

**“ALL THE GALLANTRY AND BEAUTY
THAT A PEDESTAL INTENDED FOR SUCH
A STATUE SHOULD HAVE”¹
– ABOUT THE SILVER STATUE OF THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MADE IN ROME
FOR THE PATRIARCHAL BASILICA:
LUDOVICE'S INTERVENTION**

Teresa Leonor M. Vale

ARTIS - Institute of Art History, School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon

teresalmvale@campus.ul.pt

ORCID: 0000-0003-1711-5245

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to address a specific aspect regarding the celebrated gilded silver statue of the Immaculate Conception, commissioned in Rome by King John V for the Patriarchal Basilica of Lisbon. The statue was crafted by the silversmiths Giuseppe Gagliardi (1697-1749) and Leandro Gagliardi (1729-1804), based on the project and model of the sculptor Giovanni Battista Maini (1690-1752). While the intervention of João Frederico Ludovice (1673-1752) in the iconographic models and technical aspects of the statue's creation is already known, the manuscript that is published and discussed in this text reveals a further involvement by the “*famous Frederico*” (“*célebre Frederico*”) in the process concerning the silver statue and its placement inside the Johannine Patriarchal.

KEYWORDS

Statue | Pedestal | Patriarchal | Ludovice

1. “TODA A GALANTARIA, E FERMOSURA QUE DEVE TER HUM PEDESTAL DESTINADO PERA SEMILHANTE ESTATUA”.

The silver-gilt statue of Our Lady the Immaculate Conception, crafted in Rome and intended for the Patriarchal Basilica of Lisbon, which arrived in the Portuguese capital in 1744, has been previously discussed (Vale, 2008, Vale, 2012). Therefore, this contribution will not dwell on aspects already addressed. Previous research has identified the contributions of the silversmith João Frederico Ludovice (1673-1752) regarding the selection of iconographic models to be considered for its design and, above all, specific technical issues, notably concerning the casting of a life-sized piece.

Thus, in this text we will only highlight what is important for the understanding of the subject we intend to address: Ludovice's involvement specifically regarding how the Roman work was installed and displayed within the Patriarchal.

As previously mentioned, the statue of the Immaculate Conception, was designed and modelled by the sculptor Giovanni Battista Maini (1690-1752) and cast in gilded silver by the silversmiths Giuseppe Gagliardi (1697-1749) and his son Leandro Gagliardi (1729-1804).

The celebrated image of the Virgin Mary, whose authorship is traditionally attributed within the context of national historiography – since it was mentioned by Joaquim Machado de Castro – to the Italian Lorenzo Maini, is certainly the one referred to in a document from the Biblioteca da Ajuda, dated September 25, 1744. This document has been already mentioned in the context of studies on Italian sculpture in the Basilica of Mafra (Montagu, 1996: 211-212, Vale, 2002: 53-54). It is a letter commissioning a gilded silver statue of the Virgin, eight (Roman) palms in height, which is, roughly on a 1/1 scale.

The letter details numerous specifications for its creation, including suggestions for iconographic models (paintings by Guido Reni, Carlo Maratta or Lanfranco), and technical issues concerning chiselling and the (desirable) double gilding that the work should have.

The statue was placed on a base one palm in height, and was accompanied by the figures of several cherubs, a crescent moon, and a dragon (or serpent)².

Naturally, the detailed instructions above mentioned include an author's proposal for the piece: "Il Modello della detta Statua lo farà Giovanni Battista Maini Scolaro di Rusconi e se fosse morto questo lo farà Pietro Bracci, ed in mancanza di questi Gioseppe Lirone, o Carlo Monaldi si però sarà viuo il detto Giovanni Battista Maini, il modello दौरa farlo lui senz'altra replica"³. The preference for Giovanni Battista Maini is evident in the text cited, and there is no reason to question whether it was disrespected. Thus, the attribution of the name Lorenzo to Maini was certainly an oversight by Joaquim Machado de Castro (1731-1822)⁴, which was later repeated by part of the subsequent national art historiography.

2. Arquivo do Instituto Português de Santo António de Roma (A.I.P.S.A.R.), E.I.: *Papéis Legais*, Int. 14, N° 10, publ. by VALE, 2016: doc. 31.

3. Biblioteca da Ajuda (B.A.), Ms. 49-VIII-29, f. 72 v.

4. The hypothesis of an oversight on the part of Machado de Castro seems to be confirmed if one accepts the information conveyed by the contemporary manuscript (1817), entitled *Roma Lusitana*, written by the abbot Francesco Cancellieri, which António Portugal de Faria published in the 20th century – cfr. FARIA, 1926.

The work was likely conceived by Giovanni Battista Maini, whose models were followed by the founder Giuseppe Gagliardi and his son Leandro, who carried out the casting in their workshop at *vicolo della Campanella ai Banchi* (Chracas, 1749: 3). Despite this, the execution was initially assigned to the silversmith Antonio Arrighi (1687-1776), as already noted by Marie Thérèse Mandroux-França (Mandroux-França, 1989: 39 and Mandroux-França, 1993: 48), who, in fact, received 7,440 Roman *scudi* in 1745 for the creation of the said statue⁵.

The hypothesis that Giovanni Battista Maini likely authored the model used for the creation of the silver statue of the Immaculate Conception, was substantiated by the existence of a drawing attributed to the sculptor, which Jennifer Montagu associated with the work [fig.01] (Montagu, 1996: 160). Part of a private collection, this drawing underscores the Lombard sculptor's involvement in the statue of the Patriarchal Basilica of Lisbon, further corroborated by records of various payments to Maini, between 1745 and 1748 (Vale, 2016: table 46), for the creation of the model. This model is still preserved in a chapel adjacent to the Capuchin church in Rome (S. Maria della Concezione) [fig.02] (Montagu, 2004: 76-77).

Furthermore, when the piece was sent to Lisbon in February 1750 – aboard the ship Neptune, owned by the English captain John Gardner (referred as Giovanni Gairdiner) –, as part of the contents of box No. 16, there is a reference to the statue's gilded metal base, which could be attached or removed as needed to better suit its intended location: “Una statua di gettito di argento dorato rappresentante la Santissima Concezione, con zoccolo, ossia plinto inferiore di metallo dorato, con barbantina bianca, e contrafodera di fostagno giallo, e suo stucco. Si avverte che il suddetto zoccolo, ossia posamento inferiore, è da levarsi, e mettersi, secondo meglio parerà, e sarà più adattabile al sito, ove deve collocarsi”⁶. The same document lists several items related to the cost of the work, including “Per Modelli, e Disegni fatti da Giovanni Battista Maini – sc. 1300 –.”⁷ This reiterates Maini's authorship of the model, which is also attested by a document in the archives of the Instituto Português de Santo António in Rome.

Indeed, on August 22, 1748, a Giovanni Battista Maini's account for the creation of the plaster model acknowledged, for which the Lombard sculptor received the amount of 1000 Roman *scudi*⁸. The discrepancy in values, compared to the aforementioned (1300 Roman *scudi*), may be attributed to the creation of drawings, as this account by Maini refers only to the plaster model.

Finally, what may seem merely a detail confirms the idea Maini indeed created the model for the statue of the Immaculate Conception intended to be made in gilded silver. On June 16, 1751, amidst the documents of Biblioteca da Ajuda, there is an invoice from a certain Tommaso Albertini amounting to 6 *scudi* and 15 *baiocchi*, noted as “Nota di spese fatte per il Trasporto della statua di Creta della SS.ma Concezione dalla Casa del Sig.r Giovanni Battista Maini scultore uicino a Piazza Barberini alla casa sotto l'ufficiale ritenuta per servizio della Corte di Lisbona”⁹.

The impact that the work had, both in Rome and Lisbon, has already been discussed in previous contributions, so we will not dwell on this aspect here¹⁰.

The instructions sent from Lisbon, dated September 25, 1744, certainly written by João Frederico Ludovice¹¹, have already been dealt with in considerable detail, so what is important to highlight at this point is, on the one hand, the provision of iconographic models (interestingly, all within the realm of painting and not sculpture) (Vale, 2009 and Vale, 2012), and, on the other, the specific technical instructions regarding the execution of the statue.

5. Cfr. B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-24, f. 4.

6. B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-35, pp. 84-85.

7. B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-35, pp. 84-85.

8. A.I.P.S.A.R., E.I.: *Papéis Legais*, Int. 14, N° 5, publ. by VALE, 2016: doc. 26.

9. B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-21, f. 349, N° 190.

10. See what was published by *Diario Ordinario do Chracas*, in Rome, and by *Mercúrio Histórico de Lisboa*, in Lisbon – cfr. VALE, 2016: 124-125.

11. B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-29, ff. 70-75v., publ. by VALE, 2016: doc. 25.



Fig. 01. Giovanni Battista Maini (1690-1752), drawing for the statue of the Immaculate Conception for the Patriarchal Basilica. Private collection.



Fig. 02. Giovanni Battista Maini (1690-1752), plaster model of the statue of the Immaculate Conception of the Patriarchal Basilica. Chapel attached to S. Maria della Concezione (Capuccini) church, Rome. Photo Jennifer Montagu.

Thus, the author of the text begins by emphasizing the need for the piece to be whole and not made up of several parts later soldered together, as well as specifying the type of silver to be used: “La Statua deve essere tutta isolata, e non aperta nella schiena, acciò possa godersi perfetta da ogni parte, dandosi il caso che venga esposta nel mezzo d’una Chiesa, o Cappella senza appoggio. L’argento, de quale si farà detta Statua, sarà di Carlino, cioè di undici denari, che sono undici parti eguali d’argento finissimo, et una di rame, o lega. Deve esser gettata in una grossezza competente, rispettiva alla sua grandezza, e non deve eccedere la grossezza maggiore mezzo minuto, e nelle parti più sottili di un terzo di minuto, e si concede questa conveniente grossezza, perchè si pretende, che la detta Statua sa tutta intiera, e non di diversi pezzi.”¹² Following these are other instructions, of an absolutely technical and minutely detailed nature, which lead us to confirm the association of the text with João Frederico Ludovice, as previously alluded to by Jennifer Montagu, albeit briefly (Montagu, 1996: 156).

During his years in Rome, Ludovice did not engage primarily as a silversmith – having received his training in this field in Germany – but rather as a founder. In the last years of the *Seicento*, specifically between 1698 and 1699, Ludovice was involved in the major artistic campaign for the altar of Saint Ignatius in the mother church of the Society of Jesus in Rome. Under the supervision of Andrea Pozzo (1642-1709), he had the opportunity to meet multiple artists, including sculptors and silversmiths, both Italian and French and German. His contribution was mainly as a founder, particularly ensuring the casting in bronze a relief by the sculptor Angelo De Rossi (1671-1715), themed Saint Ignatius liberating a possessed man from demons, intended for the base of the altar dedicated to the Jesuit patriarch, as well as other silver pieces (Vale, 2010: 53-72 and Vale, 2016: 279-303). The test commissioning the statue of the Immaculate Conception for the Patriarchal Basilica reveals knowledge that only someone familiar with technical aspects and the operation of a founder and silversmith workshop could have.

Several passages from the aforementioned document clearly demonstrate the technical expertise of the author, as well as practical experience within a workshop, leading us to believe that the text was written by Ludovice or based on (detailed) notes from the German silversmith.

Ludovice’s involvement was not limited, however, to these decisive interventions: from the iconographic (and compositional) suggestions to detailed technical instructions regarding silver casting, everything received his attention. We know today that even concerning the pedestal, the “famous Frederico” (“célebre Frederico” as it is mentioned in contemporary documents) sought to leave his mark. In fact, in a letter from the king’s secretary, the Neapolitan Jesuit Giovanni Battista Carbone (1694-1750), who had been based in Lisbon since 1722, addressed to the then Portuguese ambassador in Rome, Manuel Pereira de Sampaio (1691-1750) dated April 17, 1749, one can read: “O Architetto Federico soube a cazo do escultor que aqui ficou [Alessandro Giusti]¹³ que alem da Estatua da Conceição se fazia tambem hum pedestal ou vazamento pera a ditto estatua de que elle não tinha antecedentemente noticia alguma, pois não se mandou, nem de lá veyo risco algum, pelo qual viesse no conhecimento do ditto pedestal. E como manda fazer hum de marmo, em que deve assentar o que de lá vier, dezeja que o Artifice mande logo o Risco, ao menos na quarta parte, da mesma grandezza, e forma do referido vazamento, e que venha exactamente riscado em planta, e em perfil, pera se regular o pedestal de marmo, que há de ficar por baixo do de prata dourada.”¹⁴

Further in the same manuscript volume of the Biblioteca da Ajuda, specifically on folio. 255, there is a “*Reparo do Architecto*” (“a note from the architect”), attached to the missive of July 17, 1749, again from Carbone to Sampaio. In this brief text, written by Ludovice and published here as a documentary appendix, the German is concerned with providing specific indications, that the responsible party creating the pedestal should consider,

12. B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-29, f. 70, publ. by VALE, 2016: doc. 25.

13. Alessandro Giusti (1715-1799) arrived in Lisbon in 1747, to coordinate the works related to the installation of the chapel of St John the Baptist in the church of São Roque.

14. B.A., Ms. 49-IX-1, ff. 226-227v.; “The architect Federico heard from the sculptor that is here [Alessandro Giusti] that, in addition to the Conception statue, a pedestal or base would also be made for it, of which he had had no knowledge, for no sketch had been sent, to or from, that told of the pedestal. And, as he wishes to make one of marble, on which shall rest the pedestal that shall come, he wants the artificer to send the sketch, in a scale of at least a quarter, of the same size and shape of the aforementioned base, to come exactly sketched in plan and profile, that it may regulate the marble pedestal, to be placed beneath the gilded silver one.”

amending the project that had been sent from the pontifical city. The design sent from Rome was thus returned with the changes considered appropriate by Ludovice, based on concrete aspects, such as the dimensions of the space intended for the pedestal and its functionality. As he notes at the beginning of his *"Reparo"*: the space "(...) tem o comodo de se poder andar a roda da mesma Estatua, pera se ornar, e porem castiças no Altar, tendo porta pela ilharga da mesma Tribuna, sem ser necessario subir-se por diante do Altar com degraos"¹⁵.

However, Ludovice's considerations in his brief note also denoted an aesthetic appreciation, which he deemed legitimate, pointing out that the dimensions proposed by Rome were excessive and would have consequences precisely in the realm of aesthetics: "Alem de que tiraria toda a galantaria, e fermosura que deve ter hum pedestal destinado pera semelhante Estatua."

The silver statue, created by Giuseppe and Leandro Gagliardi according to the model by Giovanni Battista Maini, drew ample attention, first in Rome and later in Lisbon, as mentioned. The care taken with its adequate placement within the Patriarchal Basilica is yet one more evidence of the relevance the piece attained. Thus, in addition to the pedestal, worthy of written criticism and inherent designed intervention by Ludovice, a complementary sculptural piece was also created in Lisbon. In fact, it is in a text by Joaquim Machado de Castro who mentions a pair of adoring angels, created by the sculptor José de Almeida (1707-1769), following Ludovice's directives, who was clearly dissatisfied with the setting of the Immaculate within the Patriarchal Basilica.

In his work titled *Analyse Grafic'Ortodoxa, e Demonstrativa, de que sem Escrúpulo do menor Erro Theologico, a Escultura, e Pintura podem, ao representar o Sagrado Mystério da Encarnação, figurar vários Anjos*, Machado de Castro, known to have been Almeida's disciple, writes: "(...) O Senhor D. João V. mandara vir de Roma para a Santa Igreja Patriarcal huma Imagem de Nossa Senhora da Conceição do tamanho natural, feita em prata, parece-me que dourada; e vendo-se no lugar, que não fazia bom efeito a nudez dos lados, por dictame de João de Frederico se lhe fizerão dous Anjos, hum para cada lado, em acto de adoração, os quaes em madeira executou José de Almeida; e tanto se acabarão, e dourarão, se pozerão aos lados da dita Imagem, onde eu os vi, antes que o incendio do Terramoto reduzisse tudo a cinzas."¹⁶ (Castro, 1805, cit. Lima, 1989: 108).

Thus, José de Almeida, often overlooked in favour of Italian sculptors in the context of royal commissions (Vale, 2016b), somehow appears, by the probable hand of Ludovice, associated to a Roman piece, and a particularly significant one in the repertoire of Johannine commissions. Regrettably, none of the surviving drawings, whether by Ludovice or Almeida¹⁷, provide any indication regarding the pedestal or the adoring angels, capable of offering a visual approach of what the 1755 earthquake and its immediate aftermath destroyed.

This article merely reiterates João Frederico Ludovice's constant involvement in all artistic matters during the Magnanimous reign. The publication and discussion of this brief *"Reparo"* highlights how even apparently minor aspects, such as the pedestal of a statue, were not minor for the *"famous Frederico"* and how essential it appeared to be to the German silversmith and founder who, duly Romanized, arrived in Lisbon in August 1700, to leave his mark on everything that concerned artistic issues in the Crown's sphere, especially concerning commissions of Italian works of art.

15. "(...) has the convenience of allowing one to walk around the statue to decorate and to place candlesticks on the altar; a door by the side of the same gallery avoids the need to climb steps in front of the altar."

16. "(...) Our Lord John V had ordered from Rome for the Holy Patriarchal Church a life-sized Image of Our Lady of Conception, made in silver, seeming to me gilded; and upon seeing in its location that the nakedness of the sides did not make up for a good effect, João de Frederico determined that two angels would be made, one for each side, in a worshipping pose, which José de Almeida made of wood; and as soon as they were complete, they were gilded, and placed on the sides of the aforementioned Image, where I saw them before the fire of the Earthquake reduced all to ashes."

17. Among the drawings associated with José de Almeida, which are preserved in the collection of the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, there is one of a base / pedestal (inv. 1137 Des) but nothing in the morphology or decorative options it presents allows us to associate it with the silver statue of the Patriarchal Basilica.

APPENDIX

Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, Ms. 49-IX-1, f. 255-255v.

/ **f. 255** / Reparos do Architecto, e emenda, que insinua deuer-se necessariamente fazer no Pedestal da Estatua de Nossa Senhora da Conceição

O Nicho em que se ha de colocar a Estatua he em forma de Tribuna, e tem o comodo de se poder andar a roda da mesma Estatua, pera se ornar, e porem castiças no Altar, tendo porta pela ilharga da mesma Tribuna, sem ser necessario subir-se por diante do Altar com degraos. Esta serventia fica embaraçada, sendo o Pedestal da forma, e medida que mostra o Risco que veyo, do qual se remete copia, e nela vai¹⁸ apontado o que se deve cortar, pera que possa servir no sitio declarado; e vem a ser o Zocolo inferior em que¹⁹ assenta a Base; porquanto a excessiva sacada do dito Zocolo obrigaría a fazer hum Pedestal de excessiva grandeza, com que ficaria sem duvida impedida a referida serventia. Alem de que tiraria toda a galantaria, e fermosura que deve ter hum pedestal destinado pera semelhante Estatua, o qual se está fazendo de bordo de proporcionada altura; devendo ficar a Estatua mais alta do que o pavimento da Capela 18 palmos, de que se seguiria que a grande sacada do plinto inferior comeria parte do socolo do vazamento que assenta imedia- / **f. 255v.** / tamente sobre o dito plinto etc.

18. Manuscript: "vai" between lines.

19. Manuscript: "que" between lines.

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