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XIII Coloquio Ibérico de Geografía

Respuestas de la Geografía Ibérica a la crisis actual

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

24 – 27 de octubre 2012

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SPACE, CULTURE AND MUSIC: HOW PROVINCIAL WERE PROVINCIAL PORTUGUESE TOWNS AT THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY?

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Abstract
Portugal has been an administratively centralized country for various centuries. Culturally, it has been in the shadow of Lisbon, and to a secondary extent Oporto, that a number of provincial towns have thrived, both inland as well as on the coast. Their provincial status, often described as non-cosmopolitan, backwards, marginal, peripheral to development, and constructed in various forms, has created a frame of mind that persisted in time. This exploratory paper looks at cultural life through music in North Portugal at the turn of the nineteenth century, in particular at the city of Guimarães and attempts to provide some details of the transformation of music landscapes in the city.

Keywords: Province, Portugal, towns, music, Guimarães

1. MUSIC AND THE IDEA OF PROVINCE

Ulrich Beck (2006) defends a mélange principle on the bases that local, ethnic, religious and cosmopolitan cultures and traditions interpenetrate, interconnect and intermingle. For him, cosmopolitanism without provincialism is empty, and provincialism without cosmopolitanism is blind. Here I want to focus on the concrete manifestations of this cosmopolitanism-provincialism nexus in a particular town at a particular time: Guimarães, from the mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth
century. It was in the last decades of the nineteenth century that Portugal became more open to the outside, and with the circulation of ideas and people, a conscience of national backwardness emerged. Simultaneously, this was also a time when it became easier to travel within Portugal, by road and by train. In 1890 the railways started a service that toured Portugal. This trip and view allowed the elites from Lisbon to visit historical monuments, beaches, and thermal spas (Ramos, 1994: 565), constructing a sense of the country and of the province. At the same time, musicians, along with other intellectuals and artists inspired by Portuguese literary romanticism, as well as philological and ethnological research, became engaged with popular music, and from the 1880s to the 1920s this profound interest materialized in collecting, studying, and disseminating traditional popular music (Castelo-Branco and Toscano, 1998). Vianna da Motta, Alfredo Keil, Francisco de Lacerda, Ruy Coelho, Luís de Freitas Branco were some of the musicians that attempted to connect art with daily life and to establish a bridge between ‘high culture’ and the people, all embedded in a nationalist spirit.

In Portugal, nineteenth century music has not captured the attention of historians and musicologists to the same measure as that of previous centuries (Nery and Castro, 1991: 111). The reasons lie in the increasing gap between music in Portugal and abroad, in the fact that there is a lack of music scripts from this time, in poor archives, and mainly because the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been ‘declared’ as the golden age of Portuguese (polyphonic) music. In line with Leyshon, Matless and Revill (1998: 4), a geography of music is here understood not only as the sites where or about which music happens to be made, or over which music has diffused, but mainly as the spatialities that emerge as being formative of the sounding and resounding of music. Naturally, this is or should be a transdisciplinary exercise and effort.

2. MUSIC IN GUIMARÃES AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

In this paper I look at cultural life in Portugal, more specifically the north of Portugal, and Guimarães, a provincial town in the district of Braga, located 50 kilometers north of Oporto. The fifty kilometers that separated working-class industrial Guimarães from bourgeois commercial Oporto – connected by train since 1884 as mentioned – possibly represented a separation of two different worlds, in what music is concerned. In Oporto this was a flourishing epoch (Nery and Castro, 1991), and São João Theatre (originally Royal Theatre of São João, inaugurated in 1794) had a vast program of Italian opera and romantic bel canto, just as a number of private, elitist societies flourished (Liberal, 2009). Paradoxically, it was a Guimarães born musician, Bernardo Valentim Moreira de Sá (1853-1924), who played a key role in the cultural music dynamic of the city (Nery and Castro 1991) altering the musical panorama of the city, particularly in terms of musical taste and repertoire. He was a member of the chamber music group Sociedade de Quartetos, the origin of Orpheon Portuense in 1881 (still in existence today), founding member together with Augusto Marques Pinto, Nicolau Ribas, Miguel Ângelo Pereira and Joaquim Casella of the Society of Chamber Music in 1883. The ‘group of five’, as they were called, played in a series of concerts for about 6 years, which afforded the Oporto public the enjoyment of the best European solo and chamber music, almost always for the first time (…)’ (Liberal 2009: 60). Moreira de Sá also founded the Moreira de Sá Quartet in 1884, in which Guilhermina
Suggia (1878-1950) played from 1898. Moreira de Sá was decisive to the creation of the Oporto Conservatory and to its studies plan, which was later used to reform the national conservatory in Lisbon. Orpheon Portuense was indeed one of the musical centres of the country. Here Vianna da Motta, possibly the most remarkable Portuguese pianist of the twentieth century, played for the first time in the country the last Beethoven sonatas, Busoni’s transcriptions (dedicated to him), all of Chopin’s studies, and in 1897 the première of his symphony ‘A Pátria’ – Homeland – conducted by Moreira de Sá (one of his closest friends). This was ‘a work deeply symbolic of a certain mythology of a national ‘revival’’ (Nery e Castro, 1991: 156).

In the mid nineteenth century Guimarães retained a symbolic importance in the country, being the birth place of Afonso Henriques, the first Portuguese king, but its location, size and economic structure meant that it was another dormant provincial town, with about 7500 inhabitants (7568 in 1864; 7980 in 1878; 1611 in 1890; 9104 in 1900; 9550 in 1911). Nevertheless, it was precisely by the mid and late nineteenth century that the city and the region registered a boom in a still incipient industry and commerce. Textile exports to Brazil contributed to its development and growth, and at the end of the nineteenth century, a set of circumstances and initiatives transformed the city. The archaeologist Martins Sarmento was becoming a well-known international figure, result of his excavations at the archaeological sites of Briteiros and Sabroso (Iron Age settlements in the region), and his studies and publications. In 1877 he organized an important scientific meeting in Briteiros and in 1880 an excursion to the archaeological site, as part of the 9th International Congress of Anthropology and Prehistorical Archaeology (see Lemos, 1985; 1998). A year later the Sociedade Martins Sarmento was founded, for which the architect Marques da Silva was invited to make the project for a building (1890). Among its scientific objectives, the society also aimed at promoting education and professional skills, organizing conferences and courses for workers. In fact, from 1890 a weekly class of music principles and choral singing took place (Matos, 2009). In 1884, in the same year that the society launched the journal Revista de Guimarães, a major transformation occurred in the city and region, with the inauguration of the train connection between Guimarães and Porto. Also in 1884 a large Industrial Exposition, the first at a municipal level, a collective effort organized by Sociedade Martins Sarmento, was held. An industrial school was also launched and several urban changes and improvements were made. Significantly, and enveloped by political nationalism and a certain return to the origins, in 1887 a statue of Afonso Henriques was unveiled and in 1908, in the context of a national first look towards heritage, the Castle was classified as a national monument.

In this work we faced some problems with sources, since it is extremely difficult to reconstruct music landscapes solely from newspapers, and official municipal documents. Archives from theatres are inexistent or unavailable, therefore this is an exploratory work, combining various secondary sources and information from local newspapers. Thus, firstly this work will briefly look at formal music spaces and public spaces, and also at the role of the church, the military and of professional associations.

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1 Symptomatically, Guilhermina Suggia only played in Guimarães once, in the Jordão Theatre (opened in 1938), in 1947.
2 Motta’s 380 concerts in Portugal, 240 were in Lisbon (Beirão and Beirão, 1998).
2.1 Formal places for music

Music was an essential part of public ceremonies and daily life. Music in the private sphere is less well documented but was of no minor relevance. Influential and wealthy families organized regular dinner parties and concerts at home. In Guimarães, Count Margaride receptions in his mansion at Carmo square as well as those by the Toural nobleman, were famous\(^3\). At the end of the eighteenth century, Guimarães did not have any closed and proper place for the representation of operas and comedies (Braga, 1936)\(^4\), and most performances took place in temporary wooden floors and stages\(^5\) set up in squares, or in convents and monasteries (see below). By contrast, the nineteenth century marks an extremely dynamic time of theatre construction, for which there is scarce information regarding locations, construction and repertoires. The principal buildings were Casa da Ópera, 1819; Teatro de Vila Pouca, 1835; Teatro de São Francisco, 1849; Teatro D. Afonso Henriques, 1855 (figure 1); Teatro de Variedades, 1880; Teatro Recreios Dramáticos, Teatro do Largo do Retiro and Novo Teatro de Variedades, all in 1881; Teatro Gil Vicente, 1882; and Teatro-Salão Artístico Vimaranesense, 1884 (see Braga, 1937). Especially after the inauguration of Theatre Afonso Henriques, the urban music landscape changed, and in 1857 the local newspaper ‘A Tesoura de Guimarães’ stated: ‘Guimarães! It’s now a pleasure to be your son, newspapers, theatres, balls, all is shining’ (in Braga, 1937: 26). So far it has not been possible to reconstruct the full repertoire of the theatre, but in an exceptional year such as 1884, on the 20th April, the music program and the musicians was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Theatre D. Afonso Henriques program, 20 April 1884</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triumphal March, for band and orchestra – Guilherme Afflalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Escola, poetry recited by Artur Reis – José Cruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fontaine suèdoise, for violin played by Bernardo Moreira de Sá – Leonard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ela e o Canário, poetry recited by Alberto Bramão – Alberto Bramão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanca, Morceau de salon, for cello played by Augusto Suggia(^6) – Cesar Casella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Canário e ela, poetry recited by José Cruz – José Cruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenir de Moskow, for violin by Augusto Marques Pinto – Winniawbscky (at the piano Luciano Sollari Allegro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part II</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Filha do Sertão, original by Alberto Correia and José Cruz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Religião e Pátria (16 April 1884)

The newspaper Religião e Pátria (23 April 1884) stated that ‘it was truly notable what took place last Sunday in our theatre, in subsidy of Sociedade Martins Sarmento, offered by a group of distinct amateurs from Porto. The theatre was elegantly decorated with flowers, myrtles, ivy, and other embellishments artistically arranged, and the afflux of spectators was, beside very selected, so numerous, that there was not a single empty seat’. The performance ended at 2:00 am, and locals accompanied the amateur

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\(^{3}\) see Braga 1937 for examples of aristocratic parties, music and dances in private places in the late nineteenth century in Guimarães; see also Cymbron 2009 for an interesting case study from the Azores.

\(^{4}\) At the end of the sixteenth century, there were already a few formal places In Lisbon, such as Pátio das Arcas and Teatro da Mouraria, also known as Pátio da Bitesga (Braga 1936).

\(^{5}\) Oliveira (2008) analyzed the construction of an ephemeral wooden theatre at this time.

\(^{6}\) Guilhermina Suggia father.
participants to their hotel with a music band. The professional artists - Bernardo Moreira de Sá, Augusto Marques Pinto and Sollari Allegro left to Porto by train on that same night, at 4:40 am (Religião e Pátria 23 April 1884).

In the 1880s, D. Afonso Theatre also animated comic opera companies which included Carmen (George Bizet, 1875), Fra Diavolo (Daniel Auber, 1830) and Freischütz (Carl Maria von Weber, 1821). This was a period of great cultural activity, with many theatrical performances, masquerades, comic operas and so on. In 1907, and in many smaller cities earlier, cinema arrived to D. Afonso Henriques Theatre (the first itinerant exhibitions took place in 1897), with the ‘Kinematographo Theo Pathé’. This cultural activity declined in the 1910s, and most theatres closed down. In 1933, the authorization for the demolition of the D. Afonso Henriques Theatre was granted and in that same year Gil Vicente Theatre, which had opened in 1882, was labeled ‘indecent, smelly and unworthy of our city’ (Notícias de Guimarães, 1933, 5 February).

Figure 1: D. Afonso Henriques Theatre, 1912

Source: Caldas (1996: 128)

2.2 Public spaces and music

Music, songs and dances were heard on the streets, in taverns, tents, workshops, etc. As Lousada (2002: 20) refers for the case of Lisbon, ‘they were an integral part of the music landscapes in the city, mingling with noises from work, transports, glasses of wine in taverns, trading voices’. Naturally, streets, squares, public gardens or parks, have always been associated with festivities and music, and with a civic life that was flourishing at the turn of the century. Here religious ceremonies and processions were always accompanied by music, just as popular and political events (in 1886, for example, an hymn was composed for the deputy João Franco, for his contribute in the campaign towards municipal autonomy in Guimarães). Despite various projects, there was never a closed public park in Guimarães (Fernandes, 2005). In 1878 the garden at the Toural square opened to the public, and on Sundays there was music performed by the Hunters Company number 7. In fact, the territorial organization of the army allowed
for a certain cultural development of the province, and in many cases the only musical
groups were the regiments’ bands, and military musicians were the teachers, maestros
and even founders of philharmonic societies within civic society (Sousa, 2008). Often
military musicians played a key role in philharmonic bands providing technique and
perceived as ‘masters’. In the nineteenth century, the social revolution operated by
liberalism bands’ golden age, with the democratization of public schools and culture,
military music established a close relationship with society, through numerous public
concerts, which not only made known the works of the most prestigious composers, but
functioned also as music schools and as professional opportunities for musicians. In the
late nineteenth century, several reforms took place in the organization of military music
and distinct territorial organisation logics led to the 1879 displacement of the Hunters
Company number 7 from Guimarães to Valença, so concerts by this band did not last
long.

At this time, there was also a project for a bandstand in Toural. Although this
was a public space, certain rules promoted social elitism and physical segregation, and
only people using shoes and tie were allowed in, which led a certain dissatisfaction by
locals (Meireles, 2000). At the time, artists were aggravated by the situation and
protested, and shortly after these restrictions were cancelled (Teixeira, 2008: 102).
Naturally there was a social organization of the square, and there were specific places
and benches for each social class to listen to music concerts: on the south side, benches
with backs for high rank civil servants, bourgeoisie, traders and wealthy industrials,
high rank officers and captains; on the transverse ways, more modest bourgeoisie and
lower rank civil servants; in the remaining streets, standing up, were the rest of the
people.

In September 1879 the works of the bandstand - named Acoustic Pavillion of
Toural - were awarded to the company Costa Basto, from Oporto. In the following year
the whole metallic structure (fused in Oporto, in the Bulhão factory) was built, and at
the inauguration, the music group *União Vimaranense*, played from 6:00 to 10:30 pm
(Meireles 2000). Music bands often combined playing in religious events with concerts
in Toural. In 1883, after playing in the solemnizing of pilgrimage of S. Tiago, the music
band from Regiment Cavalry number 10 gave there a concert. The *Filarmónica Vimaranense*
followed the same routine, and in 1884, after playing in the festivities of
our Lady of August, gave a concert in the bandstand (Teixeira, 2008). These were active
years with various concerts, and from 1885, the Infantry music band number 20 played
regularly there for some years.

In 1888, the newspaper Zirro (27 May) states that on music days, it was
impossible to walk in Toural garden (mostly because there was a lot of people and
because many women wore very wide hat rims!). Not long after, in 1889, the
municipality agreed on building a new bandstand, at the request of the commission for
the festivities of S. John in Luzia street (it was never built). In 1903, already with
electric light, ‘Toural was a great place to be’ (Imparcial, 10 September). There were
concerts four days per week: Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (Imparcial, 8
October). After being painted on a few occasions (1901 and 1905), in July 1911 the
bandstand at Toural was moved to D. Afonso Henriques square (part of what is
presently Alameda) swapped by the statue of Afonso Henriques, and in 1912, the
newspaper O Lusitano (8 September) registers that the Infantry music band number 20
was considered incapable.

7 The construction of *coretos* (bandstands in Portuguese), symbolizes a passage from an enclosed space
such as the church choir into an exterior public space. It is an imported French way of life, typical of a
bourgeois society, embedded with an oriental flair architecture.
2.3. Religion and professional associations

Religion was one of the principal motivations for musical moments. Processions in the city or even to Penha mountain, were always accompanied by music groups, as well as other events outside the church, such as the blessing of a cross, and oratory or building. Naturally, convents and monasteries were widely used for sacred performances. The church was always attentive not to allow what was considered indecent behavior, and throughout time, on many occasions, various activities such as dancing, singing profane songs, bull flights at the churchyard, playing games, and so on were prohibited (see Braga, 1937). The present existence of 10 pipe organs in Guimarães, witnesses the important music landscape that reached its peak during the eighteenth century. The proximity to Braga, a major religious centre and bishopric, allowed for various important connections. For instances, Francisco António Solha (1758-1785), from Pontevedra in Galicia, who worked with Frei Simon Fontanes in the pipe organs of Braga Cathedral, lived in Guimarães and was responsible for various works in the city. Naturally, from the 1834 extinction of religious orders and with the 1910 republican impact on the church, various seminars closed down, heritage was vandalized, and many musical dynamics, such as music learning, were affected (i.e. Montariol college in Braga). In fact, it was under a difficult social and political context that the liturgical congresses of Vila Real (1926) and Braga (1928) took place, and they reveal the concerns of the council regarding music learning (Ferreira, 2009).

8 From Raimundo Fernandes postcard collection.
9 Igreja do Carmo, de São Domingos, Capela Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Misericórdia, São Sebastião, Santa Marinha da Costa, Santo António dos Capuchos, Santos Passos, Colegiada da Nossa Senhora da Oliveira.
Promoted by liberals and masons, many professional, humanitarian, cultural and leisure associations (notably fire corporations) established philharmonic groups from the nineteenth century onwards (Ramos, 1994). They duplicated the military musical groups, using uniforms and being dominated by woodwinds and percussion. Let me provide a few examples of the musical moments they provided in Guimarães. The inaugural festivity of the association of the workers of the four arts of civil construction took place on May 1812, and a music group walked the streets playing the association anthem (Costa, s.d.: 58). The association of the business employees of Guimarães organized a dinner in which the new philharmonic of Guimarães played an original anthem (Comércio de Guimarães, 25 September 1903). The catholic working circle of Guimarães organized free music lessons. Members who liked and were music gifted could attend night classes (Costa s.d. 30-31). The approval of the statutes of the Professional Association of shoe makers of Guimarães (Associação de Classe dos Operários e Fabricantes de Calçado de Guimarães) was celebrated with music on the city streets. A music group walked the streets (Comércio de Guimarães, 17 February 1905 and A Justiça de Guimarães, 19 February 1905). The celebration of the anniversary of this same association was somehow similar, with a music band walking the streets.

Two important inaugurations took place in 1903: firstly the musical society of Guimarães, which had an important role in promoting music in the city, and secondly the Guises Band, which lasted up to 1973. This musical group has an interesting history and became the most important musical group in the city for many decades. It was originally formed by 22 modest working class men, many of whom from a family named Guises. They were partly sponsored by some wealthy industrials, and certainly represented a provincial and industrial urban environment. On the day of its inauguration the ‘new philharmonic’ played in the streets, in a church where mass was held, and at night in Toural bandstand, which was embellished for the occasion (Comércio de Guimarães 27 March 1903). Later the band acquired different names10, but it was always popularly known as Banda dos Guises. The band animated festivities in the city, entered regional contests and toured the region. Matos (2009), on an analysis of the repertoire of the Banda dos Guises (here spilling over the period of analysis) illustrates that over half of the pieces were overtures (marches, original overtures, transcriptions of original works11), and among these especially marches, since they were easier to rehearsal and more suitable for playing on the move. Procession marches were also important, especially during lent and in funerals. Concert works (rhapsodies, popular phantasies, pot-pourri, zarzuelas, valses and valses’ suites) and classical pieces made the rest of the repertoire.


11 ‘It was common to listen to overtures from the operas Tanhäuser and Rienzi from Richard Wagner, overture 1812 and Italian Capriccio from P. Tchaikovsky, the 4th movement of the Symphony of the New World by A. Dvorák or the overtures of the Barber of Seville and William Tell by Rossini’ (Matos 2009, 23). Unfortunately no dates are given for these performances.
3. CONCLUDING NOTES

This is an exploratory paper so I must proceed with caution in the conclusions. The mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was a dynamic cultural period in the city of Guimarães, registering the production of numerous cultural spaces such as theatres, the vibrant existence of a bandstand at the centre of the city and the birth of numerous cultural and professional associations with a strong relation with music. Certainly that 1884 was an exceptional year in which cultural activities and initiatives transcended the size of the city. These dynamics were possibly extended through the 1880s and 1890s. Music life seemed unquestionably healthy. Nevertheless, it is rather difficult to survey and clearly define the details of many activities and events, and therefore to assess their social and cultural impacts. It is nonetheless possible to read a certain provincial character of the city, since the absence of the bourgeois concert hall, the lack of solid establishments for professional musicians’ qualifications prevented cultural distinction and sophistication. Most music advances were produced within music bands and did not last in time. Apart from very specific moments, popular music made by amateur musicians, mostly through brass bands, entertained specific religious or profane festivities and dominated a music landscape that seems to be very distant from that of Oporto at the same time. Certainly a deeper study of the music landscapes
of Guimarães is needed, but especially in relation to what took place in cities of similar size and in comparison to what took place in Oporto. That is a task that is still to be accomplished.

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This paper was developed in the context of the project ‘Vida Cultural em Cidades de Província. Espaço Público, Sociabilidades e Representações (1840-1920)’ (PTDC/CS-GEO/100726/2008)'