

Cósimo III Medici and the Portuguese Restoration: A Voyage to Portugal in 1668-1669

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Abstract

In many seventeenth century European courts the prince's formation and education were understood as matters of state, such that the prestige surrounding the quality of the heir's upbringing could in the future reserve him a position of both national and international distinction. One of the most popular means used to complete the prince's political, military, economic, religious, literary and artistic formation was by way of educational voyages through various European countries. This tradition is present in the case of Cósimo III of Medici, who during 1668-1669 undertook a trip to Spain, Portugal, Ireland, England, Holland, France and Flanders.

The present study is dedicated to the itinerary followed by the Prince in Portugal as well as the contacts he established with local society in other countries, and will analyse the diaries that narrate the trip he carried out during the decades following the Restoration, a very delicate period in Portugal's history.

Keywords

Portugal, Restoration, Medici

In many seventeenth century European courts the prince's formation and education were understood as matters of state, such that the prestige surrounding the quality of the heir's upbringing could in the future reserve him a position of both national and international distinction. It was a concept of education taken in the broadest sense of the word: it included specific knowledge of a political, military, economic, religious, literary and artistic character. To achieve the objective of a broad-based education, the princes from their youngest years were taught by the best lecturers (religious or secular) who could be found either nationally or abroad, and had the opportunity (and duty) to actively frequent the government, and more generally, to frequent social-political life. In this kind of education, along with the heir and his brothers, the king's illegitimate sons were often included.

In this educational context, and especially after the sixteenth century, the custom of educational fieldtrips, both within the realm and abroad, became increasingly prestigious. The countries the prince visited could be more or less distant from his home country, and include those nations with which the state maintained a direct relationship, or which might play an active part in the state's future political and economic relations. These trips could have very distinct characters, especially as regards their institutional

weight. First, they could be official visits without or outside of the realm; in other words they would constitute the reception of a public person of the first order (in this case the prince) who carried with him a corresponding institutional weight. Second, they might be trips undertaken by the prince for personal reasons and apparently undercover, which, notwithstanding their unofficial character, due to the fame of the traveller resulted in most cases in consequences of an “official” nature. Third, they could be pilgrimages carried out by the prince of his own initiative and not reflecting official sanction. In fact, they might be made in open contrast to the state’s current foreign policy. As regards Portuguese history it is sufficient to recall as examples of this latter variety the trips carried out by Dom Pedro or Dom Manuel, the brother of Dom João V.

Concerning each of the aforementioned cases there exist more or less complete records in the form of letters, other direct and indirect reference material, and complete voyage journals. An emblematic case in this sense is the voyage carried out by Cósimo III of Medici between 1668-1669 in Spain, Portugal, Ireland, England, Holland, Flanders and France. Even though this was a non-institutional trip, the related documentation is vast and diverse, capable of offering a well-defined view not only of the individual experience but also of the societies and the human and geographical organization with which the Prince came in contact.

Cósimo received an exquisite education, having studied with men of science, letters, philosophy and the arts, and having founded the “Conversazione Filosofica” and the “Accademia del Cimento.” Besides this, due to the influence of his mother, Vittoria della Rovere, he had a very deep religious upbringing. This led him to prefer a religious life to a secular one (Fantoni 1993: 390-402), a fact that had considerable influence on his married life with Marguerite Luise d’Orléans. His wish to see the world and perfect his knowledge led the Prince to carry out several trips, a first one in 1664 to Emilia and Romagna, the Veneto and Lombardy,¹ a second in 1667-1668, which took him to Germany, Holland and Flanders,² followed by a third in 1668-1669 to Spain, Portugal, Ireland, England and again, Holland, Flanders and France.³ Additionally, a couple of others were undertaken during his adult years (to Loreto in 1695 and Rome in 1700 on the occasion of the Holy Year⁴).

Previous studies on Cósimo’s voyages were predominantly authored under the influence of a cultural-literary historiography, and the notion of the so-called *grand tour* of formative experience and education. However, in the last decades some researchers have evaluated this kind of life experience as an effort to acquire scientific and geographical knowledge with a clear political purpose in mind (Bianchi 1985,

¹ Regarding this voyage there are three records conserved at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato: one anonymous, one by the chaplain Filippo Pizzichi and the third by Cósimo Prié, chamberlain.

² Two diaries of Filippo Corsini conserved in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato narrate this occurrence.

³ Documentation regarding this extended voyage is conserved in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana of Florence, in the National Central Library of the same city and in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato. Partial studies were conducted with regard to the geographical areas visited by the Prince: Hoogewerff 1919; Graillot, 1934: 213-223; Doglio, 1991: 9-29; Crinò, 1968; and regarding the Iberian Peninsula, Sanchez Rivero, A. and Sanchez Rivero, A. Mariutti, w.d..

⁴ An anonymous account is conserved at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato.

Scaramellini 1993, Sterpos 1978). It is with this new approach that we intend to proceed with our critical reading of the Tuscan Prince's stay in Portugal.

The Renaissance voyages gave particular importance to observation and to comparison between the known and unknown, with the final purpose of analysing the reality with which one came in contact. This very complex educational process did not have to be limited entirely to individual action, but rather sought to transform the acquired knowledge into a rational means of divulgation through a communication process for it to be valid. As such, the need grew (later it became a custom) for the traveller to keep, according to well defined rules, a diary describing the itinerary completed, the human and natural landscape, local history, the main events, etc (Leed, 1991, Ch V/VI). In some cases – especially if the traveller were a king, prince, ambassador or special clergyman – the elaboration of the diary was consigned to one or more travel attendants. This situation is reflected in the type of writing committed to the diary, and begs the question of the true value of the documents as reflections of the traveller's psychological and moral character.

This scenario occurs during the trip undertaken by Cósimo during 1668-1669. In this case, a diary written by the Prince is substituted by diaries written by his fellow courtiers, as well as an album of sketches regarding the most important places visited, and by numerous letters. It is worth highlighting that the authors of these diaries are high-ranking members of Florentine society. Consequently, even though they try to remain very objective in their writing, one can notice a personal hand in the descriptions. This gives originality to the records and offers researchers the possibility of conducting a more complete critical reading of certain events which took place and of certain proposed analyses.

The official diary concerning this voyage was most probably written by Lorenzo Magalotti, an intellectual who began his scientific education in Galileo's entourage. As well as being a poet and a prestigious narrator, he occupied the position of secretary of the "Accademia del Cimento", spoke various languages, and was entrusted with diplomatic missions. In his "biography", placed in the beginning of his "friendly letters," it is stated that Lorenzo was abroad when he "*was ordered by the Grand Duke Ferdinand II to return in order to accompany along with other eminent persons his son Prince Cósimo in his trip through Europe.*"⁵ This confirms that Magalotti's position on the trip was more than that of a simple companion. He decides to record in a diary the trip undertaken in the company of his Prince. With his humanistic background, Magalotti is accustomed to moving in the best society. His political and diplomatic experience confers upon him the opportunity to narrate and evaluate in an original manner the Prince's voyage through some of the most important European states. This "official diary" is complemented by an album of drawings - containing representations of landscapes, fortresses, docks, churches and cities - attributed to Pier Maria Baldi, who accompanied the Prince as his assistant chamberlain. Furthermore, alongside Cósimo III people of different backgrounds and functions kept diaries. Examples include the diaries of Filippo Corsini, the administrator Jacobo Ciuti and Giovan Battista Gornia, doctor of Bologna.⁶

⁵ *Delle Lettere familiari del Conte Lorenzo Magalotti, e d'altri insigni uomini a lui scritte*, Firenze MDCCLXIX, and volms, vol. I, p. XXV.

⁶ The literary tradition regarding this documentation has been dealt with to some extent in various studies, but detailed analysis is still lacking. On this issue see the indication referred to in the essay written by: Rombai, w.d., and for the part regarding the trip to the Iberian Peninsula, the sum of the sources proposed in the volume Sanchez Rivero, A. and Sanchez Rivero, A. Mariutti, w.d.

All data quoted so far indicate the extensive nature of the documentation regarding Cósimo III's trip through a considerable number of countries unique in both history and culture. However, the data also show a lack of personal involvement on the part of the Prince in this formative and politically educational experience. Each one of these authors, according to his specific role in this small wandering court and according to his own background, sensibility and interests, focuses on specific interactions with local society. This confers originality to the various narrations of the trip. The narratives, written in the third person, seek not only objectivity but follow a fixed and quasi-scientific method of recording the different stages of the trip: the locations visited, the distances covered over land and water, the quality of the means of transportation and accommodation, the reception granted in public, private and religious contexts. Regarding this latter issue – the Prince being accompanied by a small escort of 50 people - a number of diplomatic difficulties were posed, as his transit through some areas and above all his stay, even for a period of a day or so, brought up certain questions of formality. The fact that the Prince travelled in a personal capacity offered him the possibility of choosing quite freely the places private or ecclesiastic in which to rest, but this did not eliminate the “moral” obligation of those locals aware of his passage to reserve treatment for him in accordance with his social status.

Continuing our trip with Cósimo III, we shall now follow how his voyage to and in Portugal evolves. The Prince and his court left Florence on the 18th of September destined for Leghorn where he would set sail. On the 30th of the same month he reached Barcelona where he stayed until the October 5th. After leaving there, he reached Madrid on the 24th of October. He remained in Madrid and the surrounding area until November 25th. He then carried on his voyage, travelling to Cordoba and Seville, followed by Talavera la Real and Badajoz.⁷ On the January 9th, 1669, after almost five months pilgrimage through the southern and central regions of Spain, and after several social-political contacts, His Highness left Badajoz for the Kingdom of Portugal, taking the route to Campo Maior and Elvas where, as stated by Magalotti “*there is no other mark of a border than that of a large stone placed beside the main road.*”⁸

The ancient cultural-economic friendship and ties of cooperation which had always bound the interests of Florence to those of Portugal, as well as the experience acquired during the Prince's stay in Spain, immediately moved the author of the diary to mention the war which marked the history of Portugal and Spain. In the beginning of his diary, the marquis Filippo Corsini affirmed, “*His Highness Prince Cósimo III of Tuscany considering important to whom stands the duty and weight of ruling those subjected to him, to learn the rituals of various nations, to know the quality of the different nations and to observe the politics of the great rulers, not contenting himself with having- the previous year- visited a great part of Germanium, and having seen The Court of the Great Electors of Mainz and Saxony, many of the free cities including Hamburg, a great part of Holland, some bits of Flanders, decided near the end of 1668 to undertake a greater and longer voyage to strengthen relations with the greatest European powers and to visit those subjected to them, maintaining himself perfectly informed in matters of power and quality. As so to visit undercover and to enjoy more freedoms he limited the number of his escort (Ibidem 7, n.1).*” This implicit politico-diplomatic component of Cósimo III's passage through Portugal allows for a different interpretation and weighting of the conserved records.

⁷ The Spanish itinerary was largely commented on in the introduction and notes in the volume of Sanchez Rivero, A. and Sanchez Rivero, A. Mariutti, w.d. while the trip in Portugal in the same study appears only in a few notes of interpretive character.

⁸ All the references to Malagotti's diary and the divergent versions proposed by other testimonies follow the text published in the volume by: Sanchez Rivero, A. and Sanchez Rivero, A. Mariutti, w.d.: 241.

As is well known, Florence in the second half of the sixteenth century went through a deep politico-diplomatic and economic crisis. It is therefore understandable that the Prince and his closer and qualified collaborators always tried to proceed in a discreet but effective evaluation of the Portuguese kingdom regarding its ability to confront and defeat the Spanish power. In this critical reading it is worth recalling the time spent on non-institutional meetings, carried out under pseudo-casual circumstances, with the hero of the battle of Montes Claros, General Dinis de Melo e Castro. According to unanimous records of the diaries' authors, after a quick meeting with the Prince at Vila Viçosa, the General, accompanied by a few of his men, followed the Florentines to Estremoz in order to show and describe the battle that took place at Montes Claros, and that made him famous (*Ibidem*: 248-251). The references to the wars with Spain are not limited to this episode, as is demonstrated by the fact that in all visited localities until arriving at Setúbal, the various authors took considerable space in noting and evaluating defence structures, not only concerning the number of fortresses and fortifications, but also as pertained to munitions, military organization, payments, etc. Regarding this matter it is well worth highlighting that the attention devoted to these issues is not perfectly coincident between the two authors; while Lorenzo Magalotti limits himself to offering us a general view, Filippo Corsini describes in detail the Portuguese defensive system, keeping in mind even the names of some military men who distinguished themselves in the Restoration War.⁹

In the same scientific and objective line, the analysis of the land's physical and morphological character, and of its human and geographical records – the latter consistently outlined in their own specificity – gives us a complex portrait of Portugal in the second half of seventeenth century. From a geographical point of view, the country was shown to have a pleasant landscape of hills, plains and few mountains, covered with olive, cork, lemon, orange and pine trees, and with pastures where cattle of various kinds grazed. Although in a few places signs of destruction and devastation were present, the overall image was that of a peaceful, rich and well organized country, from an economic point of view, as attested not only by its agriculture and cattle raising, but also by the marble extraction, clay production, and salt industry at Setúbal, as well as the nation's involvement in shipping.

In this landscape there appeared various towns and villages that – with few exceptions – showed positive characteristics from the points of view of architecture and social organization.¹⁰ Built in strategic locations, the most important of these settlements were defended by fortresses, towers and bastions, with water, churches and monasteries.¹¹ Indeed, even those simply-constructed settlements were judged architecturally interesting, and were adorned by *azulejos*. In these accounts the present was continually linked to the past by way of historical references, and described by way of curious and/or emblematic facts. For example, the visit to Palmela stimulated Magalotti to trace the history of the Military Orders in Portugal (*Ibidem*: 263), while the passage through Santarém inspired the author to write down some of the miracles that had made that city famous (*Ibidem*: 309-319). At Tomar, his description of the convents allowed Magalotti to trace the history of the Order of Christ, (*Ibidem*: 312-313), while during his stay in Coimbra the author narrated the battle of Campo de Ourique (*Ibidem*: 316-317).

⁹ As an example see Sanchez Rivero, A. and Sanchez Rivero, A. Mariutti, w.d. the analyses on Campo Maior, p. 242, notes 2 and 3 and p. 243, notes 1, 2 and 3.

¹⁰ The size is usually calculated in function of households with 4 to 6 persons.

¹¹ The number of churches and monasteries is always identified, indicating how many housed nuns, how many houses monks, and to what order these persons belonged.

As mentioned in the beginning, due to the education he received, the Prince showed a great tendency toward the religious life, a fact that had significant relevance to the trip's organization and to the contacts he established with local society. In general the Prince preferred to lodge in religious institutions and frequently chatted with the priests. Besides this, in all the localities through which he passed he tried to visit churches and convents, participated in the festivities, and socialized with the monks and nuns. On this matter, particularly during his stay in Lisbon, the Prince had the opportunity to evaluate the nation's religious life: he went to the church of Santa Maria de Loreto, the church of the Italians, São Antònio, São Roque, Nossa Senhora da Penha da França, São Paulo, São Francisco (just to quote a few), and attended processions and concerts. Likewise, Cósimo visited some monasteries, among them those of Belém and São Bento, but it was the *Mosteiro de Odivelas* that most aroused the curiosity of the Florentines.

The nuns at Odivelas, daughters of noble families, were shown to enjoy great freedom and living conditions which recalled palatial society rather than the righteousness and simplicity of the religious life style. Lorenzo Magalotti describes in detail the rich dressing of the nuns and highlights their use of jewellery and of gloves, which were adorned with lace and flowers. Corsini comments on the meeting of the Prince with the nuns in these terms: "*he discoursed with them for a while listening to songs sung by some mothers, and joyfully passed some time with them, some of them being gentle and gallant in their speaking. It is usual for gentlemen to come over and have a good time with their devotees, enjoying such freedom that on occasions certain inconveniences follow*" (*Ibidem*: 316-317).

The pleasure of conversation marked various moments of the Prince's voyage, as is demonstrated by the fact that at Lisbon he met various representatives of the Italian community, hosting and visiting a number of nobles and clergymen. As concerns the latter, it should be recalled that His Highness met with three Franciscan friars, Frey Girolamo de Monte Sarchio, Frey Ignàcio da Valsassina and Frey Giovanni da Montecuccolo, who had spent much time in Congo, and heard Father Lobo talk about his voyages in the East and West Indies. The Prince also had the opportunity to talk several times with Padre Antònio Vieira and to attend his famous masses.¹²

Cultural curiosity caused the Prince to spend much time with the Italian engineer Antoniacci, who showed him the plans of some battles, and who built fortifications on the Portuguese border. On another occasion, Cósimo received from the ex-Governor Salvador Correia de Sà a topographic map of the Kingdom of Angola. Lorenzo Magalotti also mentions the fact that His Highness met and spoke with a Portuguese mathematician who showed him a large book regarding deeds done and fortresses built by one of the Viceroyes (*Ibidem*: 280) in India and in nearby regions. The author does not provide the name of the mathematician, but one can deduce that it is Luis Serrão Pimentel, who in the preface of his work entitled *Método Lusitano de Desenhar as Fortificações das Praças Regulares e Irregulares* recalls his encounter with the grand duke of Tuscany.¹³

As a man of culture the Prince could not ignore the educational system of the country he was visiting, a fact that induced the diary writers to reserve a large amount of space for this topic, and motivated them to present not only a detailed description and history of the famous University of Coimbra, including its

¹² Filippo Corsini also provides a short biographical note on Padre Antonio Vieira in which he highlights his fame as a speaker, the problems he had with the Inquisition, and the fact that in the time of the Prince's voyage, he was a preacher in the Royal Chapel, ..., p. 226, note n.1

¹³ This work was posthumously published in Lisbon in 1680.

various courses and lecturers, but moreover to include descriptions of the organization and functioning of the Colégio de Évora – described by Magalotti as the University of the Jesuits founded by the Cardinal D. Henrique – the *Colégio de S. António* of Lisbon, and the *Misericórdia* institution, with all its assistance and social functions.

For Cósimo III and his party, religion, culture, art and science proved vital. However, due to the political and economic decadence that Florence was suffering at the time, as well as the fact that the Prince was to face the responsibility of ruling and managing over the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, a special attention was paid to the political and administrative structure of the Kingdom of Portugal, and to the political and diplomatic games which were carried out by the Court of Lisbon.

His rather long stay in the capital and his intense contacts with both private and public representatives of power, and with religious men and intellectuals, offered the Prince and his small group the opportunity to evaluate in detail the functioning of the country. With different methods and sensibilities, Lorenzo Magalotti and Filippo Corsini write complete and very well articulated accounts of the administrative organization of the country, and of the institutions charged with managing the nation's various activities. These include the *Conselho do Estado*, *Conselho da Fazenda*, *Conselho de Guerra*, *Conselho do Desembargo do Paço*, *Conselho da Consciência e das Ordens*, *Conselho Ultramarino*, *Ordens Militares*, *Tribunal da Suplicação da Justiça*, *Senado da Câmara de Lisboa*, *Tribunal dos Contos*, *Contadoria Geral de Guerra*, *Casa da Índia*, *Casa da Alfândega*, *Conselho da Fazenda da Rainha*, *Conselho da Casa de Bragança*, *Governo Eclesiástico das Conquistas*, *Delegação Eclesiástica de Lisboa*, *Tribunal da Santa Cruzada*, *Conselho da Inquisição*, etc (*Ibidem*: 284–308).

The Prince and his court left the Portuguese territory from Caminha on March 1st, travelling on a ship that would take them to Galicia. In general, they maintained a very positive image of Portugal and its socio-political and economic potentialities. In this sense the territory was evaluated as very rich, mild, crossed by numerous rivers propitious for navigation, urban supply and agriculture. The urban centres were seen as normally well defended, and with few exceptions well organized. It was in this near idyllic panorama that Lisbon emerged as a “metropolis which by its commerce, the surrounding fertile lands and its population, whom one can count of nearly 150 thousand souls, one can say that it is of the most important centres of Christianity” (*Ibidem*: 308).

As one can detect from these brief notes, the documentation regarding Cósimo III of Medici's voyage has the capability to offer us a wide and quite complete panorama of Portugal and its society in the second half of the seventeenth century, a special moment in its history in which this kingdom was attempting with great effort to build a new political identity on the national and international levels. The diaries of the voyage of the future Grand Duke of Tuscany, as well as the letters relating to the voyage, allow researchers not only to study these documents as reflecting a human experience, but also to view Portugal in x-ray form as a country which might serve as a model for a decaying Florence.¹⁴

¹⁴ We are presently preparing a detailed analysis on various aspects relating to this trip, as well as engaging in a comparative study of other Florentine sources regarding the Kingdom of Portugal in the time just before the Union of the Crowns, during this period, and after the Restoration.

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