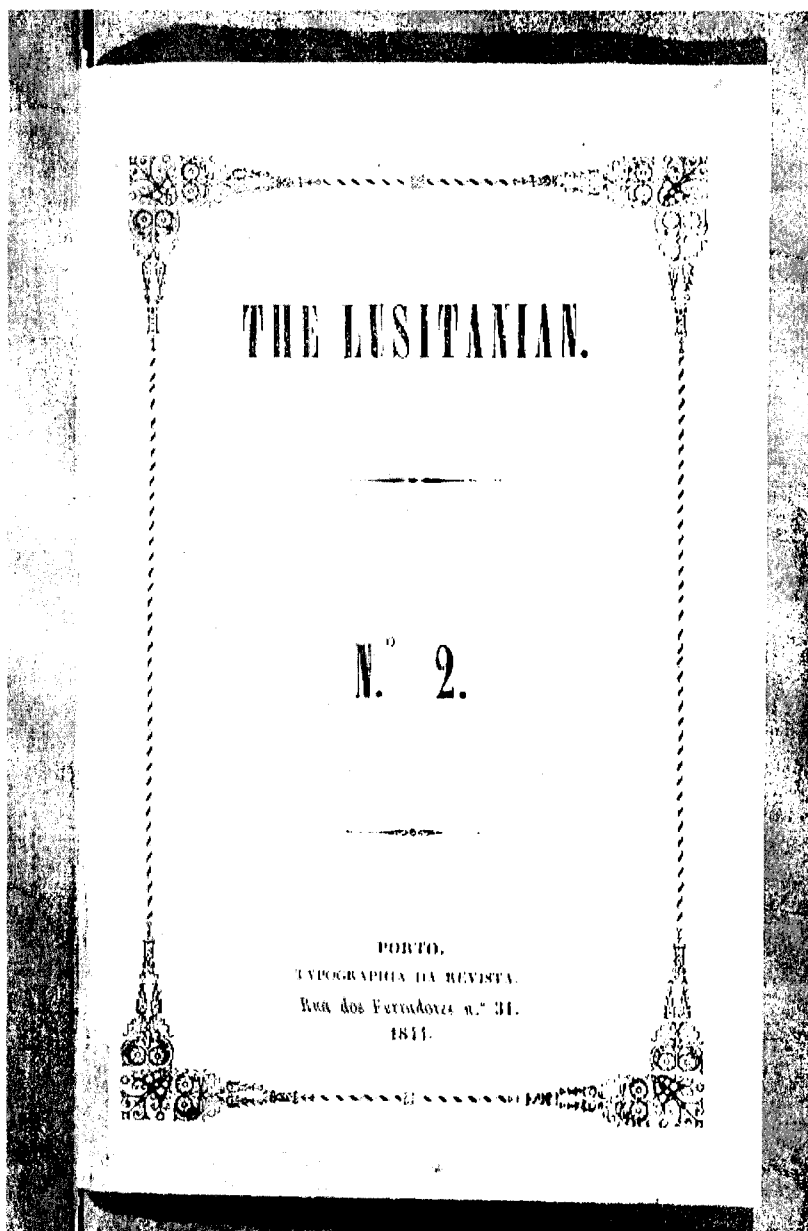


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The Lusitanian (1844-1845)

“Cosmopolitanism versus Ethnocentrism: visions of Portugal in Oporto’s English magazine”

by João Paulo Pereira da Silva

The study of the play of influences, of imitations and borrowings, has always occupied a central position in the sphere of Literary Studies, and has been a constant concern for specialists in these materials.

This is exactly what Paul Van Tieghem states in the venerable and somewhat outmoded *La Littérature Comparée*¹ (published in 1931) which still constitutes even today, due to its foundational character, a virtual bible for those in the field of Comparative Studies.

This author called attention to the universal and timeless nature of literary exchange and intertextuality, in all its variety and multiplicity. In this particular area of Comparative Studies, Van Tieghem emphasises the role of so-called intermediaries, including each and every factor, individual, group, social channel, location or publication which was conducive to the spreading in a country, or the adoption by a particular literary world, of works, ideas and structures belonging to a foreign literature.

Notwithstanding that studies in *mesology* have these days wained somewhat because of their generally descriptive and positivist character, their importance should not be underestimated as

¹ Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1931, p. 13.

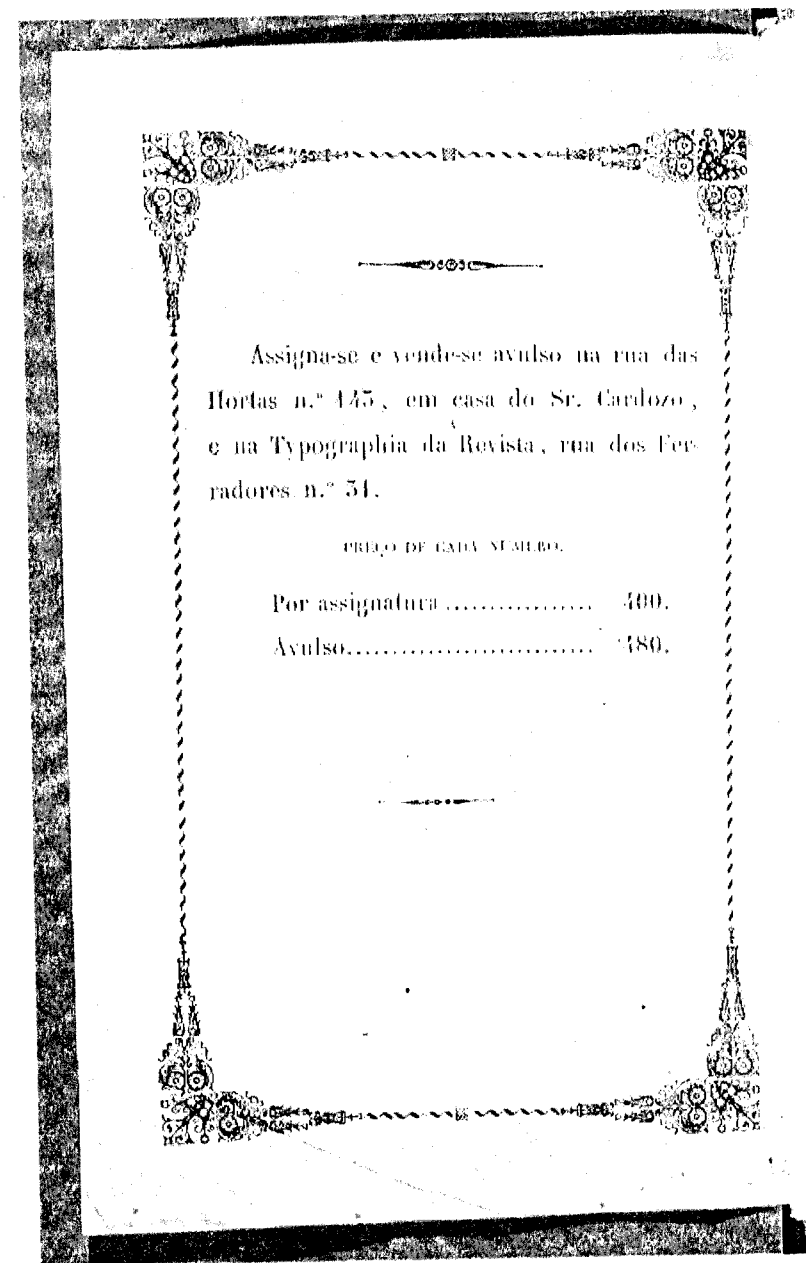
The following quotation from the above work is relevant to this point: “L’histoire littéraire telle que nous l’avons décrite a constamment à s’occuper d’influences et d’emprunts.”

they have exerted in their pioneering and seminal way a major influence on works published much later and which these days embrace other specific branches of Comparative Literature – particularly studies of literary fortune, aesthetics and reception theory. The relevance of this type of work (which has consistently been produced) is generally confirmed in all the most recent manuals in the comparative field, and by such distinguished and well-known figures as François Jost, Claudio Guillén, Daniel-Henry Pageaux, S.S. Praver, Pierre Brunel, Claude Pichois and André-Michel Rousseau.²

Within the variety of literary and cultural mediators above mentioned, we consider of particular importance for this study the periodicals, translators, translations, the *salons*, literary clubs and meeting places, as well as particular cities, places and regions which, with their cosmopolitan character, became virtual melting-pots, and meeting-points for an exchange of ideas or locales for cultural dialogue.

It would be obviously impossible to enumerate here the particular places that might be mentioned. But without doubt, among the many cities which over the centuries have performed an intermediary cultural or literary role, one should clearly include the city of Oporto where, for commercial and economic reasons, there was established from the end of the 17th century, a sizeable, prosperous and influential British community. Since then the production and export of port wine has attracted a significant number of British citizens, and later business people of other nationalities to the capital of the north.

² We would mention by way of example the following works: Pierre Brunel, Claude Pichois, André-Michel Rousseau, *Qu'est-ce que la Littérature Comparée?*, Paris, "Collection U", Armand Colin, 1983, cap. II, p.31; Daniel-Henry Pageaux, *La Littérature Générale et Comparée*, Paris, "Collection Cursus", série "Littérature", Armand Colin Éditeur, 1994, cap. II, p. 27.



It is curious to mention that of all the communities based there, only the British maintained their own way of life and identity, retaining their autonomy within the Portuguese world, always faithful to their cultural traditions and creating their own institutions, some of which survive to this day.³

Thus, the secular coexistence in the same geographical location of Portuguese and English would turn the city into an authentic cultural meeting point and, albeit to a lesser extent, into a literary mediator.

As is well known, the English presence from the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries had marked a decisive turning point in artistic taste in that area. Oporto had thus become somewhat influenced by English taste, giving rise to a style known to History of Art specialists as *Port Wine* architecture.

On the other hand, although the English colonial influence on Oporto's social fabric was scanty, it is well known that the development in the city of social outlets, particularly in the form of clubs and associations, meeting points for local elites, was much influenced by the British community, well known for its communal spirit, which saw the creation of such social centres as the English Factory and later the British Oporto Club.

Although scanty, British influence was not insignificant in Oporto writing, particularly during the Romantic era. The British presence had undoubtedly contributed to the growth of interest in Great Britain among the city's intellectuals, which led to the publication of a certain number of literary magazines of undoubted

³ V. Rose Macaulay, *They Went to Portugal*, 2nd ed., Harmondsworth, "Penguin Travel Library", Penguin Books, 1985, pp. 248-249 (1st ed., Jonathan Cape, 1946); Sarah Bradford, *The Story of Port*, new and revised edition, London, Christie's Wine Publications, 1983, cap. XII, pp. 135-136 (1st ed. Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1969).

importance, which were to a certain extent devoted to spreading particular aspects of English culture among Portuguese readers, especially by way of such influential magazines as the *Repositório Literário* [*Literary Repository*] (1834-35), the *Revista Estrangeira* [*Foreign Review*] (1837-38) and the *Revista Literária* [*Literary Review*] (1838-44).

But the best example of what would become the dialogic nature of Oporto and British culture was without doubt Julio Dinis, whose novels showed a pronounced English literary influence.⁴

His novel *An English Family*, based largely on autobiography and an in-depth knowledge of the day-to-day lives of the English bourgeois merchants, among whom he had been born, gave the most detailed and perfect picture of the British expatriate community in Oporto in the mid-nineteenth century, in what was considered the "golden age" of the port wine trade, and which was in various ways the most harmonious and intimate period of relations between that foreign community and their Oporto hosts.

Although occupying the same space geographically, the English and the Portuguese carried on as if they were in different countries. However, although the British residents lived on the edge of Oporto society and carried on their daily lives, as they would have done in metropolitan Britain, relations between the two communities were characterised by a mutual respect and sociability. This is with the exception of some brief spells – the wine-trade crisis of 1755-57, and particularly the final decades of the nineteenth century, at which time British colonial interests were most sharply felt, leading to Britain's red map and the "Ultimatum" – which was the most critical time in Anglo-Portuguese relations.⁵

⁴ Luís Francisco Rebelo, "Influência Inglesa na Literatura Portuguesa", in Jacinto do Prado Coelho (coord.), *Dicionário de Literatura Portuguesa*, 3^a ed., Oporto, Figueirinhas, 1983, vol.II (F/M), p. 486.

⁵ This refers to the moment at which Great Britain reached the zenith of its colonial expansion, leading it more and more to covet and threaten with

It is important in this respect to bear in mind that between the Napoleonic Wars and the 1870s there was an era of close ties between the two communities which, for reasons of strategy and common economic and political interests, would bring them together to a certain extent. Moments of profound crisis such as the Peninsular War, the Siege of Oporto and the *Migueliste* threat to constitutional liberties all contributed to a sense of mutual understanding between the English and the Oporto citizens. This tendency was strengthened after the liberal victory of 1834, and above all with the "Regeneration", when Oporto's economic prosperity, resulting from the establishing of infrastructures as well as the boom in manufacturing and industry of that time, gradually changed the face of the city. From this era of economic progress and unbridled optimism, distinguished by the growing influence of the Oporto bourgeoisie, both the English and the Portuguese would benefit, as they obviously shared to a large extent the same commercial and economic interests. This clearly explains the

military conquest the rich but relatively unexploited Portuguese territories in Southern Africa.

As is well-known, from the 1870s onwards there took place an unbridled race among the major European powers for control of the Dark Continent (the so-called "scramble for Africa), a political expansionism that would gradually be carried out over the ruins of our enfeebled African Empire, successively truncated and spoiled by British, French and Germans.

The British colony in Oporto followed in this respect the general social tendencies of the day, and ended up as a kind of advanced-guard of British interests in the Iberian Peninsula. They rapidly abandoned their attitude of relative cordiality towards their Oporto hosts, and especially to the major merchant and capitalist classes of the city along with the more illustrious and progressive elements of the aristocracy of that time, and gradually assumed the distant and arrogant attitude of the coloniser facing the colonised. Portugal became in this way increasingly regarded by the British as a type of protectorate, subject to the semi-colonial authority of Britain, rather than an allied nation. From Britain's point of view, it had become an important piece in the geo-strategic and economic game of chess of the major hegemonic power of the day.

intensification of contact between the two communities, expressed in the growth of sociability, and in some cases the growth of receptivity among a minority of the British to Portuguese influence – leading in some cases to inter-marriage.

It is precisely within the period 1834 – 1865 that certain figures from among the British Factory emerge who displayed an unusually close interest both in Portugal and in our culture, and who established friendships with Oporto people of all social levels. Among others, we might emphasise because of his importance and contribution, Joseph James Forrester, essayist and cartographer, renowned for his spirited defence of the quality of port wine and, on a par with him, Frederick William Flower, photography pioneer; William Henry Giles Kingston, the prolific author of Victorian children's stories and numerous travel books, as well as two other members of wine-trading families; William Richard Harris and John Thomas Quillinan.

These last two personalities made up, along with Kingston, the nucleus of a small literary group, which was responsible for the production of an English language magazine called *The Lusitanian*, published in Oporto from October 1844 to July 1845, whose main objective was to serve as a medium of Portugal and its culture among the British community in the city – a somewhat closed group and by tradition impervious to outside cultural influences. In this way, it attempted to overcome the barrier of ignorance and prejudice and to correct the false images held by the English concerning Portugal, and to attempt in the final instance to bring closer British and Portuguese citizens, encouraging greater collaboration on a project that was to a certain extent inter-cultural.

The well-chosen strategy of demystification adopted by this literary group comprised the spreading of Portuguese cultural, artistic and human values, which would allow British readers to realise that Portugal was a living and developing country.

Those responsible for editing the magazine, who were presumably British, did not wish however to limit their readership to

fellow Britons. Kingston, Harris and J. T. Quillinan wished it to be accessible and interesting to Oporto's cultured class, with whom they maintained close economic and commercial relations.

On the other hand they did not wish to limit the themes of the magazine to Portuguese matters, but rather to publish all sorts of information that they could find, thus showing themselves completely open to both British and Portuguese contributions.

Whenever authors wished it, they had the right to total anonymity, and in fact the majority used initials, which prevented for a long time the correct authorial identification of a large number of articles.

With monthly publication there appeared six issues, comprising an approximate total of 500 pages. In fact the high price of this periodic publication, in competition with similar ones in Portuguese, might well explain its limited sales and well-known short life span.

Such considerations aside, I would like to explain in the first instance the reasons that determined the choice of *The Lusitanian* as the literary *corpus* to which this study is dedicated.

The claimed impartiality of the editors and their affirmation of ideological independence, as well as the neutrality with which they steered clear of the internal Portuguese situation, all helped make *The Lusitanian* an original publication among English journals published in our country, and generally speaking, among the foreign language media that appeared in Portugal during the nineteenth century.

The latter were in most cases little more than official mouthpieces of British or French authorities, or on the other hand they served to express the positions and interests of the Portuguese government itself, alongside the foreign communities established in our country.

Of all the English magazines published in Portugal in the nineteenth century, *The Lusitanian* was definitely the only literary organ to have as its main object the spread of Portuguese culture. Thus it is an exemplary case – given that the rest of the anglophone publications confined themselves in most cases to dealing with political and economic questions.

As it is impossible to go into great detail concerning the magazine and its editors in a short work like this we will confine ourselves to the observation that one of the magazine's most interesting aspects was its hybridity.

Thus, if on the one hand the editors produced what amounted at various levels to a *literary monthly magazine*⁶ – especially in terms of content, physical appearance and even number of pages – it is crucial to remember that the objective of the magazine was to speak about Portugal, and in many cases the chosen themes were based on Portuguese literature of the era.

Both Portuguese and foreign poets mentioned and quoted in the journal are, in the majority of cases, those who at that time

⁶ This sub genre of literary periodical is defined in the following way by Naomi Jacobs, "Periodicals: Monthly Magazines", in Sally Mitchell; Michael Herr (eds.), *Victorian Britain, an Encyclopedia*, Chicago and London, St. James Press, 1988, pp. 590-591:

"The monthly magazines that provided entertainment and instruction for middle and upper-class Victorians were miscellaneous, including fiction, poetry, and articles on subjects such as travel, current affairs, biography, and science, with the proportion of fiction increasing as the century aged. Individually they had relatively small circulations, rarely more than 15,000, but as a group they would eventually claim some 450,000 subscribers and literary and cultural influence disproportionate to their share of the reading market. At their height monthly magazines published the best writing of the era: the fiction of Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Eliot, Gaskell, Collins, Hardy and Henry James. The poetry of Tennyson, the Brownings, Meredith and Swinburne; and the essays of Arnold, Ruskin, Symonds, Leslie Stephen, and Pater."

enjoyed the greatest popularity in our country. This attitude suggests to a certain extent the absence of a secure literary training and furnishes evidence of a weak knowledge of aesthetic principles and trends current at that time in European letters. Perhaps thus can be explained the undeniable pull of weak Portuguese literary models, often the belated results of a partial and confused mixture of the aesthetic models of European Romanticism.

In fact the dual nature of the journal under study can be put down simultaneously to an in-depth knowledge of the various genres into which the Victorian periodical press was divided and organised, and a prolonged contact with Portuguese literary journalism and its customary themes.

Certainly it was through a reading of Portuguese magazines of the era that these British authors came upon the bulk of the information that they clearly possessed concerning our country. This is in addition to direct contact with Portuguese society and its intellectual elite, given that Oporto was a hotbed of Portuguese Romanticism, of growing importance from the mid 1840s and throughout the 1850s.

And so the magazine in question can be regarded as authentically Anglo-Portuguese; although it resembles British journalistic models, it is Portuguese at the levels of themes, motive and general content.

However, what is most surprising about the magazine is the variety of themes that it deals with, particularly given its short life span. But no less surprising is the fact that this magazine eventually covered the full range of topics normally understood as "Anglo-Portuguese." *The Lusitanian* encompasses for the first time in the history of English literature and in a single publication, the whole range of Portuguese themes that, from the 16th and 17th centuries, at times sporadically and at times systematically, attracted the attention and energies of British poets, writers and intellectuals.

The ancient national Portuguese myths, the spread of which in England had contributed to a layer in the British imagination of a certain vision of Portugal, are dealt with now as literary themes. From among others we can naturally point to Dom Sebastian, Inez de Castro and Luís de Camões. In addition to these there appear others whose presence is determined by the development of both the Portuguese nation and of Anglo-Portuguese relations. In this respect the exemplary case is that of King Pedro IV, the subject of various poems of an elegiac or eulogistic nature.

In this general consideration of the themes dealt with in the journal, we must mention that there are various moments in the history of Portugal which - due to their seminal influence on the development of Portuguese society, and in other cases due to the role performed by Great Britain - could not be ignored by this group of English writers in Oporto. By way of example might be mentioned, on the one hand; the reign of King John III, the establishment of the Holy Inquisition in Portugal and consequent persecution directed at the newly-converted; and on the other hand, certain historic episodes more recent in time, such as the Peninsular War, the Civil Wars, and the definitive establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1834.

It is important to point out that the previously mentioned influence of Portuguese Romanticism in *The Lusitanian* and its apparent influence on certain contributors is particularly noticeable in the treatment of specific Portuguese historic figures that played important roles in our myths of decadence and regeneration.

Such a dichotomy was undoubtedly a central concern of our Romanticism and ultimately for the whole of Portuguese society of the 19th century, which at various levels, tried desperately to put an end to centuries of decadence, repression and obscurantism, and to recapture the brilliance, opulence and influence that were lost at the end of the 1500s, never to be regained in the following centuries, due to a lack of charismatic leadership that might have reclaimed the nation from the state of lethargy and moral turpitude into which it had sunk.

These mythical characters, who are totally contained within the dichotomy of decadence / regeneration (epitomizing either one or the other of these principles) are treated in the pages of *The Lusitanian* just as they were in Portugal in the same period. They include Luis de Camões (as he was represented and understood by the Romantics), messianic figures such as Dom Sebastian, the Marquis of Pombal and King Pedro IV. To this group of mythical figures should also be added the character-type of the Portuguese Jew, the victim of religious persecution by the Inquisition.

All of these are key figures, essential for a correct understanding of Portuguese destiny and its historical development to the current era, and who appear oddly enough grouped together in a sequence wherein there seems to lay certain logic. In some cases they have embodied the hopes of a new era of prosperity, very similar to that of the legendary Golden Age of medieval and renaissance Portugal, and in other cases the very phase of degeneration following it, and from which the country had apparently only recently awakened.

Comprising a monthly literary miscellany, it is clear that its contents would obviously be somewhat eclectic, including texts of a mainly literary tenor, and embracing such varied genres as poetry, fiction, travel writing, essays and book reviews.

However, in the brief life of the journal the genre most favoured by its contributors was unarguably travel literature. The reason for such a phenomenon might be, to some extent, found in the very objectives outlined in the first edition, where great importance is given from the start to that genre, and where a particular appetite is shown for travel reports connected with Portugal and its colonies.⁷

⁷ Concerning such objectives, consider the following passages from the first editorial of the publication:

"We shall publish notes of tours made in various parts of the country. We purpose therefore to give accounts of her history, her antiquities and her many valuable productions both above and beneath the soil; also all

From the editors' viewpoint, *The Lusitanian* would basically comprise a journal aimed primarily at giving an accurate depiction and description of Portugal⁸, and publishing all sorts of information of interest to those Britons who might wish to visit the country. Thus it can be appreciated that to a large extent the main objective of the magazine would be overall similar to that of travel writing – to explain to the foreign visitor the reality that was unknown to him.

The travel reports published in the journal collectively comprised a basic element in forming an image of the country visited, allowing us specifically to understand the idea that the British had of the country in question. The general conception that such narratives offered in all their variety allows us to state that the image transmitted of the visited country was decidedly positive, with an unusually open attitude to the topics dealt with, both concerning Portugal and the Portuguese.

information we can collect concerning her African Colonies, of which so little is known to the world in general, and her many other dependencies [...] We are particularly anxious to collect all notes of tours and journeys [sic] made in the country, whether of many weeks or of a single day, and we beg those who possess such to forward them to us, as also voyages to any part of the globe, reminiscences of interesting events and of noted persons. We shall particularly value any observations regarding commerce etc. etc. We earnestly beg that no one will hesitate to send us contributions through feeling him or herself unaccustomed to English composition. It is *substance* and *sterling* information we require, and no class of persons are so able to afford it as mercantile men, for they have the means of gaining, not only that regarding the country in which they reside, but through their correspondents, from various parts of the world."

Op. cit., n° 1, Oct. 1844, pp. 4-5, 6.

⁸ V. W.H.G. Kingston, *Lusitanian Sketches of the Pen and Pencil*, 2 vols, London, John W. Parker, 1845, Vol. I, Sketch XVI, p. 313.

"The *Lusitanian*, a magazine in English started for the purpose of describing Portugal correctly, and of publishing all the information which may be useful to Englishmen visiting the Country. A few numbers only have yet appeared, containing some interesting tours, translations from Portuguese poetry, and descriptions of places, etc."

This body of texts shows in addition an extraordinary wide-ranging knowledge of Portuguese society and culture, only possible among those who had lived a long time in our country and who, above all, were thoroughly familiar with our language and traditions.

The picture that was typically given of the reality of our nation, by virtue of its ample and extremely varied nature, was eventually to produce one of the most complete portraits of Portugal in the 1800s ever achieved in the realm of British travel literature of that era.

The attitude of these travellers alternated between one of extreme openness typically assumed in the treatment of the majority of topics related to our country, and periods of pronounced ethnocentrism whenever British economic, political or strategic interests were at stake. Thus, if on the one hand these men showed a strong emotional attachment to their adopted country, we note on the other hand that they did not renounce their British loyalties, and remained umbilically tied to the British mother-land in whose bosom they had grown up.

The whole picture of Portugal in the 1800s that was transmitted by travellers' narratives published in the journal evinced a double character, alternating between outright fascination with the country visited, in all its variety; (the countryside, ethnography, art and history) and, on the other hand, an outright rejection of some of the more shocking aspects of Portuguese life – corruption, political incompetence, certain extreme religious practices, and the abandoning of certain major projects which undoubtedly would have contributed to the real regeneration of the country.

We would add finally that within this picture collided two opposing images of Portuguese reality; on the one hand a mythical representation of national history, and especially of medieval Portugal, and on the other hand, a picture more realist and at times somewhat cruder, of Portuguese society in the mid-1800s, itself the source of feelings and impulses both varied and often contradictory.

Taking as our point of reference Portugal, and especially the English language publications produced throughout the nineteenth century in our country, we are nevertheless led to conclude that *The Lusitanian* would have comprised a truly exceptional case in turning its back on traditional British ethnocentrism, being open to the country which was in fact the second home of its editors and contributors. In this sense it was a journal of a distinctly hybrid stamp, the real meeting-point of distinct cultural influences which combined to produce its multifaceted and varied character.

Throughout the brief life of the journal the editors showed a rare tolerance in relation to our traditions and values, and an extraordinary capacity to accept the Other along with its cultural identity. They showed an almost unquenchable thirst for knowledge of the country they were living in, and showed an indomitable will to discover the reality which to a large extent they did not know, and above all an unmistakable desire to enhance the dialogue with the people among whom they interacted daily.

In fact, although the editors and contributors could not be considered by a long chalk to be assimilated, they still showed a *lusophile* rather than a *lusophobe* point of view. Actually none of them seems to have wanted to be more than merely members of the "English Factory". In this way they would have wished to be considered an integral part of the actual Oporto community, in which their families were strongly rooted, by way of a civil presence in the area.

This open approach and the strong desire to create an intercultural project were, however, never fully realised. As we have seen, our authors showed themselves incapable of freeing themselves completely from their status as British citizens and so integrating fully into a Portuguese cultural context. From their relations with Portuguese society there could be seen contradictory feelings of attraction and repulsion, whose co-presence is reflected in the paradoxical alternating between displays of total openness and a haughty attitude, both distant and somewhat ethnocentric, regularly

adopted by certain contributors in their critical response to our society.

This kind of attitude might, to a certain extent, explain the editors' failure to attract the contribution of Portuguese citizens in collaborating with the magazine, thus transforming it into an organ of social, cultural and literary exchange – which is to say into an authentic connecting link, which would have enhanced both the communication and contact between the two cultures.

To a certain extent they were to prove that the English based in Oporto were not exclusively cut out for commercial and financial activities, and they showed that among their fellow compatriots there existed certain literary talents and some individuals with an undeniable artistic bent. But they did not manage, as they had hoped, to arouse the entire British community from its seeming cultural apathy by way of a journalistic enterprise that was both stimulating and innovative.

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