

Abstract

Influences of viola and the guitar in local keyboard repertoires during the reign of Queen Maria I (1777-1816): modinhas, minuets and dance rhythms.

Plucked strings had a strong presence in private music-making in Portugal, reaching a wide audience that at the end of the *Ancien* regime was increasing greatly. This same audience, which played *viola* or guitar (leaving aside for the moment organological detail) would, indeed, be renewed with the commercial exploitation of the piano, amongst other consumer and entertainment goods, and their repertoires. The processes of appropriation of resources that distinguished the high aristocracy and the recognition of the reach of the cosmopolitan *salon* even conferred a certain civilizing power on certain instruments, as noted by Charles Burney, when he observed that “there is hardly a private family in a civilized nation without its flute, its fiddle, its harpsichord, or guitar?”¹

As well as its consistent presence among the aristocracy, and especially female society, as we shall see further on, it is also the case that the guitar was viewed as an important means of being fashionable. An example is found in popular theatre (*teatro de cordel*), in the play *O Teimoso em Não Casar* (n.d.), which in the characterization of the man role shows a man averse to marriage because he does not wish to support the bad manners of modern women. When he is asked if this hostility extends to entertainment, this inveterate bachelor (Francillo) responds:

I have two fine *violas*
With them I enjoy myself as I wish,
And if somebody comes
and plays the second nicely,
I'm not concerned about being a *Taful*,

¹ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, (T. Becket and Co., 1773), 6.

and play the guitar too.²

It is likely that this passage may already refer to the “English guitar”³, given that the term *viola*, in accordance with Portuguese terminology, has just been used by the same character to describe other instruments. It should also be noted that this guitar appears in conjunction with the person described as *taful* (one who concerns himself excessively, and therefore ridiculously, with being fashionable), which implies the 1780s.

(.....)

² [Anon.] *Entremez do Teimozo em não Cazar* (Lisbon: Oficina de António Gomes, n.d.), 11.

³ The “English guitar” is a pear-shaped cordophone. The instrument normally has ten metal strings (steel for the two first courses, brass for the third, steel covered with yarn for the fifth and sixth single strings), grouped in four courses or double strings and two single strings (bourdons); to some examples is added a simple low bourdon, making a total of eleven strings. Its six courses are tuned *c–e–g–c'–e'–g'*. Some examples are made with a keyboard of six keys placed on the cover. The lack of a standard terminology to describe a variety of historic wire-strung plucked instruments with similar features, has caused significant controversy among scholars.