

JORGE COLAÇO

IDENTITY AND TRANSCULTURALITY IN AZULEJO FRAMINGS

Patrícia Nóbrega

Az – Rede de Investigação em Azulejo

ARTIS – Instituto de História da Arte, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa

patricianobregap@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The azulejo frames of Jorge Colaço here in study present themselves as an independent area, an available space for technical and artistic experimentation, unifying and revealing multiple influences. These, which come from the author's own know-how and the history of azulejo, are crossed with coeval artistic influences. Colaço filtered, shaped and transformed these references, creating an identity based in its own decorative vocabulary, capable of distinguish him from other artists of his time who explored the historicist narratives in azulejo. Simultaneously, in some cases, the frames complement, contextualize or dialogue with the respective figurative composition, emphasizing the construction of a global artistic narrative. Colaço also takes advantage of the frames, by structuring and organizing them into multi-parceled spaces that best serve and fit his artistic discourse, enhancing the experience provided by the architecture with azulejo.

KEYWORDS

Azulejo | Jorge Colaço | Frames | Transculturality | Identity

RESUMO

As molduras azulejadas de Jorge Colaço, em estudo, apresentam-se como uma área autónoma, um espaço disponível para a experimentação técnica e artística, aglutinadora e reveladora de múltiplas influências. Estas, que provêm da própria vivência do autor e da história da azulejaria, são cruzadas com influências artísticas coevas. Colaço filtrou, moldou e transformou estes referenciais, criando uma identidade assente num vocabulário decorativo próprio, capaz de o distinguir de outros artistas da época que exploraram as narrativas historicistas no azulejo. Simultaneamente, em alguns casos, as molduras complementam, contextualizam ou dialogam com a cena figurativa que enquadram, acentuando a construção de uma narrativa artística global. Colaço tira ainda partido das molduras estruturando-as e organizando-as em espaços multi-parcelares que melhor servem e se ajustam ao seu discurso artístico, intensificando a experiência proporcionada pela arquitectura azulejada.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Azulejo | Jorge Colaço | Molduras | Transculturalidade | Identidade

INTRODUCTION

An imported art form – although one that assimilated characteristics that made it an identity reference of the Portuguese culture from a very early stage –, the *azulejos* produced in our country still reflect the influence of diverse cultures in a process of assimilation and cultural transmissions that existed throughout its history. Thus, in the early 20th century, the construction of an idea of national artistic and cultural identity found in the *azulejo* a privileged means of expression.

In the wake of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905), but within a different language, motivation and the existence of a time lag, Jorge Colaço (1868-1942) was also appointed as a renewal agent of the national ceramics, sharing with Bordalo Pinheiro a duty of allegiance to the artistic tradition of their homeland¹.

Painter and ceramist, Colaço conceived and executed works of great monumentality, created under a strict line and a sense of a complete and complex artistic system, giving the same importance of plastic expressiveness both to the figurative central composition and the frames. Getting involved in the historicist painting, the artist sought to build a sense of identity and nationality through the recovery of remarkable episodes in Portugal's History, interspersing them with tinges of romanticism that involved, at times, the representation of traditions, the picturesque and the bucolic.

In turn, the space of the frames was seen as another field of action, where the artist has incorporated a unique and distinctive figurative vocabulary, seeming to understand these as experimental areas. As a matter of fact, the frames, which outline and highlight the figurative central composition, are references to a benchmark of artistic appropriations assimilated by the *azulejo*, such as the hispano-moorish *azulejo*, the grotesque and the exotic, but where it's possible to identify some alignment with the European artistic practices of the time, like the Art Nouveau and Art Deco, among others.

This paper aims to discuss the transculturality in the work of Jorge Colaço based on four examples, or case studies, in the context of which the aforementioned languages can be identified, in a particularly strong way, and covering a long period of his career: Room of *Passos Perdidos* of the Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Nova Medical School) (1906), Buçaco Palace Hotel (1907), São Bento Train Station (1915), and the Palace of Justice of Coimbra (1933-35). There will also be an attempt to understand the reasons for the contrast that can be found between the figurative composition and the frames, as well as the sense of modernity that underlies them.

THE FRAMES: INFLUENCES AND APPROPRIATIONS

The thinking and action of Colaço² are inscribed within the historicist and revivalist currents that, in the late 19th century, dominated much of the Portuguese

enlightened society (Meco, 1989: 246; Souto, 2010: 159). Motivated by the political and social conjuncture, weakened by several constraints, among which is the

1. In addition to the international artistic influences, the national ones must be referred, especially, the work of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, of which Colaço could not have been unaware. If both shared some confluences, such as the humorous exercise or the *azulejo* production, they were diametrically opposed regarding their critical and political awareness. Just over two decades separate the two artists, Bordalo, being the oldest, openly progressive and republican, unlike Colaço, more conservative. The role Bordalo played in the Caldas da Rainha Faience Factory, which he directed from 1884, was critical to the renewal of ceramics and, in particular, for the reinterpretation of the in relief *azulejo*. According to Joaquim de Vasconcelos, Bordalo "revives our old artistic *azulejo*" (Vasconcelos, 1891: 11-12).
2. Caricaturist, painter and ceramist, Jorge Colaço distinguished himself mainly as a painter of *azulejo*. Son of the Portuguese consul in Tangier, Colaço was born in that city in 1868, but studied painting in Madrid and Paris, he studied with Fernand Cormon, the precursor of the historicist painting in France. In Lisbon, he began to dedicate himself to caricature, in particular, in the humorous supplement of the newspaper "O Século" and in the "O Talassa", newspaper that he founded and that was closer to his political preferences (Arruda, 1999: 416).

British Ultimatum, this quadrant of society, averse to progress, found in the nationalism affiliated in the romanticism the way to consolidate an idea of nation. This idea based itself, on the one hand, in the reunion with the remarkable events of the Portuguese History³ and, on the other, in the creation and establishment of a vocabulary of practices and ethnographic objects, able to perpetuate the singularity of being Portuguese. In this sense, the painter found in the azulejo the ideal vehicle for propaganda and celebration of a patriotic collective memory, based on the great achievements of the past and the uniqueness and originality of the Portuguese culture, where he believed he had a key role to play⁴ (Colaço, 1933: 7).

Although Colaço came into his own in the context of the Baroque decorative matrix, the multiplicity of artistic languages present in his work is extensive, specifically when considering the frames. These, often polychrome and incorporating motifs of Arab, Renaissance or Flemish influence, along with a decorative grammar featuring Art Nouveau and Art Deco characteristics, aligned with the coeval international currents, contrasted sharply with the figurative areas, in blue and white. The narratives, patriotic and illustrative of the national traditions and customs, evoked the 18th century *azulejos* (1675-1750), that distinguished themselves by an erudite painting and mostly executed in blue and white. Thus, if the return to a significant period of the History of Portuguese *azulejos* is inscribed in the historicist and revival thinking of Colaço, the technique he used deviates completely from what was the tradition and the ceramic painting explored by the Portuguese Baroque masters. Aware of the instability that the firing of *azulejo* entailed, Colaço preferred to paint in enamel over fired glaze, choosing the traditional technique of *majolica* only occasionally and in certain areas, as sometimes happened in the frames. This decision, unusual at the time, led the author to justify his choice in a manifesto written in 1913, entitled “Como me decidi pintar como pinto” (How I have decided to paint like I do) (Colaço, 1933: 7-8), where he claims not to want to be dependent on

the contingencies imposed by the traditional painting. The painting technique over fired glaze requires a third firing to fix the ceramic inks (Mendes, 2004: 130) but on the other hand, assures a watercolor effect that distinguishes it from the Baroque painting, resulting from the use of low-fire paints (Santos et al, 2015).

The frames, understood, quite possibly, as another area for exploration and innovation, stand out, then, by the plurality and confluence of exogenous influences, yet acting in an assertive way in the discourse or in global narratives. To this extent, the frames of Colaço are not just a boundary, or a structure capable of organizing a narrative articulating it with its surrounding environment, but are also active spaces of “commentary” or of complementarity with the figurative program.

If the figurative program, with a historicist and nationalistic inclination, fed an identity dialogue whose roots dated back to the second half of the 19th century, the frames reflect the permeability of the painter to other influences – historical and contemporary –, in a process whose contours have yet to be fully studied, and of which this article is just an initial trial.

One of the most visible influences of the work of Jorge Colaço, and perhaps the oldest, is the Arab culture. In fact, the interest in the culture of his country of origin strongly marked all his artistic career, being present in the choice of some of the themes of his oil paintings, such as “Nos campos de Arzila” (In the fields of Arzila) and “Filósofo árabe” (Moorish philosopher) among others, or the panel “Conquista de Socotrá” (The conquest of Socotra) that he designed for the Military Museum of Lisbon (Pamplona, 1954-59: 109-110). However, this inspiration was also a constant in his ceramic works and, particularly, in the frames. As a matter of fact, the hispano-moorish patterns, whose recreation played a key role in the work of Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro, constituted a huge influence of enormous relevance to Jorge Colaço, either from the point of view of the decorative grammar, or from a technical point of view⁵.

3. Visible in the succession of commemorative anniversaries of the Portuguese culture that, in the late 19th century, swarm the social agenda, and among which stands out the Camões tercentenary in 1880 (Almeida, 2010: 148).

4. The *azulejo* work of Colaço extends all over the country, having some applications across borders, mostly in the European and American continents. There's a doctoral thesis in progress by Cláudia Emanuel dos Santos, in the Universidade Católica do Porto (Oporto Catholic University), which will provide an exhaustive list of Jorge Colaço coverings applied in Portugal.

5. In the factory where he began his ceramic work, the Sacavém Factory, the painter found a privileged space for creation and experimentation and that allowed him to grow, especially from a technical point of view. Benefiting from, quite possibly, friendly relations with James Gilman, the Sacavém Factory administrator, he explored various conformation and decoration techniques, including the in relief, of hispano-moorish reminiscence, such as the “*cuerda seca*”, as well as processes linked to technological advances applied to the *azulejo*, as is the case of the serigraphy (Souto, 2010: 157).

THE ROOM OF *PASSOS PERDIDOS* IN THE FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS MÉDICAS DA UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA (NOVA MEDICAL SCHOOL) (1904-1906)

The incorporation of Arab motifs is visible on the first *azulejo* covering designed by the author [fig.1], for the Room of *Passos Perdidos* in the Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Nova Medical School)⁶. Executed between 1904 and 1906, in the Sacavém Factory, this work was much celebrated at the time, earning the painter a significant number of visits to his workshop on the D. Pedro V Street⁷ and later, a new *azulejo* commission for the Buçaco Palace Hotel⁸.

Painted in blue and white, with polychrome frames, the covering of the Room of *Passos Perdidos*, of an elliptic plant, has five sections of historicist meaning. The larger ones represent "Saint Elizabeth of Portugal among the lepers in a 14th century hospital" and "Queen Amelia in a children's dispensary in Alcântara". The remaining three represent the figure of "João Semana", the kindly village doctor created in literature by Júlio Dinis; an allegory to "Sciencia afugentando a Ignorância" (Science driving away Ignorance) and, finally, the surgeon "Ambroise Paré" on the battlefield, rescuing the wounded. Due to the room configuration, the sections alluding to João Semana and to Ambroise Paré are curved, in an adaptation to the architecture.

The frames, a polychrome border with in relief motifs, delimited by a double half *azulejo* frame (ochre and gold) in the upper and lower areas, are identical in all sections⁹, having only small variations characteristic of the *azulejo* manufacturing. They dispose, on a golden background, a sequence of lozenges with bevelled corners, in other tones, determining reserves with arabesques in a water green tone. The lozenges inscribe divergent semicircles that delimit a scaled area.

In the upper border, at the left and right extremities, the lozenges are replaced by three circles inscribing, each one, the outline of a female figure with a white veil over her head and golden ornaments, where a cross stands out. Taking into account the iconographic context, it's probably a nurse, possibly religious, although with allusions to the Arab culture as well. The sections of larger dimensions, with association to the Royal House, feature the Portuguese coat of arms in the upper border.

The use of gold, immediately present in this first work, became a mark of innovation and experimentation in Jorge Colaço, and we will find it again in the ceramic covering of the Buçaco Palace Hotel.

The characterization of the composition in semi-relief suggests an eastern influence, specifically the 16th century Ottoman *azulejos*, which were also taken over by the Art Nouveau [fig.2].

6. Inaugurated in 1906 under the project of the architect José Maria Nepomuceno, this building has benefited from a decorative program whose iconography is related to the practice and history of medicine (*Ilustração Portuguesa*, 1906: 121- 127). In relation to the latter, special mention should be made of a wing with three distinctive spaces: the room of Actos (Acts), with frescos of Veloso Salgado and ceiling of João Vaz, depicting aspects of the history of medicine; the *Sala de Reunião dos Júris* (meeting room of juries), with works of José Malhoa and Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro (Rafael Bordalo Pinnheiro's brother), with the latter immortalizing former teachers of the School; and, finally, the Room of *Passos Perdidos*, with a ceramic covering of Jorge Colaço.

7. The Pombaline building is still conserved today in numbers 18 to 30, and is considered as a property of municipal interest (IPA.00029699), but it also benefits from multiple contexts of heritage protection provided by the geographical area to which it belongs. It maintains the same functions as before – commercial on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors. The ground floor features, in the façade between the doors of number 18 and number 20, where the atelier of Colaço may have been, a panel in shades of blue and white of his authorship with St. George's iconography. Another panel made by Colaço and of similarity in color, representing an eagle attacking a fallen horse, is kept in a hall of the fourth floor of number 30.

8. The commission of both coverings was due to the then minister of Public Works and his friend, the Earl Paçô-Vieira (Paçô-Vieira, 1916: 11-12).

9. In the first wall, to the right of the main entrance, a frame is applied with the same characteristics as the rest, registering, however, the absence of the figurative panel. In here, it would be applied one of two panels dedicated to "João Semana", which flanked the main entrance. However, between 1974 and 1975, both panels were no longer applied, being unknown its whereabouts. The existing panel displayed on the left side of the entrance, which depicts "João Semana" was painted based on a photograph of the original panel, by Jorge Colaço, and was applied in 1998 (Pina, 2007: 178-180). We should further note the existence of figurative *azulejos* cut in the panels that intersperse with the window openings and with the back door, suggesting an intervention in the room, after the application of the ceramic covering, perhaps for the opening of these spans.



Fig.1 · "Queen Amelia in a children's dispensary in Alcântara", section of the covering of the Room Passos Perdidos (photo by Duarte Belo, 2012)



Fig.2 · (from left to right) Detail of a frame from the covering of the Room Passos Perdidos/ XV century Ottoman tiles © V&A Museum, museum number: 1620-1892 and © Metmuseum, accession number: 1998.246/ Detail of a façade in (Lemmen and Verbrugge, 1999: 105)

BUÇACO PALACE HOTEL (1904-1906)

Designed at around the same time (1904-1906), and in the same factory, the Buçaco Palace Hotel *azulejos*¹⁰ characterized once again by the blue and white figurative compositions and the polychrome frames, cover the vestibule, the staircase and the outer gallery¹¹. In these there are visible motifs of Arab, naturalist and Art Nouveau influence.

The vestibule, which unfolds in small chain linked spaces, presents a series of sections evoking the Battle of Buçaco, highlighting some of its key moments and related personalities (Mendes, 2004: 126-133), as well as episodes linked to the Portuguese Discoveries. The frames have foliage motifs with leaves and acorns and, in other panels, of scrolling branches, the glow derived from the use of golden tones standing out particularly.

In the rest of the vestibule the theme remains, but with frames of Moorish influence, in relief, where the presence of arabesques, stars and crescents is visible. These are interrupted, in the corners, by medallions with the busts of generals and colonels.

Covering the outer wall of the stairs there is the “Combate na região do moinho de Sula” (Battle in the region of Sulla’s mill), with an in relief polychrome frame interspersing *azulejos* with elephants. The original project, now in the National Museum of Azulejo (MNAz)¹² collection presents some differences concerning the framings.

Opposite to this panel there is a covering of a distinct theme, organized into different sections and illustrating scenes from *Os Lusíadas*, with the polychrome frame depicting exotic foliage, medallions with busts of indigenous people or figurative animals and, in the lower area, the shield with the cross of Christ. The frames present exotic motifs that relate to the

representations of the central narratives and that are taken over on the staircase.

On the staircase [fig.3] there are, opposite each other, two sections of large dimensions, allusive to some of the exceptionally valuable events of the Portuguese History. The frames are characterized by a lush profusion of palm branches, green on a yellow background, that go beyond these threshold areas, “invading” the blue and white figurative compositions. The exoticism of this set is noticeable on the upper frames where, visible among the foliage, there are medallions with busts of warriors and lions (panel “The conquest of Lisbon from the Moors”) and busts of Indians and elephants (panel “The arrival of Vasco da Gama to India”). In the middle of the panel, the contour of the frame takes on an irregular shape as it inscribes the cross of the Order of Christ with a terrestrial globe marked at its center by the shield of Portugal.

The outer gallery [fig.4] presents episodes from *Os Lusíadas*, from *Autos* of Gil Vicente (writing for Theater) and from Bernardim Ribeiro’s *Menina e Moça*, delimited by frames with decorative motifs of Art Nouveau influence. The foliage, stems and flowers (sunflowers, chrysanthemums, daisies, etc), the zoomorphic elements (with the predominance of birds, insects, reptiles and hybrid imaginary animals) are especially noticeable, showing a naturalist trait and being close to a Portuguese Manueline¹³ style concerning to the use of the hybrid imaginary animal. This decorative motif was also taken over by Art Nouveau which can be found in a French catalog of the time (*Revêtements Céramiques de la faïencerie de Choisy-le-Roi*, 1898, feuille F, g). In one of the panels there is also a female face, likewise of Art Nouveau influence. In certain sections, and linking up with the aforementioned elements, other Portuguese culture iconography is visible, such as caravels or the cross of the Order of Christ [fig.5].

10. According to the consulted bibliography, the contract between Jorge Colaço and the Ministry of Public Works for the provision of the Buçaco Palace Hotel *azulejos* was celebrated in 1904 (Mendes, 2004: 131). The same source states that the last payment to Colaço, and corresponding to the completion of the work, dates of February of 1906, which is why we present the interval of these two dates for the creation of Colaço’s ceramic work for this building (Mendes, 2004: 131).

11. Of the initial tribulations that characterized the work of the Buçaco Palace Hotel (Silva, 2004: 44-49), with successive changes of function and direction of the same, initiated in 1886, it is important to retain that the painting and *azulejo* decorative campaign took place from 1903. The intervention of Jorge Colaço dates back to the next year – 1904 –, replacing the work of *azulejo* of António Ramalho, who had not met the deadlines for the ceramic covering of the staircase and the gallery.

12. Museu Nacional do Azulejo (M.N.Az.)/National Museum of Azulejo, project P- 631.

13. Designation that, in the 19th century in Portugal, is attributed to the artistic production that began in the reign of King Manuel and was extended to the reign of his son, King John III. By identifying identity traces of Portuguese history and culture, the Manueline style has been considered, since then, “the true national style” by some authors (Neto and Soares, 2013: 52-53).



Fig.3 · On the staircase, Buçaco Palace Hotel, "The arrival of Vasco da Gama to India" "panel (photo by Patrícia Nóbrega, 2015)



Fig.4 · The outer gallery covering, Buçaco Palace Hotel (photo by Patrícia Nóbrega, 2015)



Fig.5 · Examples of caravels and the cross of the Order of Christ among the frames decoration elements, outer gallery, Buçaco Palace Hotel (photo by Patrícia Nóbrega, 2015)

SÃO BENTO TRAIN STATION (1906-1915)

Already under the influence of Art Deco, the São Bento Train Station in Oporto, constructed on the former convent of São Bento da Avé Maria, with the project of the architect José Marques da Silva (Carvalho, 2007), dates back to 1904 and was inaugurated in 1915. The vestibule walls are fully covered with *azulejos*, arranged at different reading levels, with evocative sections of defining moments for the nation and, sometimes, related with the region's History or with local customs and traditions.

Naturally, the space available for the *azulejo* is determined by the architecture, discernible by the rhythm of large openings and the presence of the granite that imposes itself on the space, being distributed through the basement, entablement, pilasters and the frame of the archways, contrasting with the surface covered with *azulejos*. On the North, South and East walls three reading levels can be observed, the first two painted in shades of blue and white and without frames (only separated by a stone frame that runs across the space) and the last one near the ceiling, polychrome, illustrating the evolution of transports

throughout the ages. This last one is delimited, in the lower and upper area, by a four *azulejo* frame [fig.6] which also extends to the fourth wall of the vestibule, and that acts as a separating element, rather than as a traditional frame (Arruda, 1999: 417).

It is characterized by a sequence of polychrome stylized forms, highlighting the circular ones with the overlapping of foliage elements in an x, which refers to both eastern influences and those close to the Art Deco. These finials may also allude to the rose of the winds, clearly seen in the context of the train station where they are.

On the West wall, the decorative system becomes more complex [fig.7], also due to the rhythm conferred by the openings, but keeping the three reading levels. The first refers to the function of the main building, inscribing, in a medallion, the front of a locomotive. The second level features allegorical figures, among which are the Seasons, also inscribed in medallions. These are delimited, in the upper and lower areas, by a sequence of stylized forms, interrupted by the openings, with concentric circular forms with a center in the shape of a star, decorated by foliage and floral elements, in a geometric language that reminds us of the Art Deco vocabulary.



Fig.6 · South wall of the vestibule, São Bento Train Station (photo by Ana Almeida, 2015)



Fig.7 · West wall of the vestibule, São Bento Train Station (photo by Ana Almeida, 2015)

PALACE OF JUSTICE OF COIMBRA (1933-1935)

Finally, and advancing in time until almost the end of Jorge Colaço's career, the Palace of Justice of Coimbra¹⁴ presents a covering executed in 1933 and 1935 in the Lusitânia Factory¹⁵, where the painter started working in 1923. The covering is vast and eclectic, employing different aesthetics [fig.8] and it is applied mainly in the circulation areas.

The iconographic program defined meant to extol the values of Moral and Justice, through the representation of allegories and the use of historical events that illustrate them, occasionally evoking figures or episodes of the local History, a narrative composition, very characteristic in the work of Colaço (Nunes, 2000).

Since the commission was much more extensive than originally planned, Jorge Colaço had the collaboration of António Costa, in the painting of the ornamental panels but also in some of the frames. Due to timing issues and deadlines, it was even necessary to resort to other collaborators for the execution of the frames. It should be noted that some authors refers, sometimes, to this question, advocating that Colaço delegated the making of the frames to his collaborators (Soares, 1983: 17), which was a common practice in the context of the workshop. Nevertheless, even though the frames may have been executed by collaborators, as it happened in Coimbra, the truth is that their design and artistic creation were undoubtedly of Jorge Colaço's authorship, as evidenced by some projects

that are in the collection of the National Museum of Azulejo¹⁶. In this regard, it should still be noted that the coverings were designed simultaneously and as a whole, that is, with the figurative areas and their frames, wherein Colaço first painted in watercolor, on which he traced, afterwards, a reticulate equivalent to the space where the *azulejos* were to be placed.

Returning to the Palace of Justice of Coimbra, the frames recuperate a decorative grammar characteristic of the Baroque, but also of hispano-moorish and of Renaissance affiliation. A classical type of frames can be identified alongside others with a higher degree of complexity, close to the Baroque ideals but which, through a sectoral division of the space, enable several reading levels. This creation of sub-categories within the same frame allows for a reconfiguration of the space giving a volumetric illusion to the two-dimensional surface. In this regard we can conclude that Colaço conceived imaginary architectures through the way he played with and organized the frames.

Another feature that can be identified is the predominance of eastern elements that are inscribed in the Art Deco vocabulary, visible in the frames' geometric language [fig.9] and that we can associate to decorative elements published in catalogs of that time (Minton Tiles, 1909). In fact, the work done in the context of the Sacavém Factory certainly allowed the painter a privileged contact with the catalogs of other factories, especially English and French¹⁷, which resulted in the incorporation of "new" models, illustrating an entire decorative grammar then in vogue in Europe, in various production centres, and which were adapted to the national taste.

14. It is located in the former Dominican College of St. Thomas, a building adapted for the residence of the Earl of Ameal in the late 19th century and acquired by the State in 1928, to be converted into a judicial building (Figueiredo, 2006).

15. The public tender for the decoration of the various building spaces through painting and *azulejo* was opened in 1933, the laying of this extensive *azulejo* commission took place in during the two following years (Nunes, 2000).

16. Among these we point out, in the Jorge Colaço's collection, the projects for the frames of the Palace of Justice of Coimbra (National Museum of Azulejo's collection -MNAz projects P-381 e P-1127, and a project for a panel located in the vestibule of the Buçaco Palace Hotel MNAz P- 631).

17. The english *Minton Tiles* (Minton Tiles, 1909) was one of the most distinguished and whose catalogs had greater influence on the Portuguese *azulejos* of the time, but the French factories should also be mentioned, such as the *Revêtements Céramiques de la Faïencerie de Choisy-le-Roi* (1898), of Paris.



Fig.8 · “Saint George and Portugal” panel, Palace of Justice of Coimbra (photo by Francisco Queiroz, Instituto de Promoció Ceramica de Castellón, Spain 2010)



Fig.9 · Detail of a frame, with decorative elements reminding Art Déco's vocabulary, Palace of Justice of Coimbra (photo by Francisco Queiroz, Instituto de Promoció Ceramica de Castellón, Spain 2010)

CONCLUSION

As we have been trying to demonstrate, the main contributions of Colaço's work were brought about by the innovations he made in the frames. These reveal a wide range of influences, which extends from the hispano-moorish motifs and goes through many languages and artistic contaminations that the *azulejo* knew how to assimilate and transform throughout History. Thus, if the figurative compositions are decisive in assuming a nationalist and identity discourse, the frames reveal a unique modernity. Corresponding, on the one hand, to a moment of alignment and synchronization with the coeval artistic creation, but then, on the other, they evoke the History of the *azulejo*, reinterpreted and updated in a global perspective. Nevertheless, they often underline the message of the ceramic narrative, through coats of arms or medallions, whose iconography refers to the figurative scenes illustrated. Let us remember the outline of the female figures of the Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Nova Medical School), the coats of arms of the staircase in the Buçaco Palace Hotel to which reference has been made, or the frames of the Battle of Buçaco,

in the latter's vestibule. In the section depicting Lord Wellington on horseback, general Marbot and other soldiers, the frame displays, in the upper area, the duke of Wellington's coat of arms and, in the lower area, two lions involving a cartouche with the inscription Lord W. On the lateral frames the coat of arms of Portugal and of the United Kingdom can be observed.

In this respect, the frames of Jorge Colaço also assume the nationalist and identity discourse, albeit wrapped in a different figurative language. They constitute, like the *azulejo* production since the late 15th century to the present day, a repertoire of worldviews resulting from the incorporation of several artistic languages and their specific interpretation, filtered by a nationalist discourse based on the nation's remarkable historical features. The present paper constitutes, therefore, a contribution to the appreciation and comprehension of Jorge Colaço's work in the light of the idea of an identity reference that the Portuguese *azulejo* claims to have, since the mid-19th century, and that is also the result of an assimilation of multiple influences.

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