25. *Fatto (a Roupá, vestidos & moveis portáteis do nosso uso*  
Attire (clothing, dresses, and furnishings for our use.)
26. *Carruagens e mais couzas pertencentes às Cavalherices*  
Carriages and other items belonging to the stables.
27. *Couzas da cozinha e ucharia*  
Kitchen and pantry items.
28. *Peças que ficarão nos ditos Passos por se não poderem acomodar no Paço do Duque nem terem serventia no Paço*  
Pieces that will remain in the aforementioned locations [Bemposta] since they cannot be accommodated at the Duke's Palace [Braganza] or are not useful in the royal palace.
29. *Na Ocharia*  
In the pantry.

Upon careful examination of the inventory, we face several problems: i) the issue of vocabulary in some of the items: for example, the word *brincos* can be translated as both “earrings” and “adornment,” including travel bags with bottles, chests, watches, rosaries, and the golden dressing table; ii) items in the inventory were listed according to the materials and not the rooms they were in, except for those in the chapel; iii) lack of information about the queen's daily life and her experiences at the palace; and, lastly, iv) there are only written descriptions as we have seen and no images from the period that reveal the inside of the Bemposta. In 1703, the ambassadors of Carlos III and the Admiral of Castile were received at Bemposta, but we have no record of any detailed descriptions of the inside of the palace, only of the protocol for their reception by the Queen of England (Saldanha and Radulet 1990, 157).

#### 4.1. Collecting

Catherine of Braganza was very religious and enjoyed collecting objects related to divine worship. While in England, she received a miniature of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre made of wood and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, one of the few surviving objects from the earthquake because

it had been kept at Bemposta Palace (fig. 5). Additionally, there are 17 rosaries made of various shapes and exotic materials such as agalloch (*calambuco*), agarwood (*pau de águila*), crystals, pearls from Jaffa, and diamonds, among other things. She also owned a processional cross and reliquary made of narwhale tusk and mounted with a silver crucifix which was thought to contain a piece of Saint Thomas Becket's staff (fig. 6 on page 66) (Pinto 1956) and owned a copy of the Holy Shroud.

At Bemposta Palace, she kept one richly decorated oratory, but her true love was the chapel, a baroque space adorned with paintings, tiles, gilt and carved woodwork, as well as sumptuous vestments for all seasons marked in the liturgical year: white, green, purple, black – a true example of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. However, the chapel was also a special place where the public gathered to attend religious services and enjoy one of the Queen Dowager's greatest pleasures: Latin sacred music (Lourenço 1999, Troni 2008). The Bemposta Chapel employed around 20 chaplains for the choir and who sung mass for a payment of 80,000 reis each, as well as musicians playing the harp, violin, guitar, and organ. The chapel consecrated to Our Lady of Conception of Bemposta was more than a religious space: it was a symbol of luxury and authority.



FIGURE 5: Anónimo, c<sup>a</sup> 1675. Miniature of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, with the coat of arms of Catherine of Bragança, second half of the 17th century, from the Palaces of Bemposta and Necessidades, sent to the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa in July 1916. © Fundação da Casa de Bragança



To carry out this inventory, the judge relied on the expertise of four goldsmiths and gemstone appraisers from the *Casa da Índia*: Manuel Nunes, Manuel Leal, Manuel Pereira da Silva, and António Martins de Almeida, both gold and silversmiths. The presence of these officials was deemed necessary to take stock of the first item on the list: jewels and earrings.

After the Queen's death, the goldsmiths who assessed the jewelry and gemstones declared their value to be 42,123 cruzados and 330 reis. From among the numerous rubies, aquamarines, sapphires, emeralds, topazes, garnets, amethysts, and turquoises, what stands out the most are the pearls. Fourteen pear-shaped pearl earrings, various loose pearls from Jaffa, and a pearl necklace gifted by her mother Queen Luísa de Gusmão. Although portraits show the use of jewels sewn onto her dresses, what is most prominent is the regular wearing of pearls, a personal preference of the queen's. Some historians have referred the use of pearls as a subtle declaration of her Catholic faith, as they, being rare and valuable, served as metaphors for biblical texts. Pearls were also attributes of Saint Margaret, protector of childbirth, and Catholics associated them with the Virgin Mary, given the chastity associated with them (Bell 2008).

From the above, we can assert that the queen was a great promoter of her faith, as most of her portraits depict her adorned with these jewels, which she possessed in large quantities, as evidenced by the accounts from the 1660s (some gifts from King Charles II himself), as well as by the inventory attached to the will. What we would like to highlight, however, is not so much the personal jewelry – such as pearl necklaces, pearl earrings, rings, bracelets, gold buttons, and watches – but rather the objects made from precious materials, including hardstones (such as jasper, ebony, lapis lazuli, ivory) and metals, whether in their natural form or mounted in more elaborate compositions. Examples of such objects include coffers, small caskets, snuffboxes, perfume flasks, and picture frames.

Additionally, there are pieces composed entirely of filigree or adorned with filigree decoration.<sup>6</sup> The application of filigree – whether in gold, silver, or parcel-gilt silver – attests to the meticulous care devoted to these objects, driven either by collecting sensibilities or by beliefs in their therapeutic virtues. Among the most illustrative examples are holy water fonts, bezoar stones, *cordeal* stones, and unicorn horn tips,

<sup>6</sup> At this stage, we are also taking into account the objects listed under the category white silver, which includes pieces crafted in silver filigree.

often embellished with inset gemstones, including rose diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, amethysts, topazes, and turquoises, as recorded throughout the inventory (Rau, 1947).



FIGURE 6: Processional Cross of D. Catarina with relic of St. Thomas Becket, 1664. Originating from the Palaces of Bemposta and Necessidades. Sent to the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa in 1956. Fundação da Casa de Bragança

Although the entirety of this collection was lost in the 1755 earthquake, one may reasonably speculate that certain parallels could be drawn with the *Dauphin's Treasure*, now housed at the Prado Museum, particularly when considering the period and its shared Catholic framework.<sup>7</sup> As Letizia Arbeteta Mira observes, “the collection popularly known as the ‘Dolphin’s Treasure,’ or, according to older inventories, the ‘Jewels of the Dauphin,’ is a group of precious vessels that came from the immensely rich collection of Louis, Grand Dauphin of France, and arrived in Spain as part of the inheritance of his son Philip, the first king of the Spanish Bourbon line, who reigned under the name Philip V” (Arbeteta, n.d.).

Another point worth emphasizing is the presence of 15 Indian fans (Rau 1947, 46), which appears to serve as an indicator of collecting practices and the Portuguese cultural links with India. This observation stems from the fact that these items were not listed among garments but were instead included under “jewels

<sup>7</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Hugo Miguel Crespo for this invaluable suggestion as well as for his insightful reflections in his area of expertise.

and earrings,” and from the documented existence of other fans commissioned in France (Flor 2012).<sup>8</sup>

In the collections of Queen Catherine of Braganza there were four incomplete tapestries, 22 religious paintings distributed throughout the chapel and oratory, eight portraits, and two panels depicting Somerset House Palace, figures that may not be large enough to consider her a collector. However, if we add the fact that the Queen of England tried to buy the Admiral of Castile’s painting collection from him (Delaforce, 2002, 31), which was in the end acquired by Carlos III of Spain, future Charles IV, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (Saldanha and Radulet 1990, 174), this idea that the queen was a collector must be treated with greater caution.

As to the geography of the listed items, the “French enameled jewels; black coral bead rosaries from India; loose rubies from Ceylon; forty-two *cordeal* stones (from Macau?); various wooden trunks from Brazil; a large silver platter bearing the arms of England; a silver teapot made in China; a dozen tablecloths from Flanders; a crucifix with a Roman-style base; cobra stones from Mombasa; two benches from Muscovy; a carpet... with a Rouen lining; white linen from Cambrai (Camerick); two altar cloths from Brittany; and three wooden sculptures from Genoa” (Rau 1947) are worth highlighting. This shows some of the importance of the East in Portugal and also Brazil in its trade as a global empire.

#### 4.2. *Display*

One of the most impressive pieces among the queen’s possessions was her gold toilet set, documented several times, either through descriptions by contemporary authors or through appraisals from the early eighteenth century. The first known remark regarding this toilet set came from the diarist John Evelyn (1620–1706), who was a figure close to the English royal household. Shortly after Queen Catherine’s arrival in England, Evelyn visited Hampton Court Palace, where the Portuguese staff had lived prior to the young kings’ triumphant entry into London (August 23, 1662). In her diary, Evelyn wrote that “other visitors recorded this marvelous piece of art, valued in the year of the Queen’s death at seven thousand five hundred forty-two mil reis and one hundred and ninety reis in gold value alone, with the caveat that the amount

<sup>8</sup> The Queen of England bequeathed all her personal belongings (clothing) to her attendants who had served her in England. The details of her stipulations regarding this estate remain unknown.

represents only the value of the pieces without craftsmanship, and that the dish and the pitcher are of gilded silver" (Bédoyère 1995, 128).

In the Queen's will, special attention was paid to the golden toilet set as well: "The manner in which I want everything that is currently used for the ornamentation and service of my Chapel, as well as my gold toilet service, and the jewels with which I am currently adorned, shall be disposed of, will be set forth in a paper signed by my own hand, which along with the said jewels and toilet service shall be found in a chest. I order that what I have prescribed there be fully complied with"<sup>9</sup> (Rau 1941, 327). This masterpiece had a black leather chest in which various golden pieces were stored, namely: two boxes for storing brushes; two boxes containing powder for wigs; two oval-shaped salvers on foot and an incised crown of England; one round-shaped salver on foot; two small square bottles for spraying perfumes; an open chest with a compartment on top for pinning breastpins; two containers for storing removable birthmarks; one round box; three round brushes with golden hilts; one square mirror with a frame adorned with two angels holding a crown in gold; one oval basin with an engraved border of leaves and an engraved crown in the center; one silver-gilt ewer; and one crystal mirror (Rau 1947).

We also know that the queen had a room called "the wardrobe" in her palace which in Portugal is a multi-purpose space adjacent to the bedroom, where several objects, paintings, and clothing were stored. However, in her will, the queen merely stated that the arrangements concerning the gold dressing table and the jewelry were to be kept in a safe, along with the described objects, but did not specify its exact location. While it could have been in the "wardrobe," the dressing table was not believed to be on display, since another toilet set, composed of fewer items and made of silver, is listed in the same inventory: a basin and an ewer; two toilet boxes; perfume bottles; a mirror; and a brush with a silver hilt,<sup>10</sup> likely the queen's regular dressing table. In Portuguese sources, we only hear of this set again in the accounts of the household of Queen Catherine of Braganza, where it is explicit that the

<sup>9</sup> Author's translation.

<sup>10</sup> "E hum toucador de prata que consta das peggas seguintes: hum prato óvado com seu jarro molduras gomadas, o jarro com tapadoura gonzada e remate em sima de tudo com armas talhadas. Duas caixas redondas iguaes com tapadouras com armas e as tapadouras sao gomadas. Dous pucarinhos com tapadouras armas e azas .... Mais hum espelho com remate de huma targe com coroa e por detraz huma argola e encosto de prata e huma escova com cabo de prata" (Rau 1947, 50).

gold dressing table was to be gifted to her nephew, the Prince of Brazil and future King João V (Flor 2022)<sup>11</sup>.

### 4.3. *Consuming at Bemposta*

As mentioned above, there are no contemporary accounts that describe the daily life of the Queen of England. This lack may be attributed to the policy of state secrets that Queen Catherine of Braganza chose to adopt in her final years. Although she assumed the regency in the absence of her brother (Lourenço 1995), Bemposta Palace was guarded from the traffic of the Carreira dos Cavalos, since the entrance to Rua da Bemposta was shut off by walls with gates (Ribeiro 1935; Rau 1947). Moreover, we know that when the claimant to the Spanish throne (the future Emperor Charles VI) landed in Lisbon in 1704 (Delaforce 2002, 31) and visited the queen, only he was permitted to enter the royal chamber. Both Portuguese and foreign nobles were made to wait in the outer chambers by the gatekeeper, João Carneiro Brum. This atmosphere of greater discretion, perhaps more due to the queen's health than her status as a widow, prevents us from reconstructing with greater detail her habits, particularly concerning her tea consumption.

Portugal had known about tea at least since the second half of the sixteenth century, as confirmed by Dominican and Jesuit accounts. However, the first reference that has so far been found among the customs records is from 1661, when a shipment was sent from the general customs to the *Casa da Índia*. A few months later, Catherine of Braganza left for England and her dowry included only sugar. Tea was already traded in England and was highly appreciated for its medicinal properties (for treating colds and digestive problems). Charles II's household accounts list greater expenses from chocolate than from tea because the king believed in the former's benefits in terms of energy and vitality. In Portugal, tea was not present in the *agasalho* culture (the so-called welcome culture) from the second half of the sixteenth century until the late seventeenth century (Flor 2022b). In fact, Portuguese habits included herbal preparations and tisanes for colds, and fortified or perfumed waters for cooling the body, as reported by foreign visitors to Portugal.

The habit of tea drinking must have also been due to its attributed medical benefits. It made its way into the queen's everyday life due to

<sup>11</sup> See Vila Viçosa, Museu-Biblioteca/Arquivo Histórico da Fundação da Casa de Bragança, MS. NG 23. Decreto "sobre as carregações dos diamantes da Índia," de 29/01/1706 com escrito do Padre Manoel Pires, unnumbered folios. See Lisboa, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, MS. cx. 6530, Doc. 1611, Inventário dos Bens da Coroa, séc. XIX, fl. 9–10.



its medicinal properties, and it was regarded a virtuous beverage due to its supposed physical and spiritual benefits. Catherine of Braganza initiated the fashion of tea drinking, going on long walks after supper and seeking out quiet locations to commune with nature. She began this in the 1680s after the death of Charles II, a time of deep melancholy for her, according to her closest servants. American specialists have shown that Edmund Waller's poem dates from that period, not from the 1660s. Indeed, for many years it was believed that Waller's poem dated Queen Catherine's habit of drinking tea to the 1660s (Flore 2022b). The poet praises Catherine's habit, which had gone from being for medicinal purposes to displaying her virtue, as tea was thought able to cure melancholy and bring serenity to the soul.

Considering the topic of this paper, we might say with greater accuracy that Catherine of Braganza made drinking tea fashionable in England several years after her arrival and the habit of drinking tea for pure pleasure when she returned to Portugal in 1693. From the inventory, it is evident that she possessed an immense and complete set of Chinese porcelain: 378 teacups; 283 saucers of various shapes; six sugar bowls; six tea kettles, four of which were from China. Given the specificity of these descriptions, we can infer that we are dealing with porcelain from Jingdezhen, as well as Yixing ceramics,<sup>12</sup> including *blanc de Chine* pieces from the Dehua kilns,<sup>13</sup> featuring figurines, but also birds and animals in color and trompe-l'œil crabs, among others. The assorted quantity suggests not only the familial heritage of the House of Braganza but also the immense taste for consuming this new social beverage, along with chocolate, as the queen also owned a silver chocolate pot.

The inventory also provides information indicating that the most important pieces (likely collectible) of Indian porcelain (i.e. Chinese porcelain) were stored in lacquered Chinese boxes,<sup>14</sup> while the remaining items were kept "in two pine cabinets... each with two pieces and four doors [which] are not upholstered" (Rau 1947, 88). Based on the description, this appears to be a simpler piece of furniture, not only in design but also due to the use of pine wood (unlike other furniture described as being made from *charão*, rosewood, or walnut root), intended to store everyday Chinese porcelain. This aligns with Portuguese habits,

<sup>12</sup> "Chareira de barro vermelho da China" (Rau 1947, 85).

<sup>13</sup> "Louça branca da China" (Rau 1947, 85).

<sup>14</sup> "Caixa de palmo e meyo óvada acharoadada de vermelho, e em outra pequena alta a modo de vaso acharoadada de preto com rozas douradas, e fundo de porçolana" (Rau 1947, 85).

as evidenced by numerous archaeological excavations throughout Lisbon. At Bemposta Palace, silverware was considered the finest dining ware, which, unfortunately, it is not mentioned in any events the queen hosted during the last four years of her life at her place on the Hill of Santa Ana.

The furniture is listed under “*fatto*,” which corresponds to the storage of clothing, bedding, and textiles. However, the most significant items are catalogued under the heading “white silver,” where we find an array of objects including sconces, mirrors, tables, plaques, and the dressing table itself. The considerable number of these pieces suggests a penchant for collecting, a taste that was shared with the French court during the reign of Louis XIII (1601–1643) and regency of Anne of Austria (1601–1666) (Alcouffe et al. 2002), and also with her niece Mary II who collected chinoiserie (Lim 2024).

## 5. Conclusion

The tragedy of the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon and the destruction of the collections of the royal house and the Ducal House of Braganza prevent us from fully grasping the true extent of the collecting practices, variety, and wealth of the objects amassed by the Portuguese crown over the centuries. However, we have attempted to derive from an analysis of the extensive inventory of the Queen of England, that, indeed, the objects gathered by Queen Catherine of Braganza in her Bemposta Palace were indicative of a collecting tendency, particularly in the categories of “jewels and earrings” and “Indian porcelain,” where numerous tea sets stand out. As Hugo Crespo suggests, there exists a type of collecting that reveals a more feminine tone and perhaps more discreet taste, which should be emphasized: “yet one of the most important aspects resides in the way in which princely collecting is understood in Portuguese historiography. Only painting collections have received some kind of art historical research, while the decorative arts, deemed as mere furnishings, or simply utilitarian, and regardless of their obvious contemporary appreciation as works of art in themselves, to be treasured and collected not only for their material value but also for their superior craftsmanship and artistic merit” (Crespo 2019, 13).

The queen demonstrated a preference not only for fine arts but also for mechanical devices, considering the existence of eight clocks (three gold pocket watches, with miniature portraits, three clocks placed on

top of dressers (*bofete*) showing hours and quarters, a sundial, and a barometer called a *borometre* to forecast the weather). One can also see a predilection for the exotic that took on decorative or utilitarian forms and arts. Mention should be made of the 34 bezoar stones, two horns believed to be from unicorns, and several tortoise shell boxes, which show her taste for *naturalia* and the mysticism surrounding it. Also noteworthy is the presence of chests lined with coconut shell, Brazilian woods, amber, mother-of-pearl, ebony, crystal, and an ivory nativity scene. Finally, the list included the curtains made of Indian cloth, embroidered flower papers, and 15 Chinese fans.

With a particular leaning towards the rare and eclectic, this entire wide variety of objects was not stored and exhibited within a cabinet of curiosities. The very contents of Bemposta Palace may have reflected the idea of a global material culture for the decoration of her home, which in our opinion makes the figure under analysis a collector, but not in the traditional sense of classification. It was a feminine way of enjoying materiality and the exotic, more private and more guarded from public view, a typical characteristic of Portuguese culture. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why despite the extensive inventory of goods, the image left by Catherine of Braganza was not that of a great collector.

Contrary to what the text we have just written might suggest, the queen was not known for the wealth of her collection or her consumption habits. To illustrate this historical figure, we turn to the words of the well-known Jesuit Father António Vieira, who, from Brazil, praised her life as follows: "Yesterday, they [the soldiers] had a good afternoon because, coming to visit me at a country estate or 'wilderness,' where I am living in seclusion, a soldier from the fleet, solely out of curiosity to be able to testify in Lisbon that I am still alive, I asked him very privately about Her Majesty, and all the news I heard from him was always with tears in his eyes, and even more so when he told me that the Queen of England was the mother of poverty in Lisbon. Blessed be the soul of Your Majesty, who after the crown of this world devotes herself to securing the one in Heaven"<sup>15</sup> (1997, 272, letter of September 25, 1695).

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<sup>15</sup> Author's translation.

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**Author's contact:** [susanaflor@fcsh.unl.pt](mailto:susanaflor@fcsh.unl.pt)

**Postal address:** Colégio Almada Negreiros, Campus de Campolide, 1099-032, Lisboa, Portugal.

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