

VITRINE DE CURIOSIDADES



Manuel de Faria e Sousa

Epitome de las Historias Portuguesas, Dividido en Quatro Partes

Francisco Foppens

Brussels, 1677

Paper, leather and ink

BM-HIST-00743

Entre muchos Científicos Supuestos

Eligen a Faria,

Que en Historia, y Poesia

Saben, que no pudiera

Darle mayor la Lusitana Esfera.

Lope de Vega, *Laurel de Apolo, com otras Rimas*, 1630, p. 27.

This month's Cabinet of Curiosities highlights a work by Manuel de Faria e Sousa entitled *Epitome de las Historias Portuguesas, Dividido en Quatro Partes (Adornado de los retratos de sus Reyes com sus principales hazañas)*, which, although edited in Lisbon in 1628, would only be published forty-nine years later, posthumously, in Brussels.

Throughout its three hundred and eighty-seven pages, the pen of the author – a prolific historian, poet, epistolary writer, literary critic and polygraph by trade, considered one of the most erudite and talented men of his time – describes stories from the history of Portugal and the exploits of its kings, without neglecting the generosity of its climate, the riches of its soil, or forgetting to list its illustrious writers. Following the trend of the historiographical current in force, his narrative, embellished with the most refined rhetoric, similar to that of Gaspar Frutuoso or Leitão de Andrade, extols the deeds and glories of his ancestors as a guarantee of the prestige of a distant past.

Written in a century which, in different European nations – due to the public's taste for chivalric romances and travel literature – a market for vernacular imagery and mythology developed, this epitome sought to fulfil the goal of renewing Portugal's cultural prestige. Although written in Castilian, because it was during the period of the Iberian Union, the expressions of anti-Philip sentiment and national autonomy contained therein led to Manuel de Faria e Sousa being denounced to the Spanish Inquisition. Despite the accusations were not upheld, he was forced to take up residence in Madrid, where he eventually died on 3 June 1649.

This piece is part of the Library of the Documentation Centre of the Museum of Angra do Heroísmo.

