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JOÃO JÚLIO RUMSEY TEIXEIRA

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Unveiling the long history of the massive diamond-set badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece of King D. João VI of Portugal

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JOÃO JÚLIO RUMSEY TEIXEIRA, G.D., born in Lisbon in 1988, worked as a volunteer at the Ajuda Palace before studying for a degree in the history of art at the Universidade Nova, Lisbon. He received a Graduate Diamonds diploma from GIA-London and spent ten years working in the Portuguese art auction trade, eight of those as the head of the jewellery and antique silver department of Veritas Art Auctioneers, Lisbon. Between 2009 and 2011, he also covered the art auction markets for *L+arte* magazine. In 2019 he joined the team of scholars responsible for the committee of the Royal Treasure Museum being built at the Ajuda Palace, specifically to carry out research on the history of the Portuguese Crown Jewels. In 2021 he was appointed curator of the Bank of Portugal's Museum of Money, in Lisbon, a position he recently resigned in order to accept a doctoral scholarship granted by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology to further research and study Portuguese royal jewellery and its history.

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Front cover:

Badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece of King D. João VI of Portugal, c. 1800.

Brilliant cut diamonds, rubies, sapphire, silver and gold.

Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, Lisbon inv. 4774. 27x12,2x1.8 cm, 413.5 g

© PNA/DGPC/ADF Luísa Oliveira

Unveiling the long history of the massive diamond-set badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece of King D. João VI of Portugal

JOÃO JÚLIO RUMSEY TEIXEIRA

The diamond-set badge of the Golden Fleece was commissioned c. 1800, in a period of great political uncertainty, by D. João VI when he was still Prince Regent. It was a statement of one of the pillars of the Portuguese Crown's wealth – Brazilian diamond extraction. Set with more than 300 carats of Brazilian diamonds, some with delicate natural tints, this jewel miraculously remained intact for over two centuries and will be one of the highlights of the new Royal Treasure Museum at the Ajuda Palace (Palácio Nacional da Ajuda), Lisbon. The research published here was inspired and financed by the *Associação Turismo de Lisboa* as part of the work undertaken in preparation for the opening of the new Royal Treasure Museum. This is a study of jewels that had belonged to the Portuguese Crown, including those purchased by the Portuguese State in 1943 from the heirs of D. Miguel (1801-1866), younger son of D. João VI (1767-1826), whose attempts to usurp the Portuguese throne from his niece, D. Maria da Glória (1819-1853) ended in defeat and exile in May 1834. Although this collection of jewels has been well-known since the 1950s, scholarship on the topic had not been deeply revisited for decades. The approach intended by the committee of the new museum involved careful examination of the objects, combining gemmological analysis and assessment of the metal mounts with detailed study of the documentary sources in the Portuguese royal archives (Ribeiro ed. 2022).

Of the many jewels in this glittering collection that were the subject of research for the new museum, it was the spectacular badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece commissioned by D. João VI when he was Prince Regent that raised the most unexpected conclusions. Most information hitherto gathered about this piece turned out to be untrue or, at least, incomplete. Made around 1800, this remarkable jewel is believed to be the largest and most opulent surviving version of the badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece. With a height of 27 cm, it is set with diamonds weighing a total of more than 300 carats (fig. 1).

This article unpicks the 220 year history of this extraordinary jewel revealing the significant role it played in the complicated political world of the first half of the nineteenth century, and its seminal importance for the history of jewellery in Portugal at a time when this art was undergoing a period of especial brilliance.



Fig. 1.
Badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece of King D. João VI of Portugal, c. 1800.
Brilliant cut diamonds, rubies, sapphire, silver and gold.
Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, Lisbon inv. 4774.
27 x 12,2 x 1,8 cm, 413.5 g
© PNA/DGPC/ADF Luísa Oliveira

An exceptional jewel: history and myths

One of the most fascinating Portuguese royal jewels is the large badge of the Golden Fleece that had belonged to D. João VI (1767-1826). Not on permanent display to the public with most of the jewellery and goldsmiths' work once in the possession of the Portuguese Crown, the badge has nevertheless become a staple of Portugal's collective cultural memory thanks to the magnificent photographs published in all three editions of the catalogue of the exhibition *Tesouros Reais* held at the Palace between 16 July and 14 August 1991. These became the standard images of the jewel, published and republished, while the piece itself was seldom exhibited after 1991, and always in venues outside Portugal.

The modern narrative for the creation of this jewelled insignia was established at that time and has remained unchanged until now. The belief that the piece was made in 1790 by the goldsmith and gem-setter to the court, David Ambrósio Pollet (1745/6-1822), rested on the 'evidence' of a single receipt by Pollet (Godinho 1992: 153).¹ The seemingly solid connection between Pollet and this jewel alleged by the 1790 receipt, has been accepted uncritically by subsequent scholars, both in Portugal and abroad, and this dating and attribution are to be found in all the standard reference works and catalogues where the piece appears. Current investigation has ruled out that connection, not only based on newly discovered documents, but also on material evidence: the 1790 receipt is not related to this badge, but to another, earlier and smaller.

The receipt concerns a payment to David Pollet on 10 May 1790 for two jewels made as '[a] birthday present for the Prince Our Lord [the future D. João VI]'. The jewels in question were a small sword in gold and diamonds, and a gem-set badge of the Golden Fleece. Fortunately, the composition of that badge is described in detail by Pollet in the document: it comprised 400 brilliant-cut diamonds totalling 34.08 carats, 102 small rubies and a 2.03 carat sapphire. However, the badge which survives in the Ajuda Palace Treasure is incomparably more opulent: the number of gems vastly exceeds the number listed for the jewel described in the receipt: around 1700 brilliant-cut diamonds totalling more than 300 carats, 190 rubies of different sizes and a 35.75 carat sapphire.²

The assumption that this receipt referred to the insignia now in the Ajuda Palace was mainly based on the date of the document, as it was around this time that Pollet was engaged in an important royal commission to design several magnificent jewelled badges of the Three United Portuguese Orders (Rumsey Teixeira 2021).

1 The receipt is published in 'BANBA Documentos', vol. V, pp. 88-9.

2 Originally, the large stone at the base was a blue glass doublet, finally replaced by a blue sapphire in 1951 in a very well documented operation that will be explained in the catalogue of the new museum. The doublet set in this jewel is reported as early as 1834 and it was replaced by a sapphire cut specifically to fit the existing mount. The original doublet remains in the Ajuda Palace collections.

The discrepancy between the insignia in the Ajuda Palace and the description in the 1790 receipt led me to seek out documentary evidence from the period to piece together a new narrative for a jewel that had now been deprived of its history.

The life-cycle of diamonds – dismantling and resetting

The documentation kept in the archives of the Portuguese royal household is extensive and is scattered across various institutions, both in Portugal and in Brazil. In Portugal, Lisbon's Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo houses thousands of boxes filled with documents, most still to be catalogued and digitised. The situation is the same at the Biblioteca da Ajuda, the library at the former royal palace of Ajuda, Lisbon, which holds vast quantities of paperwork relating to the now-defunct Portuguese Crown. A third important collection of royal papers is kept by the Fundação da Casa da Bragança at the former ducal palace of the Braganza family in Vila Viçosa, to the east of Lisbon, near the frontier with Spain.

Among these many sources of information is a key inventory, drawn up in January 1825, which lists the decorations that belonged to D. João VI, and which records the number of badges with the insignia of the Golden Fleece in the possession of the king before his death, in suspicious circumstances, just over a year later. Among them were: an unspecified number intended for daily use on a dress coat; six badges without diamonds; three small badges; three sumptuous examples set with diamonds; one collar and lastly (and unconnected to the collar) a large, very precious badge which, it is argued here, refers to the spectacular example in the Ajuda Palace today.

This inventory is enriched by detailed and very informative descriptions added by the clerks, which help explain how this great jewel was assembled. From these we learn that the jewel now in existence was created from an earlier badge of the Golden Fleece that was totally broken up, as well as from dismantling 'a badge of the Three Military Orders that was unset to set the diamonds in the [new] large badge of the Golden Fleece, the core of which is from the aforementioned [Three Military Orders] decoration'.³

The 1825 inventory reference to the disassembling of a badge which combined the insignia of the Three Portuguese Military Orders is particularly important in dating the large Golden Fleece jewel under investigation: it was in 1789 that Queen D. Maria I (1734-1816) had decreed that the emblems of the Portuguese Military Orders of Avis, Christ and Santiago were to be combined in a single decoration: the Badge of the Three Military Orders. As the inventory states that the Golden Fleece jewel in the Ajuda palace was constructed using stones from a badge of the Three United Portuguese Military Orders, it seems improbably that this newly appointed badge would have been dismantled within a year.

3 'Um placar das Três Ordens Militares que se descravejou para se porem os brilhantes no hábito do Tosão Grande, cujo miolo é do dito placar [...]'. Second appendix to the 'Autos do Inventário e Partilha de D. João VI', ANTT, fl.585v.

The same 1825 inventory reference also includes other significant information about the construction of the large, very precious badge. The clerk tells us not only that the badge of the Three Military Orders was unset and the diamonds used in the great badge of the Golden Fleece, but also that the new jewel incorporated the 'core' of the disassembled piece intact. This way, the palmette motif now in the centre of the great badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece, which survives in the Ajuda Palace, is an original element of this earlier badge of the Three Military Orders that was dismantled.

Study of the decoration in question revealed a great deal of information about its construction, including evidence to support the claim made in the inventory that the plaque with the palmette motif was used in the piece as a single section. This plaque is fixed to the framework around it by means of a series of pins on the verso, some of which have clearly been adapted by means of small grooves opened in the metal framework, into which fixings have been soldered. Of these, two are redundant in the context of the jewel's present construction (fig. 2). The back of this palmette plaque has, additionally, six small grooves arranged symmetrically which are unfilled but may have been for fixing the piece into a different jewel – perhaps the badge of the Three Military Orders, to which it had previously belonged (fig. 3).

The 'core' in the form of a palmette

Encircled by laurels and secured by a fluttering bow, the central palmette is set with the largest diamonds of the greatest clarity. The biggest of these is cushion cut, weighing an estimated 22 carats and displays a yellowish tint which, combined with an unusual orange fluorescence (Carvalho 2022), takes on an extraordinarily warm tone when exposed to light on the UV spectrum, such as sunlight. Set near to it are two diamonds, roughly circular in shape, of around 4 carats each, both with a lovely, light-pink tint.

The central palmette motif not only establishes the neoclassical aesthetic of this great jewel; it also acts as a marker for the changing taste in the style of jewellery commissioned by the Portuguese court (Vassallo e Silva, 2000). In this context it is interesting therefore that the palmette itself actually pre-dates the badge in which it is now preserved. This suggests a reassessment of the formal relationship between the design of D. João's large Golden Fleece badge and the drawing of the *rocaille* shell motif that was incorporated into the lid of the splendid snuff-box commissioned in 1755-6 by King D. José I (1714-1777), grandfather to D. João VI (fig. 4). The stylistic similarities between the two motifs testify to the fluidity of the transition from the rococo to the



Fig. 2. (above)

Detail of the back of the badge where one of the fixings without function in the current configuration is visible. The pierced gold element was soldered after the removal of a segment of the original gold lining.

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Fig. 3. (right)

Detail of the back of the palmette showing two of the fixing grooves that are currently without function.

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Fig. 4.
Central element of the badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece placed next to the magnificent snuff box commissioned by King D. José after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 (France, Paris, 1755-6; Pierre A. Jacqmin, PNA, inv. 4786).
© PNA/DGPC/ADF Luísa Oliveira

neoclassical style in Portuguese art of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. D. José's snuff-box, commissioned shortly after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, and the great badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece made for his grandson, the future João VI, in the context of the rising Napoleonic threat, are both pieces designed to project messages of economic power and courtly sophistication.

One of the most extraordinary technical features of the badge is the lightness of its *à jour*, or open setting (fig. 5). In the manner of lace, the gold-backed silver structure is kept to the bare minimum necessary in order to trace the design of the jewel and secure the gemstones which, mounted in this way, are completely exposed to the passage of light. Although open settings had already been used in the finest jewellery for some decades, the technique was employed sparingly in Portugal, as it was usually used only for the finest stones.

Who and when?

The overall design and construction of D. João VI's badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece, nearly 30 cm in length and set entirely *à jour*, reveals a profound shift in the level of skill used to execute jewellery at the Portuguese court. Unlike the pieces produced in the early part of the reign of D. Maria I (reign 1777-1816), the size and technical sophistication of D. João's great jewel anticipated the extraordinary and hyper-opulent jewellery that would soon emerge from Napoleonic circles. In this context, it is impossible to forget that one of the bedrocks of Portugal's finances rested on the Crown's monopoly of the diamond mines in Brazil, and that these mines were the subject of great interest – and envy – among the remaining European powers. During the early years of the nineteenth century until 1807, peace between Portugal and Napoleon was partly maintained by means of regular financial payments, some of these achieved through



Fig. 5.
Back of the badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece
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Fig. 6.
Portrait of Queen D. Maria I of Portugal (reign 1777-1816)
Portuguese school, c. 1780
Oil on canvas

The queen wears lavish diamond, sapphire and pearl jewellery. The sapphire and diamond medallion in her hair is the one at the Ajuda Palace that is set with a sapphire weighing over 100 carats (PNA, inv. 4782). Courtesy of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, © Photo: João Júlio Rumsey Teixeira



Fig. 7.
Portrait of Prince Regent D. João (later King
D. João VI) (reign 1816-1826)
Domingos António de Sequeira (att.), 1802-1807
Oil on canvas

D. João wears several magnificent diamond-set jewels: shoe-buckles, the Portuguese Three Military Orders badge at the sash (PNA, inv. 4784), breast-star of the Three Military Orders (PNA, inv. 4777), set of buttons (PNA, inv. 4727-4769) and, at the neck, the large diamond-set badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece addressed in this article. © PNA/DGPC/ADF José Paulo Ruas

loans guaranteed by thousands of carats of diamonds.⁴ This state of affairs made clear the scale of diamond production controlled by the Portuguese Crown. At a time of high political and military tension, this increasingly valuable asset was flaunted by Portugal's rulers, who deliberately depicted themselves wearing jewellery and decorations studded with large diamonds (figs. 6, 7, 8 and 9).

D. João's commission of the great badge of the Golden Fleece took place in this context. It has still not been possible to

discover exactly the year in which it was made, but one of the earliest depictions of the piece appears in a portrait of D. João made while he was still Regent, executed between 1802 and 1807⁵ (fig. 7). Little is known about the circumstances of the commissioning of the jewel and consequently the identity of the jeweller is as yet unknown, but it is argued that its innovative construction, together with the dating, make it almost impossible to attribute it to David Pollet since his work for the royal household had gradually come to an end during the course of the 1790s, even before he was arrested on charges of robbery in 1796 when his relationship with the court ceased altogether (Mendonça

4 There are records of diamonds being handed as guarantee for loans and 'diplomatic' payments in several years, and of these 1801 was among the most notable because of the Treaty of Badajoz. In that year, according to Jean A. Junot, between 110,000 and 115,000 carats were deposited with the Amsterdam merchants Baring & Hope as a guarantee for a loan taken out by the Portuguese Crown after the treaty was signed (Junot, 2006: 122).

5 Palácio Nacional de Ajuda, inv. 4115. Unfortunately, the portrait is not securely dated, although it must have been painted after 1802 because the depiction of the Ajuda Palace in the background reflects changes to the architecture that were approved in that year.



Fig. 8.
Portrait of Emperor and King D. João VI
Domingos António de Sequeira, 1821
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of The National Museum of Ancient Art, Lisboa,
© Photo: Júlio Marques, 1999 - arquivo fotográfico da
Assembleia da República, PT-AHF/DE/R155



Fig. 9.
Detail of the chest of D. João in the portrait of
1821 by Domingos António de Sequeira.
The badge of the Golden Fleece is worn alongside other
lavishly diamond-set decorations and jewels.
Courtesy of the National Museum of Ancient Art and the
Portuguese Parliament Museum, © João Júlio Rumsey Teixeira

2012, 90-4). Furthermore, the delicate construction of the central palmette is unlike David Pollet's heavier style though a few receipts concerning payments of works entirely made *à jour* by him are known. Surviving jewels by David Pollet testify that he preferred, and was a master of, working with robust closed-back mounts. This robustness might partly be explained by his training in his father's studio, the Polish Adam Pollet (c.1720-1785) and in London, during the 1760s.

Two names stand out from a survey of the surviving lists of goldsmiths who supplied the royal household at the turn of the nineteenth century: Carlos José van Nes, who up until 1805⁶ (the probable date of his death), produced several important jewels, and José Luís da Silva, who was responsible for large-scale items. Indeed, from 1801 until the royal family left for Brazil in 1807,

da Silva was one of the most important goldsmith-jewellers employed by the royal household. The delay in payments to him from the Crown can be explained by the departure of the court, as well by da Silva's own death shortly after this. However, in February 1816, the account was finally settled, and his widow received the balance of payment for his works, some of which had been handed over many years earlier.⁷ Significantly, among the pieces listed in this final balance is an entry for eleven diamonds 'for the Badge of the Fleece'⁸ but the lack of any further reference to the object makes it impossible to link the payment to a specific object – particularly since, as we have seen, D. João owned several diamond-set badges of that Order.

6 BANBA Documentos, VII, 1956: 20.

7 BANBA Documentos, VII, 1956: 61-7.

8 BANBA Documentos, VII, 1956: 66.



Fig. 10.
Element of the alternative mount that could be fixed at the lower part of the palmette.
Portugal, Lisboa, ca. 1800.
Brilliant cut diamond, silver and gold
PNA, inv. 53317. 2,0 x 7,0 x 0,9 cm.
© PNA/DGPC/ADF José Paulo Ruas



Fig. 11.
Back of the alternative mount.
At the lower part is visible the hinged clasp where another diamond-set element representing the ram's fleece and rays could be hung.
© PNA/DGPC/ADF José Paulo Ruas

A versatile jewel, and other surprises

The material and symbolic importance of the great badge of the Golden Fleece meant it appeared frequently in depictions of D. João, both during the period of his regency and once he became king, after the death of his mother Queen D. Maria I (1734-1816). In most depictions of the badge it is noticeable that the depiction of the palmette plaque in the central section is consistent, while the design of the elements of the lower section of the jewel varies. Although artistic licence might offer some explanation for these differences, we should be careful not to attribute all these changes to the imaginative vision of different artists.

One of the most surprising and exciting moments in this research took place when it was possible to identify the function of a fragment of jewellery that served no apparent purpose,⁹ yet which shared the same ornament, dating and workshop techniques as the laurel branch frame which encircles the central palmette in the great badge of the Golden Fleece (fig. 10 and 11). Close examination of this fragment confirms that it was in fact designed to form part of the badge. The decorative vocabulary and workmanship of the front are identical to that of the garland which surrounds the palmette, suggesting it was designed to be inserted below the plaque; the reverse of the fragment, meanwhile, exactly fits this location. A trapezoidal section on the back of the piece with a screw at the centre and pins at either side, slots into a corresponding trapezoidal space at the back of the great badge (fig. 12). Indeed, two of the fixtures designed to receive the fragment are also visible from the front of the badge. The base of the fragment additionally has a hinged clasp for the suspension of an additional piece which, naturally, would have consisted of a ram's fleece and horizontal rays, the symbols of the Order.

This discovery confirms that this great badge could be

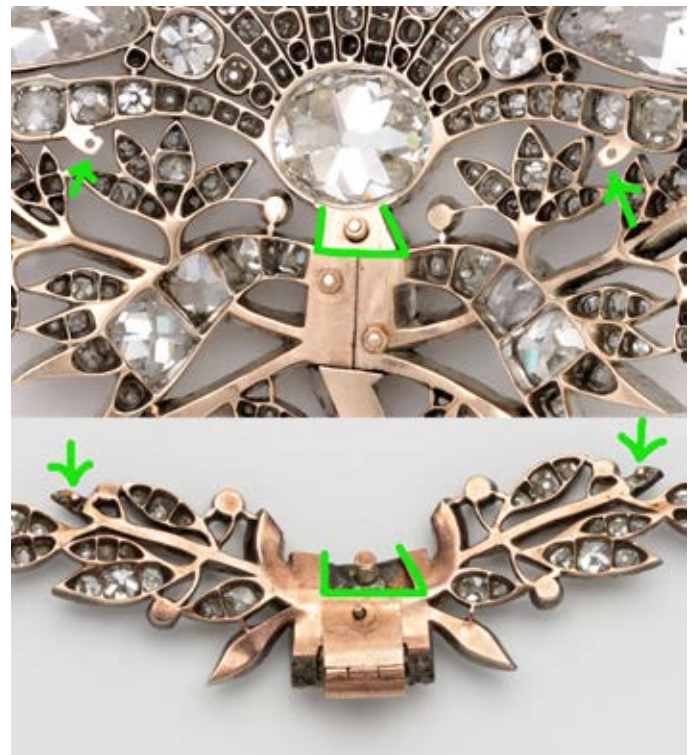


Fig. 12.
Fittings on the back of the lower part of the palmette and their matching ones on the back of the alternative mount.
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⁹ Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, inv. 53317. The fragment was included in the major 1991 exhibition, 'Tesouros Reais' (cat. no. 45), where it was identified as a necklace clasp.



Fig. 13 a. (top)

Central palmette

Fig. 13 b. (bottom)

Photomontage showing the central palmette with the alternative laurel-shaped mount in its original place.

© João Júlio Rumsey Teixeira

mounted in a different, simpler, form to suit the requirements of a less formal occasion (fig. 13a and b). In support of this are the numerous references found in inventories drawn up after D. João's death to 'a box which has within it a mount for the great Fleece, being a ram with its rays and ornament, all in small diamonds'.¹⁰ This clearly shows that at the time there was an alternative set of pieces that could be attached to the great badge. This set consisted of a ram's fleece and rays (now lost) that hung from an ornament in the shape of a laurel branch (the fragment now identified) which served as a link to the main jewel. The written descriptions coupled with evidence of the fragment which survives today show us that this alternative set was executed in silver and brilliant-cut diamonds, and therefore monochrome. By contrast, the rays and fleece on the badge as it survives today bring together the yellow of the gold setting, the red of the rubies, the brilliant scintillation of the diamonds and the deep blue of the central sapphire in a dazzling play of colours (fig. 14).



Fig. 14.

Detail of the lower part of the large badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

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¹⁰ 'Uma caixa que tem dentro uma guarnição para o Tosão grande, sendo hum cordeiro com os seus raios e guarnição, tudo de brilhantes pequenos': Autos do Inventário e Partilha de D. João VI, ANTT, fl. 584.

And a second badge of the Golden Fleece

The great badge of the Golden Fleece in its current configuration, as well as the alternative mount related to it, were all the property of D. João VI until his death (1826), and he took them with him when he moved the court to Brazil. During that period (1808-1821), the centre of Portuguese political power was based in Rio de Janeiro and consequently Brazil acquired the status of a kingdom in 1815 while Portugal was renamed 'The United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves'. D. João VI's transatlantic political manoeuvres peaked in the years 1817-18 and garnered immense prestige for the Portuguese Crown across Europe. In 1817 his son and heir D. Pedro (1798-1834) married Leopoldine von Habsburg (1797-1826), while in the following year D. João himself was formally proclaimed King of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves.

In a Europe coming to terms with the aftermath of Napoleon and the diplomatic negotiations of the Congress of Vienna, the marriage of D. Pedro to a princess who was the daughter of Frances I of Austria (1768-1835) and sister of Maria Luísa (1791-1847, second wife of the recently-deposed Napoleon), served to highlight the political might of Portugal, which now officially stretched as one united country across the Atlantic. The negotiations and celebrations associated with the wedding required a great deal of new jewellery to be commissioned, not only for members of the Portuguese court, but also as gifts and 'agrados' (literally, 'sweeteners') for a vast number of Austrian courtiers – a staggering display of generosity that dazzled not only the Austrian court, but the bride herself.¹¹ Equally, D. João's proclamation as King of Brazil – and hence ruler of a European dynasty whose power stretched beyond the old continent – prompted the court to organise another series of spectacular celebrations to mark the occasion.

Although the subject still lacks an in-depth study, the production of jewellery in Rio de Janeiro during this period was evidently considerable and to a high standard. This is demonstrated by the refinement of some of the pieces which survive, such as the royal crown commissioned for the 1818 Acclamation (fig. 15). In the context of both these celebrations, numerous diamond-set jewels and decorations would have been newly commissioned for the royal family, while pieces from the royal treasury that had been brought over from Portugal in 1808 would have been adapted and remodelled to suit the new requirements (Rumsey Teixeira 2022). This, then, is the context for the portraits which show D. João VI and his heir, D. Pedro, each wearing identical large, jewelled, badges of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

The 1820 uprising in Porto made it imperative that D. João leave Brazil and return to Portugal, where he arrived in 1821. D. Pedro remained there, together with Leopoldine, and in 1822 declared Brazil's independence from Portugal. The evidence of



Fig. 15.
Detail of the gold royal crown made in Rio de Janeiro, in 1817, for the Acclamation of King D. João VI (PNA, inv. 4863).
© PNA/DGPC/ADF Luísa Oliveira



Fig. 16.
Bust of D. Pedro as First Emperor of Brazil
Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, 1826
Marc Ferrez
Bronze
City Council of Angra do Heroísmo, Azores
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¹¹ Among the many jewels distributed by the Portuguese at the Viennese court, the miniature portrait of himself, framed by large diamonds, which D. Pedro presented to his bride Leopoldine, gained particular renown (Santos, 2006: 76).

inventories, written accounts, painted iconography, documented provenance and subsequent history, all confirm that the great badge of the Golden Fleece which is the subject of this paper returned to Lisbon with D. João VI. However, D. Pedro continued to have himself depicted wearing an identical badge (albeit of slightly smaller dimensions) even after he had proclaimed himself Brazil's first emperor (fig. 16). This suggests that after a certain date, there were in fact two, very similar, badges of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a possibility reinforced by the fact that D. Pedro's son, the Emperor D. Pedro II of Brazil (1825-1891) had himself painted wearing the same badge shortly before his deposition (1889).

A note added to one of the inventories cited above by one of D. João VI's personal servants, Tomás António Carneiro, provides the key to the apparent mystery of the two badges. Carneiro records that 'His Majesty gave to this same Lord [D. Pedro], when he said farewell to him on his ship, a rich badge of diamonds of the Golden Fleece to stay there, to wear around the neck'.¹²

From this, we know that once he had boarded his ship, and shortly before sailing for Portugal, D. João VI presented his son D. Pedro with a diamond-studded pendant with the emblem of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a jewel that must 'stay there' or, in other words, be kept at the court in Rio de Janeiro. D. João's wish was evidently granted, as the badge was passed down to his grandson, D. Pedro II. Perhaps more importantly, the piece was among the small group of jewels that belonged to the Brazilian Imperial Crown treasury, and as late as 1887 appears in an inventory described as 'a diamond-set Fleece'.¹³ Following the imposition of the Republic of Brazil and the exile of the Imperial court, the whereabouts of the jewel are unknown. The many depictions of it in imperial portraits, however, suggest it was (or possibly still is) very similar to the one which survives in the Ajuda Palace treasure, although slightly smaller in scale and with minor differences in the arrangement of the laurel-branch frame around the central palmette motif.

From the death of João VI to the Royal Treasure Museum – 1826-2022

The death of D. João VI in 1826 plunged Portugal into an eight-year period of political unrest bordering on chaos, and of profound change. D. Pedro, although King of Portugal, now also ruled an independent Brazil. Consequently D. João, while still alive, had appointed the Infanta D. Isabel Maria (1801-1876) to act as future regent of Portugal in her brother D. Pedro's name. D. Pedro's brother, the Infante D. Miguel (1802-1866) had been in exile since 1824 and was to cast a dark shadow over Portuguese politics. He was his mother's favourite and she, now

12 'Deu Sua Magestade ao mesmo Senhor, quando se despediu dele na nau, para lá ficar, um hábito de brilhantes rico do Tosão, de pôr ao pescoço'. Appendix 2 to 'Autos do Inventário e Partilha de D. João VI', ANTT, fl. 588 and 588v.

13 Anuário do Museu Imperial, 1943: 265 (where, due to a writing lapse, it appears as a "tostão" instead of "tosão".)



Fig. 17.
Portrait of Infante D. Miguel (later King D. Miguel I) (reign 1828-1834)
Vienna, Austria, 1827
Johann Ender
Oil on canvas
PNQ 290
© PSML/ADF João Silveira Ramos

the Queen Mother, D. Carlota Joaquina of Borbón (1775-1830), wanted him to inherit the throne and return the country to the absolutist monarchy in which they both staunchly believed.

From his empire in Brazil, D. Pedro I (IV of Portugal) issued various decrees, among them one concerning the equitable division of D. João VI's personal possessions among his children. It was the first time in Portugal that such a division had taken place on the death of a sovereign, and D. Pedro's extraordinary 'liberal resolution'¹⁴ raised a practical problem that required urgent attention, namely the need to identify and separate what could be considered the late King's personal goods from those that belonged to the State – or, as it was then, the Crown.

14 'Sentença da Partilha', Autos do Inventário e Partilha de D. João VI', ANTT, fl. 315.



Fig. 18.
Detail of the upper part of the jewel where the bow is visible, with the badge's suspension hook and its smart setting of flat brilliant cut diamonds.
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This is not the place to explain this process in detail,¹⁵ but of relevance here is that the inheritance to be divided included many hundreds of jewels, among them the great badge of the Golden Fleece. Despite the enormous legal complexities which such a division entailed, the distribution of the late D. João VI's goods was declared finished a mere fourteen months after his death. Of the jewels apportioned to the five children eligible to inherit,¹⁶ the great badge of the Golden Fleece fell to the exiled D. Miguel, who promptly returned to Lisbon in 1828. Shortly after he arrived, he organised a *coup-d'état* and had himself declared absolute ruler of Portugal (fig. 17). This, in turn, ignited a civil war from which the country only emerged in 1834.

After D. Pedro's victory in the name of his daughter D. Maria (1819-1853), now D. Maria II, Queen of Portugal since her father had abdicated the throne in 1826, D. Miguel left the country definitively. The treaty of Évora-Monte, which brought an end to the war, required D. Pedro to respect a number of Miguel's rights, including his right to keep his personal possessions. Yet D. Miguel had also incurred many personal debts during his brief reign, among them one with his youngest sister, D. Ana de Jesus Maria (1806-1857), Marchioness of Loulé, which he had secured with a portion of his jewels. For this, and for other reasons, a chest

with some of D. Miguel's personal possessions was deposited with the Banco de Lisboa (which would be renamed the Banco de Portugal in 1846) for safekeeping when he went into exile a second time, never to return. Among the contents of the chest was the great badge of the Golden Fleece which he had inherited from D. João VI (Maranhas 2022).

The 'Case of D. Miguel's Jewels', as it became known, turned into a complex web of legal arguments, with sensitive political consequences and dragged on for over a century. The chest that contained the jewels remained at the Banco de Portugal from 1834 until 1943 when, finally, the Portuguese State – now, of course, a Republic – reached an agreement with the descendants of D. Miguel and D. Ana de Jesus Maria. Part of that agreement involved a private auction held between the State and the descendants, the aim of which was to acquire important jewels for the Portuguese nation, the most important of all being the large badge of the Golden Fleece that belonged to D. João VI. Today these jewels form part of the collections at the Ajuda Palace, among which the great badge of the Golden Fleece stands as one of the most impressive. This was true even back in 1826: one of the richest jewels left by D. João was the same, stunning, diamond-set badge commissioned around 1800, while still Prince Regent.

¹⁵ For a full discussion, see Rumsey Teixeira and Maranhos, 2022: in press.

¹⁶ Three of João's daughters who were already married at his death received nothing, as the dowries they had received meant they were ineligible to inherit.

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Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT) – *Arquivo da Casa Real*

Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT) – *Autos do Inventário e Partilha de D. João VI*.

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