

Portugal as *Nostos* Interrupted

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Abstract: In the present article, I examine the role of prophecy in Gabriel Pereira de Castro's *Ulisseia* (1636) and António de Sousa de Macedo's *Ulissipo* (1640), two pre-Restoration epics that center on Odysseus as the mythological founder of Lisbon. In both epics, a prophecy drives the hero to found Lisbon as a precondition for making his *nostos* to Ithaka while also speaking of a fabled warrior landing at the future site of Lisbon in order to found a great empire. This prophecy echoes others that predict the return of the *Encoberto*, yet they also tempt Odysseus into forgetting his *nostos* for the sake of Lisbon's foundation. Insofar as forgetting one's *nostos* is associated with a deathlike state (*lêthê*) in epic poetry, the parallel between Odysseus and the *Encoberto* strongly suggests that the imperial enterprise itself is a hazard that leads the hero towards oblivion and death.

Keywords: epic, prophecy, apocalypse, Restoration, *Sebastianismo*, *nostos*.

Built around the literary figure of Odysseus, Gabriel Pereira de Castro's *Ulisseia* (1636) and António de Sousa de Macedo's *Ulissipo* (1640) work to link the Homeric hero's alleged foundation of Lisbon to prophecies regarding the *Encoberto*. Taking the ancient Greek concept of *nostos* (homecoming) as central to this link, I contend in the present study that by essentially forgetting about Ithaka in both epics (recalled only at the last moment in the *Ulisseia* and abandoned altogether in the *Ulissipo*), Odysseus places the *Encoberto* prophecies on shaky ground—even as both poems seek to lend them a measure of credibility.

Prophecies about the return of the *Encoberto* were especially prevalent during the decades preceding the 1640 Restoration, and within Pereira de Castro

and Macedo's epics these prophecies would dovetail with Odysseus's fraught *nostos*. In Homer's *Odyssey*, we learn that the hero languished for seven years on Ogygia, Kalypso's island, in a forgetful daze (*lêthê*). He is rescued only by a divine intervention that allows him to resume his journey homeward. In the *Ulisseia* and the *Ulissipo*, it is the lure of an empire centered far away in Lisbon rather than his enchantment on Ogygia that imperils Odysseus's *nostos*; the result of this is an analogous foreclosing, or at least a problematization of the *Encoberto*'s return. For even if the *Encoberto* were to return to Portugal, Pereira de Castro and Macedo's epics present the kingdom that he would find as little more than an Atlantic Ogygia, the source of a seductive, albeit chaotic form of *lêthê*. What also emerges from this framework, I conclude, is a more generalized theory of empire in seventeenth-century Portugal as an impediment to *nostos* and a one-way foray into *lêthê* and death.

The Encoberto Myth

Though a constant in Christianity since Late Antiquity, prophecy acquired new vigor in Portugal in the fifteenth century as the kingdom's empire grew. Aggrandizing hopes of future greatness found themselves intertwined with the Arthurian legend of the hidden king, *O Encoberto*, which Isidore of Seville had putatively given an Iberian spin in the seventh century CE. Carole Myscowski notes that the convergence of these currents fueled belief in a destiny for the Portuguese monarchy (and nation) that was nothing short of transcendent: "The Portuguese monarchy was, in this vision, conceived of as divinely established, uniting earthly and sacred powers in the person of its human representative" (79). The fervent forms of faith in such a destiny derive in no small part, of course, from the presence of Jewish messianic thought in medieval and early modern Portuguese culture (Beselaar, *Sebastianismo* 32-34; Ferro Tavares; and Myscowski 79-83).

Between the mid-sixteenth century and the eve of the Restoration of 1640, self-styled prophets such as Gonçalo Annes de Bandarra (whose *Trovas* were published in 1603, though they were written over a half-century earlier) heralded the coming of the *Encoberto* in the guise of the Last World Emperor or a Universal Monarch who would dock in Lisbon on a misty morning and, mounting a white horse, restore the kingdom to its former glory by launching

an expedition to recapture the Holy Land. The earliest and most elaborate version of this myth appears in an apocalyptic text falsely attributed to the fourth-century Church Father Methodius of Olympus (Pseudo-Methodius), translated haphazardly from Greek into Latin in the late seventh century and adapted by the mystic Joachim of Fiore in the twelfth century. Pseudo-Methodius prophesied that a messianic king would wrench Christendom from the jaws of destruction and usher in a golden age. But, as foreseen in Revelation, the gates restraining Gog and Magog would soon fly open and both tribes would flood out to wreak havoc upon the world. Acknowledging the futility of resistance, the king would journey to Jerusalem, place his crown on the site of the cross at Golgotha, and “give up his soul to his creator,” thereby creating a power vacuum (Pseudo-Methodius 50). The Antichrist would then appear to assert dominion over the earth until Christ’s second coming.

Writing in the wake of Portugal’s incorporation into the Iberian Union in 1581, João de Castro would cast D. Sebastião in the role of *Encoberto* and thus, as the Last World Emperor or Universal Monarch. This is evidenced in three works: *Da quinta e última monarquia futura* (1597), *Discurso da vida do sempre bem vindo, e aparecido rei D. Sebastião*, a prophecy-laden biography of the monarch published in 1602, and *Paráfrase e concordância de algumas profecias de Bandarra* (1603), a partial commentary on Bandarra’s *Trovas*.¹ This second work would blend Bandarra’s *Trovas* with prophecies from Scripture, the Patristic tradition, and biblical apocrypha—often of dubious attribution—in order to identify the *Encoberto* as D. Sebastião.

Castro, meditating on the disaster at Al-Qasr al-Kbīr, maintains that Portugal’s fall from grace is a sure sign of its redemption. According to Castro, the jubilation of the messianic era numbs the pains of the present, which, as in Purgatory, are purifying punishments. D. Sebastião’s implacable pride cost Portugal its independence and reputation, a change so swift that the kingdom “é hoje a mais vil e deprezada de Europa” (Castro, *Vida* 127^v). However miserable this punishment, Castro stresses that it is temporary: God’s pact with Afonso I before the Battle of Ourique in 1139 guarantees that Portugal will suffer temporarily after sixteen generations of kings, but that God will then renew his mercy (*Vida* 124^r). For Castro, the long winter of captivity was even then

melting away; history at the close of the sixteenth century was a mere stepping-stone to the coming of spring, when D. Sebastião would wake from his sleep to vanquish the Muslim world and recapture the Levant (*Vida* 129^v-130^r). This constant insistence on the king's imminent awakening in effect turns the present into a cramped antechamber of the future.

As the seventeenth century progressed, the temporal folding intrinsic to Sebastianism gained traction. It became influential during the two decades leading up to the 1640 restoration of Portuguese sovereignty, when opposition to the Count-Duke of Olivares's financial and military policies spread from the popular classes to the clergy and eventually to the Portuguese nobility. The title of *Encoberto* therefore came to rest on the missing D. Sebastião for the bulk of Portugal's incorporation into the Iberian Union. The *Encoberto* came to epitomize Portuguese independence from Castilian domination, and it became a precursor for discourse related to the *Quinta Monarquia* or *Quinto Império* after the 1640 Restoration.

Odysseus and the Legendary Foundation of Lisbon

Composing their epic poems in the messianic milieu of the Restoration, Pereira de Castro and Macedo seized upon an ancient myth according to which Odysseus had founded *Olisipo*—Lisbon's original name—while on his way back from Troy. This legend originates in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*, when Proteus describes Elysium to Menelaus as an idyllic plain at the far western edge of the world, irrigated only by ocean breezes wafting over the coastline: “[T]he immortals will convoy you to the Elysian / Field and the limits of the earth,” proclaims the sea god, “where there is made the easiest life for mortals, / for there is no snow, nor much winter there, nor is there ever / rain, but always the stream of the Ocean sends up breezes / of the West Wind blowing briskly for the refreshment of mortals” (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.563-69). Throughout classical antiquity, many geographers and historians believed that “the limits of the earth” to which Proteus refers lay somewhere on the western extremes of the Iberian Peninsula, beyond the Pillars of Hercules where Odysseus is thought to have ventured.

In ancient Rome, *Olisipo* and orthographical variations of the name became something of a geographical commonplace that was often mentioned

yet seldom elaborated upon in any depth. First among the extant allusions to *Olisipo* is book two, chapter one of *De rerum rusticarum libri tres* by Marcus Terentius Varro (59-27 BCE). Building on geographical observations by Greek scholars writing around 100 BCE, chiefly Posidonius, Artemedorus of Ephesus, and Asclepiades of Milreia, Strabo (20 BCE-23 CE) complicates matters in his *Geographia* (III.3.1) by mentioning two cities: *Ulysseia* and *Olysiþión* (a variant of *Olisipo*), the first entirely mythical, the second a Roman *municipium* along the Tagus River dating back to the second century BCE. Another ancient Roman source that links Odysseus to *Olisipo* is Pomponius Mela's *De situ orbis* I.3 (c. 43 CE), a geographical study composed during the early years of the Roman Empire. Other noteworthy references to the city include two passages (IV.113-17 and VIII.166) in the *Naturalis historia* of Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE), in which he mentions the settlement multiple times and calls the promontory overlooking the Tagus the "*Olissiponense*." *Olisipo* also makes an appearance in book two, chapter three of Claudius Ptolemy's *Geographia* (c. 150 CE) and in the *Itineraria Antonini Augusti et Burdigalense*, a third-century CE register of the road network winding throughout the Roman empire, commissioned originally under Julius Caesar and carried out under his successor, Augustus. References to the city in later centuries include chapter twenty-three of Gaius Julius Solinus's *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (third century CE) and book four of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, an encyclopedic work written as a didactic allegory between 410 and 429 CE.

Bridging the classical and medieval approaches to the myth was Isidore of Seville, who in his *Etymologiae* (early seventh century) attributes Lisbon's foundation to Odysseus. According to Isidore, "Olisipona (i.e., *Olissipo*, Lisbon) was founded and named by Ulysses; historians say that in this place the sky is separated from the earth and the seas from the lands" (XV.1.70). Along with classical authorities, this late-antique reference to the myth percolated into a variety of medieval genres, such as the *Passionarium hispanicum*, a martyrology compiled between the seventh and eleventh centuries; *Vita prima beati Antonii* (c. 1232), a hagiography of Anthony of Padua written shortly after his death; and *Crucesignati anglici epistola de expugnatione Olisiponis* (c. 1150), an epistolary chronicle of Afonso I's conquest of Lisbon in 1147 allegedly narrated from the perspective

of Raul de Glanville, an English crusader. Other than Isidore of Seville, the most significant medieval adaptation of the Lisbon foundation myth was Pedro Afonso's *Crónica geral de 1344* and Alfonso X of Castile's *General estoria*, both of which draw on a large array of ancient and earlier medieval texts.²

In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese humanist André de Resende would challenge Lorenzo Valla's attempt in his *Historiarum Fernandini regis Aragoniæ libri tres* (1445-46) to debunk the connection between Odysseus and *Oli-sipo* by reworking a brief section of Strabo's *Geographia* in *Vincentius levita et martyr* (1545) and in his posthumous *Antiquitatibus lusitaniæ* (1593).³ As versified in sections 44 to 49 in *Vincentius's* "Liber posterior," Odysseus founded a city named "Odysseiam" along the Tagus that, as Resende believed, was: "nunc clarissima toto / cognita in orbe" 'now the most famous in the world' (*Vincentius* 26). Lisbon's proximity to the Strait of Gibraltar (Homer's Pillars of Hercules) gave reason for Resende and other Portuguese humanists like Damião de Góis to believe that *Oli-sipo* may have been an archaic name for Lisbon, where Odysseus had sojourned on his wayward route back to Ithaka. Far more doubtful about the veracity of the myth than Resende, Góis was nonetheless inclined to agree with him: "We are more inclined to accept the opinion of an illustrious writer such as he than to adopt the ideas of naysayers who scoff at him without any solid argument of their own" (*Lisbon* 8).⁴ The renewed discussion of the myth in the sixteenth century coincided with the zenith of Portugal's maritime empire before its official incorporation into the Habsburg Spanish empire in 1581. That it remained in circulation just as prophecies of the *Encoberto's* looming return gained traction makes their synthesis in Pereira de Castro and Macedo's epics less than surprising.⁵

In the *Ulisseia* and the *Ulissipo*, Odysseus's stopover becomes a precondition for his *nostos*, starting with a divine commission at the outset that drives the plot along until the city walls rise along the Tagus. While Pereira de Castro's version of the myth hews more to Homer's *Odyssey*, itself populated with deities from the Greek pantheon, Macedo takes a markedly Christian tack by situating Lisbon's foundation in the crossfire between the underworld and the Judeo-Christian God. Aside from their religious latticework, the major events of the epics are largely the same: Odysseus lands in Lusitania and meets King Gargoris, the Tartessian ruler, who by supernatural means is urged to wage war against

the hero, sparking battles that result in a Greek victory.⁶ Odysseus falls in love with Gargoris' daughter in each poem, an act of infidelity resolved only when he makes his *nostos* to Ithaka in the *Ulisseia* and abandons it completely in the *Ulissipo* upon receiving a false message from Antinoös that his wife, Penelope, has died very suddenly. Significantly, both epics rely heavily on prophecies of foundation and of *nostos* to hail Odysseus as the mythical founder of an empire then awaiting the emergence of its *Encoberto*.

Odysseus as Proto-Encoberto

Prophecies abound in the *Ulisseia* and the *Ulissipo*, and none more than those lauding Lisbon's foundation by Odysseus as a prelude to the Portuguese empire's apotheosis under a revived *Encoberto*. In the *Ulisseia*, rather than prophesy to Menelaus as he does in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*, Proteus promises Odysseus that “[a]ntes de ver o porto que desejas / Entre o furor dos procelosos mares / ... Lá onde Febo morre, onde outro mundo / Espero de seu rosto claridade; / Neste lugar o fado mais jocundo / Te permite fundar uma cidade” (2.85-86). Founding Lisbon thus becomes a precondition for *nostos* even if the war that foundation provokes also imperils the hero's life. Moreover, the prophecies delivered to Odysseus bear a striking resemblance to those that fueled D. Sebastião's ill-fated sally into the Moroccan desert in 1578. In the *Ulisseia*, this resemblance first appears when Circe addresses the hero:

‘Aqui neste lugar os nobres muros
Levantará com glória, a que tremendo
Todo o Oriente, em séculos futuros,
Inclinará a cerviz obedecendo,
Quando ao mundo nasceram aqueles puros
Espíritos que o Elísio está detendo
Até que o tempo vagaroso e lento
Traga o dia a seu claro nascimento.’ (3.125)

The hero becomes the progenitor of a destiny to which he bears witness firsthand when Circe accompanies him on a *katabasis* to Elysium. Among the

last of Portugal's monarchs whom Odysseus sees before the kingdom's shift to Habsburg control is D. Sebastião, who: "[q]uer pisar a cerviz do velho Atlante; / Intenta ver a um tempo destruído / De Marrocos o muro e Turudante" (Pereira de Castro 4.105). Aware that D. Sebastião had heeded Luís de Camões's exhortation to conquer Africa in the last strophes of *Os Lusíadas* (1572), Pereira de Castro depicts Odysseus as he observes the monarch act with prophetic zeal. For while Homer's hero acts on a vision of building an empire to which all of "o Oriente ... / Inclinará a cerviz obedecendo," Sebastião strives to realize it by crushing "a cerviz do velho Atlante" (Pereira de Castro 3.125, 4.105). That both act hastily on these prophecies throws into question their shared fate and, more importantly, whether the imperial project allows for *nostos* at all.⁷

In the *Ulisseia*, images of D. Sebastião's latter-day crusade into Morocco paradoxically motivate Odysseus to establish Lisbon while they also bemoan the monarch's folly. Circe exhorts Odysseus to marvel at the boy-king as he envisions unparalleled victories:

'Vê bem o grave e carregado aspecto
 Com que um mudo pavor nas almas cria
 E nota que em seu rosto e forte peito
 Grandes cousas se vem com a fantasia,
 Que dá esperanças o famoso objeto
 De não imaginada monarquia,
 Mil sombras de inimigos debelados
 O cercam, mil de reinos conquistados.' (Pereira de Castro 4.106)

Rendered in D. Sebastião's boundless "fantasia," these "[g]randes cousas" echo and anticipate other prophecies the hero receives throughout the *Ulisseia* and the *Ulissipo*. Here, Circe maps an earlier allusion onto Odysseus's "empório, uma cidade / A cujo ceptro sua riqueza própria / Renderá Pérsia, Arábia e Etiópia" onto the "[m]il sombras de inimigos debelados" and "mil de reinos conquistados" (Pereira de Castro 3.98, 4.106). Ostensibly driven to Lusitania to fulfill his *nostos*, Odysseus also identifies with D. Sebastião. Prophecy instills in the hero "esperanças" to accomplish something loftier than heading home, to

attain the “famoso objeto” of a “não imaginada monarquia” (Pereira de Castro 4.106). Odysseus’s homecoming is thereby made subordinate to or even competes with raising the walls of Lisbon, and with them, the imperial monarchy seared into his imagination.

Strangely enough, Circe prefaces her exhortation to Odysseus by disclosing the catastrophe at Al-Qasr al-Kbīr and the impossibility of D. Sebastião’s *nostos*. She bellows out, “ah!, que vejo ao reino sua ruína / Num rei que é moço e só se determina” (Pereira de Castro 4.105). This ruinous outcome notwithstanding, Odysseus empathizes with the vanquished monarch in an incomplete manuscript version of the *Ulisseia* found in Évora (Segurado e Campos x). When he learns of D. Sebastião’s death, “[m]ostrá Ulisses nas lágrimas saudosas / Sentir a alheia dor não como alheia” (Pereira de Castro 4.109).⁸ As it seems, a similar destiny inflicts similar pains—so similar, in fact, that Odysseus feels them himself.

Deeply impacted by the loss of *feitorias* on the Moroccan coast such as Safi and Azamor during his long minority, D. Sebastião came to believe that destiny called him to recover these lost enclaves, a future battle he grounded in the crusading rhetoric that his Jesuit tutors had used to educate him (Baños-García 50-57; Fonseca 31-41). Sebastião’s desire for a “não imaginada monarquia” still smoldered in 1574 when, inspired by his uncle Felipe II’s overwhelming victory at Lepanto, he began planning a crusade to recover Portugal’s Moroccan territories from the Sa’adis. Unyielding in the face of entreaties from Felipe II and ‘Abd al-Malik, the Sa’adi sultan, to call off his expedition, D. Sebastião led himself and thousands of soldiers to their deaths on August 4, 1578. Several chroniclers at Al-Qasr al-Kbīr remark how the monarch threw himself headlong into the fray, so sure of the righteousness of his cause that he may very well have mistaken al-Malik’s encroaching army for the “[m]il sombras de inimigos debelados” (Pereira de Castro 4.106).⁹ What D. Sebastião’s “fantasia” perceived as the pinnacle of martial glory was also its nadir, the final seconds before he and the Avis dynasty met their end.

Similarly to Pereira de Castro, Macedo uses the *Ulissipo* to dangle prophecies as carrots to drive Odysseus and his fellows Greeks forward through immense toils. Paramount among these prophecies is a legend that spread among

the Lusitanians that closely resembles the *Encoberto* myth sketched above. During an audience with Gargoris on the Tagus, Odysseus witnesses Aucano—presumably Gargoris’ high priest—sacrifice a bull to Neptune. Puzzled, the hero asks “[p]orque a Neptuno ... / Sacrificais na Lusitana terra? / Ensinou-vos primeiro a policia / De domar os cavalos para a guerra?” (Macedo 5.57). Aucano responds by narrating the legend of a seafaring warrior destined to reach Lusitania’s shores and erect a great empire. The priest attributes this legend to an event that occurred three years earlier, when Casillia, Gargoris’s moribund spouse, implored a sage named Chiron to prophesy the fate of her daughter:

‘Este lhe disse que nos astros via
(Se a figura astrológica não erra)
Que à corrente do Tejo a portaria
Um insigne varão em paz, e em guerra;
Que o nome seu perpétuo deixaria
No lugar mais sublime de alta serra;
Que a este digno esposo destinado
Tinha a Calipso o soberano fado.

Que inda que outra consorte lhe impedisse
Novo himeneu, daria finalmente
O fado traça como que o mundo visse
Que o segundo ficava conveniente.
E que, por mais que a inveja resistisse,
Capitão valeroso, e rei prudente,
Levantarão padrão de tanta glória,
Que infunda alento a mais feliz memória.’ (Macedo 5.59-60)

Knowing that her time is short, Casillia requests that Gargoris bury her ashes atop a promontory overlooking the Tagus where her spirit can observe the fleet sail up the river mouth. “[N]os astros via” casts a mantic net over the entire passage by presenting it as more than a chance occurrence (Macedo 5.59). As with the *Ulisseia* (which does not contain this prophecy), providence

places Odysseus on a path to Lusitania as a prerequisite to his *nostos* from the very beginning of the *Ulissipo*. Years of peripatetic hopscotching around the Mediterranean straighten into the sharp edges of a prophetic destiny, “altamente decretado,” that demanded that “fosse a Ithaka armada o instrumento [i.e., Odysseus] / Para ser cá no mundo edificado / A lei divina estável fundamento” (Macedo 1.34). This destiny faces opposition not only at sea, where Neptune buffets the Greek fleet, but on land as well, where Hades stirs up paranoia and jealousy in Gargoris and in his prized soldier, Polymion.

That Odysseus, however much “a inveja resistisse,” is fated to build up a “padrão de tanta glória” draws a clear parallel with the *Encoberto* and D. Sebastião in particular (Macedo 5.60). This parallel crops up in João de Castro’s *Discurso da vida* and *Paráfrase*, both of which contain a prophecy attributed to Isidore of Seville proclaiming that “[s]azón llegará que el Encubierto vendrá a España en su caballo de madera, y estará aquí, y de muchos no será creído” (*Vida* 39^r; *Paráfrase* 105^v-106^r).¹⁰ A similar myth appears in two anonymous Sebastianist treatises penned during the post-Restoration period—namely, *Ante-Vieira* (1661) and *Opinião contrária à ressurreição del-rei D. João IV* (1661)—that derive from a Castilian *copla* by João de Rocacelsa, a late fifteenth-century Benedictine friar living at the Montserrat Monastery: “[s]ale con nuevo pendón / El caballo mariano, / Deja el Ausonio Trojano / Para otra ocasión” (Besselaar, *Vieira* 197-98). Recalling Isidore’s alleged prophecy, the “caballo” in each prophecy refers to a ship on whose prow the *Encoberto* will stand as it docks in Lisbon.

Mirroring the “caballo mariano” in Rocacelsa’s *copla* and “caballo de madera [equo ligneo]” that Castro links to Isidore of Seville is the arrival of the “ventura armada,” as Chiron prophesies in the *Ulissipo* (Macedo 5.64). The hopes of the Lusitanians and their Portuguese descendants rest on a messianic figure who either comes to seed imperial glory or to revive it. Rather than being ends in themselves, however, this seeding and revival are in theory paths to *nostos*, the joyous moment when Odysseus hangs his sword above his hearth in Ithaka and the *Encoberto* (most likely D. Sebastião) returns to Portugal. Evidently, both Pereira de Castro and Macedo recast Odysseus as an *Encoberto avant la lettre*. Prodded onward by the prospect of tranquility, *nostos* is not a simple homecoming, but a safe arrival after staving off lethal dangers (Bonifazi 501). In the

Odyssey, it refers to a glorious return after the Greek victory over Troy as well as an escape from any potential hazards along the way.

Given their epic scope, however, the glory of empire remains more tempting in both poems than a completed *nostos*, even if Odysseus's reason for attaining that glory is for the sake of *nostos* in the first place. Predicating *nostos* on imperial feats unveils remarkable parallels between the prophecies that motivate him and those that drove D. Sebastião to an untimely death. Curiously, in the *Ulissipo*, Odysseus seems to forget about *nostos* altogether, a point to which I will return. What matters for the moment is that even if *nostos* is not an explicit motivator propelling the hero to Lusitania, prophecy motivates him nonetheless. When Odysseus learns that he is fated to “fundar alta cidade / Onde has de eternizar nome glorioso,” he finds resolve that the Delphic Sibyl later bolsters with similar prophecies (Macedo 1.58).

Likewise, by linking Odysseus and D. Sebastião's ambitions, Pereira de Castro implies in the *Ulisseia* that the imperial enterprise—whether building Lisbon's walls or recovering lost enclaves in Morocco—imperils the possibility of *nostos*. The allure of expansion and of rekindling past crusades attests to the “grandes cousas” and “esperanças” that incite both Odysseus and D. Sebastião to act (Pereira de Castro 4.106). *Nostos*, in this case, becomes secondary. In a similar fashion, Odysseus does not mention Ithaka again until he has a sudden change of heart at the end of the *Ulisseia*. The lapse in memory (*lêthê*) that deters him from returning to Ithaka resonates with D. Sebastião's death insofar as *nostos* can be understood as a departure from both *lêthê* and death.

Between Forgetting and Death

As mentioned earlier, *nostos* in its original sense refers to a felicitous homecoming, yet as Bonifazi stresses, it is also flexible enough to accommodate a variety of related denotations, such as the evasion of fatal hazards. She observes that due to this semantic density, “[s]everal Odyssean passages show an attraction between the opposing ideas of *nostos* and that of destruction/death” (501). Similarly, as Vincent Barletta observes in reference to Gregory Nagy's work, *nostos* is etymologically linked both to the verb *néomai* (to return) and to *nóos* (mind), signaling both the link between “*nóos* and the concept of return and

between *nóos* and the possibility of life after death” (38-39). To delay *nostos* is therefore to empower its opposite, which for both Bonifazi and Barletta is death and destruction. Karen Bassi, however, understands *nostos* to be a stasis that approximates *lêthê* or a lack of interest in continuing onward. A case in point is Odysseus’s many interactions with conniving goddesses and minor deities throughout the *Odyssey*. Odysseus falls into the snares of these higher beings in the *Odyssey* just as he faces the perils of war in the *Iliad*. The hero is persistently tempted to remain with the various feminine characters he encounters, each of whom threatens to interrupt his *nostos* by creating an inviting simulacrum of it:

Odysseus’s implicit desire not to return home (or to forget home) is due to the presence of females who may take the place of Penelope. Classicists, following the work of folklorists, have long equated this inertia with a death-like state and read the hero’s return home as symbolic of transcendence and resurrection. (Bassi 418)

Lêthê induces a stupor from which Odysseus has a slim chance of escape. In Pereira de Castro and Macedo’s epics, for example, we see in the prophetic and courtship scenes that Odysseus’s memory lapses are highly charged with images of death. Other than stock images of courtly love, such as the hero comparing his affections to “um incêndio que arde,” in the *Ulisseia* Odysseus and Kalypso also kiss against the backdrop of “montes, e apartados arvoredos / Muitos nocturnos pássaros voaram / E nas concavidades dos penados / Vozes de aves infaustas se escutaram / ... e não faltaram / Gemidos de animais, que o ar abrindo, / Foram tristes agouros repetindo” (Pereira de Castro 7.17, 7.23). Similarly, the Odysseus of the *Ulissipo* describes his love for Arminilda as a “cego fogo” that confounds his reason, moving him to label his condition a “viva morte” (Macedo 4.42, 4.46). While Antinöos seemingly liberates him from this “viva morte” by falsely announcing that Penelope has died, the former in fact delivers the hero to a permanent form of it by ensuring that he marries Arminilda later in the epic (Macedo 9.61). In these abortive *nostoi*, then, *lêthê* and death turn out to be virtually indistinguishable from one another.

Both come to link Odysseus and his foundational act to the *Encoberto's* ever-delayed resurrection and charge to retake the Holy Land.

Stirred up by prophecies of imperial splendor in both poems, Odysseus arrives in Lusitania with his men, where he eventually meets Gargoris and his daughter. The act of naming this Lusitanian princess “Calipso” (i.e., Kalypso) and “Arminilda” (who enjoys Kalypso’s protection) summons images of the inertia that Odysseus suffers on Ogygia. In the fifth book of the *Odyssey*, Athena convinces Zeus to take pity on Odysseus, whereupon the god dispatches Hermes to liberate him from Kalypso. Hermes encounters the hero in the throes of despair, “sitting out on the beach, crying, as before now / he had done, breaking his heart in tears, lamentation, and sorrow” (Homer, *Odyssey* 5.82-83). Coupled with the traumatic loss of his companions, the prospect of immortality offered by remaining with Kalypso stupefies Odysseus. Immortality and longing on an island paradise resemble the Lêthê River, whose tides of forgetfulness and oblivion liken his sojourn in Ogygia unto a living death. As Gregory Crane suggests, like the sirens that later threaten to halt Odysseus’s voyage, Kalypso is herself a harbinger of death:

To be among the nymphs was a synonym for death. Odysseus’s relationship with Calypso is generally ambiguous. No light thing was it to love a god or a goddess: when a sick person dreams of sleeping with a divinity, death is not far away. Death itself can be viewed as a marriage with Hades or Persephone. (17)

Kalypso’s simultaneous appeal and peril is a testament to her name, which, like *lêthê* and the river named after it, can also mean “concealment.” True to her namesake, her attempts to deceive and conceal the hero from his *nostos* suspend him in grief, a spiritual malady that draws him to the brink of death.

Returning to Lusitania, Odysseus’s entrapment on Ogygia recalls the fatal consequences of his affair with Kalypso in the *Ulisseia* and Arminilda and in the *Ulissipo*, respectively. Macedo’s treatment of this affair is far simpler, yet more direct than Pereira de Castro’s in that Odysseus recognizes the hazard that his attraction to Arminilda portends. The prophecy linking him to

the *Encoberto* also mentions his betrothal to the princess, thereby implying the abandonment of *nostos*. Even before learning of this prophecy, however, Odysseus describes Arminilda from afar and immediately falls in love with her. This “cego amor” precipitates an internal struggle between his desire and fidelity to Penelope, resolved when Antinoös delivers a fake message reporting the latter’s sudden death (Macedo 4.38, 4.59). At once crushed and relieved, Odysseus can now relish in the “viva morte” and “pena deleitosa” he uses in a harangue against love’s temptations (Macedo 4.46).

Platitudes of courtly love take on a darker tone when it is later revealed that Kalypso keeps guard over Arminilda (Macedo 8.17). So powerful is the princess’s impact on Odysseus that he accepts Antinoös’ message without hesitation. Stranger still, upon hearing the prophecy of the great founder and his connection to the *Encoberto*, the hero also agrees wholeheartedly with his rival’s proposition to avoid any diplomatic imbroglios “[c]om bodas da princesa lusitana” (Macedo 5.45). Consequently, all of the prophecies that the Delphic Sibyl recites between cantos 10 and 14 in the *Ulissipo* omit any mention of *nostos*.¹¹ Under Kalypso’s auspices, Arminilda so transfixes Odysseus that he willingly accepts the news of Penelope’s death. If these prophecies once bound *nostos* to Portugal’s imperial destiny, they now cancel it altogether. It therefore hardly comes as a surprise that the poem ends by describing the moment when Odysseus “levantou primeiro / Quadrada pedra aos muros que traçava / Sobre láminas de ouro com leteiro, / Que sua fama aos tempos consagrava” (Macedo 14.80). As if he had remained in Ogygia, the hero forgets his *nostos*, surrendering wholly to a prophetic destiny once driven by that same promise of homecoming.

If prophecy leads Odysseus to *lêthê* in the *Ulissipo*, a pang of memory at the end of the *Ulisseia* sends him fleeing from Lusitania. More fickle and unfaithful than the Odysseus of the *Ulissipo*, the hero falls in love with Kalypso without any qualms about loyalty to Penelope. Pereira de Castro’s Kalypso seems to have the same bewitching effect on the hero as the nymph on Ogygia, as evidenced when Odysseus exclaims, “[q]uis-se fazer fermosa a morte feia / Com vossa fermosura, alta senhora” (7.21). In contrasting her beauty with the hideousness of death, he reaffirms the connection between nymphs and mortality in the *Odyssey*. Its significance does not readily come to the fore

until the last part of the poem, when memories of Ithaka jolt Odysseus from his *lêthê*. Between the courtship scene in canto seven and his sudden flight in canto ten, he wages a brutal war against the Lusitanians that culminates in Gargoris's death in singular combat against him (Pereira de Castro 10.89-90). The Greeks then resume building Lisbon, which “vai-se aperfeiçoando e vai crescendo” until Odysseus suddenly decides to “partir-se” (Pereira de Castro 10.100).

Odysseus's epiphany parses apart his original desire for *nostos* from the prophetic destiny that originally deterred him from that *nostos*. Now loosed from the forgetful inertia that held him at Kalypso's bosom, he concludes that remaining in Lusitania would be a gross violation of his *nostos*. Curiously, he compares her hopes for him to stay to amorphous clouds through which the sunlight pierces:

‘Como do Sol os raios transparentes
Quando entram no mar de luz escassos
Formam nas nuvens corpos diferentes,
Castelos e gigantes de cem braços,
Onde aquelas imagens aparentes
O Sol com os raios atravessa a espaços,
As formas muda, e com eterno lume
Umas de si se aparta, outras consume,

Assim o cuidado triste a que te entregas
Esses castelos vão ergue no vento,
Crendo as leves visões, tristes e cegas,
Que são filhas do ar sem fundamento.’ (Pereira de Castro 10.103-104)

These “castelos e gigantes de cem braços” recall the “não imaginada monarquia” towards which Odysseus and D. Sebastião strive, except the former, once he erects Lisbon, presumably completes his *nostos*. Like Dido upbraiding Aeneas for abandoning her, Kalypso then lashes out against Odysseus:

‘Vieste, amigo Ulisses, a esta terra
Fazer-me Tróia de amorosa guerra.

Às torres de minha alma assaltos deram
Desejos invencíveis, a que o fado
Dobrou a força, com que me venceram
E o Ílion desta alma vi abrasado.' (Pereira de Castro 10.113-114)

Noteworthy in both passages is the way in which Odysseus and Kalypso rely on images of civilization and its destruction to build their arguments. Like the rays of sunlight that dissolve the “corpos diferentes” in the clouds, Odysseus realizes that *lêthê* is tantamount to dwelling in “castelos vãos,” a dangerous abode indeed if they are merely “leves visões / ... filhas do ar sem fundamento” (Pereira de Castro 10.104). But if these skyborne castles are tokens of his forgetfulness, they also index the fateful end that meets the Greeks returning from Troy in the *Odyssey*. In accusing Odysseus of coming “a esta terra / Fazer-me Tróia de amorosa guerra,” Kalypso substitutes herself for Lisbon and, consequently, becomes a metonymy of a self-consuming Ogygia wrapped in the sheepskin of the nascent Portuguese Empire (Pereira de Castro 10.113). Odysseus feels impelled to abandon Kalypso in order to sail home; he does so, however, not for the sake of reentering an active life of warmongering or seafaring, but as Bassi frames it, to exchange his *lêthê* in Lisbon for that of a domestic life on Ithaka (418). Like the *nostos* of the *Encoberto* after him, Odysseus’s homecoming charts a meandering route away from and back to *lêthê* by way of empire. That Kalypso hurls herself—along with the couple’s two children—off a cliff overlooking the Tagus thus warns of the disaster awaiting those who shy away from destiny. Kalypso’s murder-suicide¹² does not merely avenge her abandonment, but it also suggests that the craft of empire rules out the possibility of a life-giving *nostos* for Odysseus and for any would-be *Encoberto* following in his footsteps.

Nostos and *Lêthê* as Pitfalls of Empire

The notion that empire either prevents or dooms *nostos* reveals the dark underbelly of *Encoberto* prophecies—and, more broadly, of the imperial enterprise itself—in the *Ulisseia* and the *Ulissipo*. Whereas in the *Ulisseia* Odysseus follows D. Sebastião down a doomed path, in the *Ulissipo*, the Delphic Sibyl links the prophecy of an “insigne verão” arriving by sea to the advent of the

Encoberto. Each outcome hinges on the belief that to “o Lísio império fortaleça / Ordena o alto Céu, por penhor caro, / Que nele assento peregrino tome / Um que de vencedor tem glória, e nome” (Macedo 14.25). Shoring up the Portuguese empire calls for a costly sacrifice, a “penhor caro” whose “assento peregrino” lies among the corpses at Al-Qasr al-Kbîr. The sibyl retools the prophecy applied to Odysseus in canto five to predict D. Sebastião’s resurrection:

‘Este insigne varão perdendo a vida
Por uma sacra lei, com peito forte,
Há de alcançar a glória mais subida,
Trocando por divina a humana sorte.
A natureza se verá vencida
De brutos animais em sua morte;
E seu corpo incorrupto em um deserto,
Será por largos tempos encoberto.

Até que nasça um Príncipe famoso
De Portugal primeiro, em cuja idade,
Descoberto por modo misterioso,
Ilustre de Lisboa à majestade;
A nau, em que tesouro tão precioso
Tomou porto feliz na grão cidade
Ela por armas tem, insígnias claras
Dos edifícios em que tu reparas.’ (Macedo 14.26-27)

This standard version of the Sebastianist legend clashes with the prophetic visions of glory that drew him to Africa—and Odysseus to Lusitania—in the first place. If anchoring in the “porto feliz na grão cidade” is for Odysseus the onset of forgetting and death, then the alluring image of D. Sebastião returning by ship to remain in Lisbon may not ultimately usher in the imperial heyday for which seventeenth-century Sebastianists pined (Macedo 14.27).

Much to the contrary: João de Castro (glossing Bandarra) and Manuel Bocarro Francês—two of the most prominent pre-Restoration

Sebastianists—contend that D. Sebastião, now the *Encoberto*, will return in the form of the Last World Emperor or Universal Monarch to recoup Portugal from Habsburg Spain and blaze through Africa to topple the Ottomans and raise Christian banners over Jerusalem once again. Dressed in this apocalyptic garb, he will rush headlong towards dangers that dwarf what he faced at Al-Qasr al-Kbīr. Castro proclaims that “el-rei Sebastião havia de ser o primeiro que empreendesse a conquista contra o Turco e infiéis,” a prophecy Bocarro later echoes in *Anacephaleosis da monarquia lusitana* (1624) when declaring “[m]as o famoso império lusitano / Livre do Ocaso eterno se amplifica. / O do Gentio, Mouru, o do Otomano, / Que incensários a Lucifer dedica / Sujeito ao forte Luso brevemente, / Verás que adora Cristo omnipotente” (*Vida* 39^r; 26^r). This calls for nothing short of a frontal assault against the Ottomans, who shored up ‘Abd al-Malik’s forces during the invasion of Morocco in 1576 (Bovill 18-42; Levtzion 402-10). If D. Sebastião risked life and limb during his ill-starred African campaign, he will double down on this gambit after his resurrection, yearning, perhaps, to deposit his crown and perish at Golgotha.

With further conquests before him, D. Sebastião’s *nostos* may paradoxically signal a return to death, that is, to the “assento peregrino” from which he emerged (Macedo 14.25). To affirm that his seaward return to Lisbon from death is a *nostos*—a core tenet of Sebastianist thought—becomes salient in the *Ulissipo* as well as in the *Ulisseia*. This is particularly the case inasmuch as Pereira de Castro and Macedo use Odysseus as a template for conceptualizing D. Sebastião’s return. An “insigne varão em paz, e em guerra” lands in Gargoris’ Lusitania for the sake of a *nostos* that never comes to pass (Macedo 5.59). Also an “insigne varão,” D. Sebastião will anchor in Lisbon to reconquer Portugal, yet his destiny is not to pair off with any princesses or forget his mission (Macedo 14.26). His joyous homecoming is instead a layover en route to a doomed future, assured not by launching another incursion against Habsburg Spain or the Sa’adi forces that quelled him at Al-Qasr al-Kbīr, but by besieging the far more potent Ottoman empire and heading onward to Jerusalem. The Ottomans—the main opponent of Christian supremacy in the Mediterranean—pose an intriguing challenge to D. Sebastião just as Gargoris does to Odysseus in the epics. Yet if Odysseus’s victory over Gargoris and his

subsequent stumble into *lêthê* are precursors to Portugal's future triumphs in the Levant, and D. Sebastião is the *Encoberto* the Sebastianists make him out to be, then the monarch's *nostos* presumably ends not in Lisbon, but rather with his death at the site of the cross.

In viewing Portugal as a steppingstone towards expansion into Africa and Asia Minor, D. Sebastião resembles Odysseus at the outset of his journey from Troy. Still, if the trappings of empire cancel Odysseus's *nostos* in Ithaca, they also expedite D. Sebastião's homecoming—not towards the Portugal of his previous life, but, at the end of another perilous charge towards danger, back towards the death from which the *Encoberto* temporarily resurrects. Further muddled by the exigencies of empire, the semantic ambiguity surrounding *nostos* overshadows Odysseus and D. Sebastião's homecoming, confounding it with *lêthê* or packaging *nostos* as an invitation to the afterlife. Pursuing the same glory as Odysseus, in other words, entraps D. Sebastião in a circuitous *nostos*, one that departs from his death in Morocco and returns to it at Golgotha.

Taking a step back, what comes through in the *Ulisseia* and the *Ulissipo* is the idea that imperial destiny subsists on baiting and switching. Prophecies in both epics confect mirages that extend the promise of *nostos*, while also finding ways of deferring that *nostos* perpetually or transforming it into its lethal opposite. For D. Sebastião to follow in Odysseus's footsteps therefore leads to the netherworld of a failed *nostos*, to a non-place where, in Fernando Pessoa's words, “[f]oi por não ser existindo” (83).

Notes

¹ Castro uses “Emperador do Universo,” which can be taken as a composite of both titles (*Paráfrase* 39^v). Also see Besselaar, “A profecia apocalíptica” 9-12; Pseudo-Methodius, 127-39; and Reeves, 59-60.

² According to Mário Martins, in the *General estoria*, one of Alfonso's scribes writes about how Odysseus lands at the site where he will erect Lisbon, which, “porque le semejó aquel lugar mejor que los que hasta allí habían hallado, tomó de éste su nombre *Ulixes* y este otro *bona* y los ayuntó e hizo dende uno y le puso a aquella ciudad que hizo y la llamó *Ulixbona*” (83).

³ See Valla, f. 9; and Resende, *Antiquitatibus*, 102-03.

⁴ Góis's Latin text reads: “Nobis tamen, tanti viri testimonio adhærere placebit potius, quam illorum dicta comprobare, qui id nullo certo argumento cavillare conantur” (*Urbis* 8).

⁵ For more on texts that mention Odysseus's legendary foundation of Lisbon, see Nascimento 5-15 and Ureña Prieto 173-75.

⁶ In addition to the Odysseus legend and prophecies of the *Encoberto*, Castro and Macedo mix the Odysseus myth with a legend derived loosely from book 44, chapter four of Justin's *Epitoma historiarum philippicarum* about King Gargoris, hailing from a region near the forests of Tartessos (modern-day Andalusia and the Alentejo). Both poets modify the plot by turning Gargoris' daughter into a chaste maiden who awaits Odysseus's arrival. In addition to enduring Gargoris' efforts to kill him, Odysseus also struggles to survive en route to Portugal. Tartessos was a prosperous maritime city located at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River with inland territories expanding throughout Andalusia and the Alentejo. For more, see Deamos, 193-99.

⁷ A cautionary tale for visionaries of Portugal's empire like João de Barros, Diogo do Couto, and the Sebastianists was Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE), whose string of victories from Asia Minor onto the Indian subcontinent ended at the banks of the Ganges River, where his army mutinied. Noteworthy here is that Alexander never completed his *nostos* to Pellas (Macedonia) and instead died in Babylon of fever after a lengthy drinking bout with Medius of Larissa. In Vincent Barletta's seminal work on the specter of Alexander in medieval and early modern Iberia, he underscores the link between *nostos* and death in the works of humanists linked to the courts of Castile, Portugal, and Aragon. Much like poets and prophets seeking to extol Odysseus and Sebastião, "the issue of Alexander's slide into madness and failure to return—even from death—to Macedonia could present deep problems for Greek [and Iberian humanist] historians laboring to present him as an iconic Hellenic hero (flaws and all) within the cultural and ideological framework of Roman dominance" (Barletta 39). For recent biographies on Alexander, see O'Brien and Green; for more on his cultural legacy, see Spencer and Stoneman.

⁸ These verses are substituted in the published *princeps* for "[c]om tanta majestade o corpo arreia / O santo Henrique é, para que fique / Do nome primeiro, último Henrique" (Pereira de Castro 4.109).

⁹ For more on this scene, see MacKay 21-30.

¹⁰ The original Latin reads: "occultus rex bis pie datus [in Hispaniam] veniet in equo ligneo, quem multi videntes illum esse non credent" (Besselaar, *Vieira* 197).

¹¹ See, for example, Macedo 10.4-25, 11.68-83, 12.23-83, and 14.2-41.

¹² The suicide scene encompasses strophes 123 to 130, with 129 being key: "Um dos filhos que leva lhe tomaram / Com dois caiu do precipício horrendo, / Que no fundo do pego onde pararam / Se vão em duras pedras convertendo" (Pereira de Castro 10.129).

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