

HOW VALUABLE WAS MUSIC FOR CLOISTERED NUNS? A CASE STUDY IN SÃO BENTO DE CÁSTRIS (ÉVORA, PORTUGAL) ⁹²

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Abstract:

In the past, living together within a community was a form of isolating oneself from the world as well as a means to perfect oneself through the observance of several moral precepts. Generally speaking, what defined life within a convent, besides the reclusion from society and the solitary life that it entailed, was a very strict spiritual program that included not only prayer, but also attending to the Divine Offices. A careful reading of the expense books prepared by the treasurer nuns reveals the costs spent on musical practice, as well as other expenses with which it is compared in this article. This study, carried out by analyzing costs relating to Music in Benedictine and Clare monasteries and, in particular, in the Cistercian Monastery of St. Benedict of Cástris (Évora, Portugal) in the post Trento period, shows that a significant part of the monasteries budget was devoted to expenses with guest musicians, musical instruments, choir books, special food and "gifts" for the musician nuns as a recognition for their music.

⁹² This study comes in the framework of the Project FCT EXPL/EPH-PAT/2253/2013, "ORFEUS Project – *The Tridentine reform and the music in the silence of the cloister: the monastery of S. Bento de Cástris*", coordinated by Antónia Fialho Conde and funded by FCT/MEC and co-funded by Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) through the Programs COMPETE and QREN. The study puts together specialists in Modern History, Architecture, Codicology, Music, Musicology and Organology, treating the collection of Choir books and musical manuscripts from a Cistercian female monastery, St Benedict of Cástris, in the South of Portugal, officially founded in the 13th century. The main goal is to study the impact of counter-reformation measures in the musical praxis of the nuns, verifying the continuities and the differences in the texts and melodies that were sung and played.

Keywords: Female monasteries; Cistercians; Benedictines; Poor Clares; Music costs

Introduction

Since remote times that accountancy was used in the administration of Portuguese monasteries (Araújo, 2010: 47). However, the privileges and abuse of commendatory abbots⁹³, who in the majority of cases used the monasteries assets for their own benefit and for their relatives' advantage, many times led to the ruin of those institutions. It was during the last session of the Council of Trent (1545 - 1563) that a set of rulings was emanated – *Decree of Regulars and Nuns* – which put an end to this degrading, dilapidating situation and extinguished the commendatory abbot's position. Under the same logic, the position of Abbot and Abbess ceased to be perpetual and began to be voted every three years. From this point on, these functions included more duties, namely their co-responsibility for expenses and for their recording in proper books by the registrar or treasurer nun. Those were inspected every year or every three years by a male member of the same Order. The Council of Trent also instructed that monasteries should be gathered into provinces (as it happened with the Franciscan ones) or into congregations. Therefore, in Portugal, in 1567, happens the foundation of the Congregation of Saint Benedict of Portugal, with the mother - house located at the Monastery of Tibães, and the Congregation of Santa Maria de Alcobaça, whose mother-house was the Monastery of Alcobaça.

Today, and as a result of the Tridentine resolutions, which made feminine cloistered life much more rigorous and led to the recording of its daily economy, we have the means to study both and, in the latter's case, to focus on the relevance of music in that world.

I.

The register of expenses with music in feminine monasteries

Since the Council of Trent that feminine monasteries were not only obligated to have records of everything they earned and paid, but also to keep their Order/Congregation's hierarchy and the Apostolic Visitors informed of everything. The Abbess was responsible for the monastery's administration, both spiritual and material. She was the one who implemented discipline and she also assumed and signed all the economic acts and contracts in the monastery's name, in conjunction with the general chapter, a group constituted by the Superior Mothers of the Order, to whom

⁹³ *Commendam (or in commendam)* – in canon law, it was a form of transferring an ecclesiastic benefice in trust to the custody of a patron. Monks were dependent from the monastery's duties, a third part of the monastery's income; commendatory abbots were entitled to the abbey's duties, two thirds of the monastery's revenues.

she referred to in order to solve matters of greater responsibility for the monastery. Her decisions were always backed up by the superintendent nun of the House, the Vicar. Among the other positions to be voted every three years, we highlight the one of “Choir Master” (in Benedictine and Poor Clares monasteries) and of “Sacristan Mother” (in São Bento de Cástris and in the other Cistercian monasteries). These were the nuns responsible for the choice of repertoire for the Divine Office (the Liturgy of Hours), for the Masses and its expenses. This highlight is directly related to their connection to sacred music and to the various register books where this is documented.

The treasurer nun, also known as *Síndica* (a sort of administrator), had the obligation to create and keep the account books, the ledger books and/or the Treasurer Nun’s books, which contained the register of the majority of the acquisitions for the community. In the monasteries’ construction ledgers, we also have records of the costs of the extension and renovation of religious buildings and churches, including choir spaces and the purchase and repair of church organs. The Abbess had the help of another nun in the administration of the community’s daily life: the Depository Nun, who according to the case kept or managed the values and money that entered the “Archive” or “Deposit Chest” or “Community Chest”. Along with this, there were also other nuns that occupied other positions which varied according to the monastery and religious Family. There was the function of Grain Keeper, who controlled the inbound and outbound cereal, and the function of Cellarer, who provided for the feeding of the nuns. The expenses related to these functions could have their own register or they could be part of the treasurer’s accounts.

Having as an example the ledger books from the Benedictine monasteries of Santa Ana (Viana do Castelo), of Semide (Coimbra), and of Avé Maria (Porto), dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, we can list the type of recorded expenses which were related to musical practice: the purchase of organs; the payments to organ-builders for repairs and tuning throughout the times; the acquisition of other musical instruments, namely harpsichord, clavichord, double bass, viola, harp and strings; the buying and restoration of Choir Books; the payment to musicians that came to the monastery to participate in festive liturgical ceremonies; the payment to cantor priests who, during the Holy Week, sang the “Passion of Christ”, and to other cantors and performers, such as shawm players, bagpipe players and drummers, during festive celebrations. Monasteries also had costs with special presents to musician nuns, “pampering and flower arrangements”, special foods, and extra expenses with the purchase of candles for Christmas, when the nuns spent hours rehearsing *Vilancicos*, a poetic-musical genre which was a favorite of theirs and of the faithful from the 18th century and

which is musically similar to the baroque cantata, with multiple-voice choirs, solos, duets and instrumental parts.

Contrary to what happened in masculine monasteries, the celebration of masses and sermons in feminine monasteries involved costs, because it was necessary to resort to regular and secular masculine clergy and these services were paid. In this context, and when talking about economic initiative, we must particularly refer to the first Brazilian monastery, the one of the Poor Clares of Desterro (Salvador – Bahia). In order to spare some money and guarantee their permanence at that location, the nuns became tenants of the land where the convent was built and they agreed with the landowners that, in return, they would have “the responsibility to sing, every Saturday and forever more, the litany of Our Lady, [...] for which [the landowners] usually had to pay musicians the amount of 40 000 *réis* every year. [...] The nuns’ chant [...] paid for the land’s tenancy” (Nascimento, 1994: 219).

A common expense was the payment for the organist when, as it frequently happened, the monastery did not have anyone who knew how to play the organ. Therefore, we can find many cases in which this task is paid and assigned to an outsider or to a house nun. However, such circumstances sometimes created difficult situations: in the first case, there was great competition between monasteries when trying to attract an organist who was considered a good performer and who had an unblemished reputation (in this case, the negotiation could even lead to warranting the lady’s religious profession, with no dower delivery and with the right to vote, if she was a laywoman and single or a widow). In the second case, and as documented in some convents of St. Claire, there was the risk of such task becoming too demanding and permanent for the nun who performed this job. She could feel burdened, without conditions to practice her other tasks as a nun, and, although she could have been partially or totally exempted from the payment of the dowry (for being a musician, a characteristic of surmountable importance for the monastery), prefer to pay it and just stop being an organist. In the convents of Toledo, there is a similar situation: at the Monastery de la Concepción, there are records of organist nuns who were paid between the years of 1599 and 1801. (Baade, 2011b: 51)

Expenses with Music at the Monastery of São Bento de Cástris

The Cistercian monastery of São Bento de Cástris (Évora) is the oldest feminine convent located south of the Tagus River. Object of a detailed study by Antónia Fialho Conde, who brought us its daily life in its material and spiritual dimensions, today this monastery is also being studied under Project ORFEUS, of which we are a part of. Integrating its important musical estate, preserved at the Public Library of Évora, there is a collection

of Choir Books constituted by seven Antiphoners, one Sanctoral Antiphoner (recently studied by Isabel Cid da Silva from Project ORFEUS: cf. Conde & Silva, 2015), one Hymnal, two Invitatory Books and two Gradual Books, which result from a long-term investment by the nuns and which attest the choral practice of the monastery. Having as reference the years between 1726 and 1744, it is possible to see, on Table 1, a list of expenses related to musical practice at the monastery, which clearly shows the value and interest this had to this community where the Divine Offices and other liturgical festivities were celebrated with great dignity and beauty. As you can observe, in 1741, the monastery acquired a new organ. The organ-builder was Master Filipe da Cunha, who was paid the following amount in three installments: 96 000 *reis* (1st installment, 1741); 57 600 *reis* (2nd installment, also in 1741); 396 400 *reis* (3rd and last installment, 1744). The monastery paid him a total of 550 000 *reis*, but we do not know if this amount included the costs with materials, transportation and other expenses.

Table 1 – Expenses with Music at São Bento de Cástris from 1726 to 1744

Description	Value in <i>reis</i>	Date	Observations	Source
Main Singer	4800	October 1726	“paguei a pitaça da cantora-mor Dona Maria Elena”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 13
Ministers	960	August 1726	“paguei aos Menistros que cantaram nestas duas festividades ”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 9
Ministers	480	Nov. 1726	“paguei aos Menistros que cantaram a missa de dia dos santos”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 15
Ministers	480	Dec. 1726	“paguei aos Menistros que cantaram na missa de nossa senhora da Conceiçam ”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 17
Ministers	1920	Jan. 1727	“paguei aos Menistros que cantaram nas missas de Natal e Vespera , e no dia da circunsizao”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 19v
Passions	6000	April 1727	“paguei aos Padres que cantaram as paixões todas da semana Santa”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 27v
<i>Exultet</i>	2000	April 1727	“paguei a quem cantou o <i>exultet</i> ”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 27v
Masses a)	1560	June 1727	“paguei ao Padre capelam doze missas rezadas e tres cantadas”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 31v
Ministers	960	Feb. 1728	“paguei aos Menistros que cantaram nas festas da circuncizão e da purificação...”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 42v
Ministers	960	March 1728	“paguei aos Menistros que cantaram na mesma festa”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 44v
Organ Repair	8400	July 1728		CXXXII 1-4 fl. 50v
Organ Repair	720	Sep. 1728	“paguei de huas fechaduras para o órgão”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 52v
<i>Exultet</i>	2000	April 1729	“paguei a quem cantou o <i>exultet</i> ”	CXXXII 1-4 fl.62
Passions	6000	April 1729	“ paguei aos Padres que cantaram as paixões”	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 62

Main Singer	4800	Dec. 1732	“paguei a Madre Cantora Dona Caetana de Sousa no primeiro anno”	CXXXII 1-5 fl. 12v
Main Singer	4800	Jan. 1736	“paguei a Madre Cantora mor a sua pitaça do anno de 1736”	CXXXII 1-6 fl. 10v
Fee (Franciscan)	2400	March 1736	“paguei a um Religioso de Sam Francisco que veio ajudar a cantar as Paschoas	CXXXII 1-6 fl. 14v
Fee (Dominican)	2000	April 1737	“paguei a hum Religioso de São Domingos que ajudou a cantar as Payxoes ”	CXXXII 1-6 fl. 30
Main Singer	9600	April 1738	“paguei a pitaça a Madre Cantora Izabel Candida de dous annos”	CXXXII 1-6 fl. 43
Description	Value in reis	Date	Observations	Source
Fee (Dominican)	2400	April 1738	“paguei a hum Religioso de São Domingos qua ajudou a cantar as Payxois ”	CXXXII 1-6 fl. 44
Main Singer	4800	Nov. 1738	“ pagouse de sua propina”	CXXXII 1-7 fl. 7
Ministers	1 440	Dec. 1739	“paguei aos Menistros em dia da Conceção noyte e dia de Natal de cantarem as empistolas e Evangelhos”	CXXXII 1-7 fl.21v
Main Singer	4800	Jan. 1741	“ paguey a Cantora mor de sua propina”	CXXXII 1-7 fl. 34
Ministers	480	March 1741	“paguei a dous clérigos de Hirem cantar as payxões em dia de Ramos”	CXXXII 1-7 fl.36
Repairs (Organ, payment by installments) b)	96 000	August 1741	“pagouse a Filipe da cunha á conta do Orgão que está fazendo”	CXXXII 1-8 fl.11v
Repairs (Organ, payment by installments) c)	57 600	October 1741	“pagouse a Filipe da cunha á conta do Orgão que está fazendo”	CXXXII 1-8 fl.15
Ministers	960	March 1742	“pagouse aos Ministros que assistirão a duas Missas Cantadas”	CXXXII 1-8 fl.28v
Repairs (organ)	1 600	Sept. 1742	“pagouse hua tranqueta de ferro com parafuzos para as portas do organ”	CXXXII 1-8 fl. 47
Main Singer	4800	Jan. 1744	“ pagouse a propina a Madre Cantora-mor”	CXXXII 1-7 fl. 7
Repairs (organ) d)	396 400	March 1744	“pagouse a Filipe da cunha todo o resto do Orgão que fez”	CXXXII 1-8 fl.79
Masses e)	3 120	April 1744	“pagouse de nove Missas cantadas e oito Rezadas quando o Padre Capelão estava doente”	CXXXII 1-8 fl.81v

a) 3 sang Masses and 12 prayed

b) 1st installment

c) 2nd installment

d) 3rd installment (last one)

e) 9 sang Masses and 8 prayed

Source: Public Library of Évora, Catalogued Estate of São Bento de Cástris

The ledger books from the Monastery of Santa Ana (Viana do Castelo) also have records of payments to Cantors and Priests who sang the

Passion of Christ during Easter. In 1759, Father Matias de Brito received 2000 *reis* from the nuns of Santa Ana (Lessa, 1998: 343). The price list for this service in 1737 is the same which was used in Cástris. In the previous century, specifically in 1614, the Franciscan Monastery of Santa Isabel de los Reyes de Toledo paid 345 *reis* to the musicians who polyphonically sang, with organ, the *Passion of Christ*. (Baade, 2011b: 53)

The job of Main Singer was a very prestigious one. At the Monastery of Cástris in the 1740s, and according to Table 1, the Main Singer was paid 4800 *reis* per year. Some Benedictine monasteries offered presents and better meals to the Singers (sweet rice and fish). At the Monastery of Semide, near Coimbra, the Vestry Book has records from 1757 to 1782 of expenses with palm heart and flower arrangements; besides that, the Main Singer also received a fee of 4180 *reis*. The ledger book of the Convent of Avé Maria in Porto, from the beginning of the 19th century, has records from 1805 to 1807 of payments to the Main Singer of a total of 14 400 *reis* and to the Chapel Master of the amount of 57 600 *reis* (Lessa, 1998: 371; 381). Such high values are certainly connected with the high prestige and responsibility of a Chapel Master, who was responsible for the entire monastery's musical service, including the vocal musical direction of plainchant (or plainsong), of a *capella* polyphonic singing, and/or for the instrumental accompaniment. Meanwhile, the value received by the Main Singer, who assured the Choir, corresponds exactly to the value of three years at Cástris for 4 800 *reis* per year.

To have some notion of the relative value of the amounts spent with Music for religious festivities and Masses, we built Table 2. This works as an example, not as a comprehensive depiction of what happened. So, in an increasing order (from 100 to 8 000 *reis*), we have the expenses made with Music and food in five Portuguese feminine monasteries, during the period of which we have data on the payment of music in Cástris (1672 - 1744). The other four communities that we will briefly refer to are all part of the Order of St. Claire (Poor Clares), the one which, during the 17th and 18th centuries, was the most numerous and omnipresent in the Portuguese Empire. One of the houses, the one named Salvador, has the peculiarity of, just like São Bento de Cástris, being located in Évora. The second, the one of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of Immaculate Conception), is also located in Alentejo, but in Beja; the other two are located on the Portuguese archipelagos: the Azorean one, Nossa Senhora da Glória (Our Lady of Glory), in the town of Horta (island of Faial), and Madeira's one, Nossa Senhora da Encarnação (Our Lady of the Incarnation), in the city of Funchal.

By looking at Table 2, one may question oneself about the buying power of tangible amounts of money, without the need to adapt them to inflation or to other altering effects when referring to chronological time. For

example, in a certain period, 300 *reis* allowed buying two chickens, which were considered to be sophisticated and fortifying food; therefore, they were expensive and rarely consumed, being bought only for celebrations or for when someone was sick or recovering from an illness. In a different historical context, 300 *reis* permitted buying strings for a harp, something rapidly consumable and regularly substituted. For example, at the Convent of Glória (Horta), they bought strings six times per year, close to important liturgical festivities when they were easily broken. With this analysis, the enormous importance that the Cistercian monastic community of São Bento de Cástris gave to musical celebration is very clear. They considered it a supreme way of praising God and a means of sharing with society this exaltation of transcendence. Its expenses with external services of music and singing during the Holy Week, or with the annual salary of the Main Singer nun, are much higher than any others in the house and often correspond to figures two to eight times higher than the most expensive ones related to food.

In the 19th century, the expenses with the Divine Office at the Monastery of Cástris gradually decrease, a not so strange fact, having in mind the extinction plan for the Orders and the overall financial decadence. In 1814, the income map of Cástris, designed by Dona Anna Rita Peregrina do Desterro, states that the monastery *does not receive tithes of any sort* and that, in that same year, the annual expenditure with the Divine Office was of 208 800 *reis*; three decades later, ten years after the Interdiction to New Admissions' Law was published, the expenses with the Office were almost inexistent: a mere 120 *reis* (National Archives - Torre do Tombo, Cister, Mç.2 doc. 87).

Table 2 - Purchasing power of some amounts of money

AMOUNT IN REIS	YEAR	WHAT IT ALLOWS TO PAY	MONASTERY	CITY OR TOWN	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
100	1718	a week of food for a "fâmula" at the monastery's infirmary	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, December 1718, image 100	A "fâmula" was a monastery's maid. 100 "reis" were called a "tostão"
150	1689	a chicken	Nª Srª da Conceição	Beja	Alfredo Saramago, <i>Convento de Soror Mariana</i> , p.119	
200	1672	one harp	S.Bento de	Évora	CXXXII 1-2	

		string	Cástris		fl. 5	
300	1718	a week of food for a nun at the monastery's infirmary	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, December 1718, image 100	
AMOUNT IN REIS	YEAR	WHAT IT ALLOWS TO PAY	MONASTERY	CITY OR TOWN	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
300	1717	harp strings	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, December 1717, image 88	
320	1718	a “canada” (1,4 l) of butter	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, May 1718, image 95	
400	1720	harps strings	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, April 1720, image 111	400 “reis” were called a “cruzado”
400	1719	a “canada” (1,4 l) of butter	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, May 1719, image 104	
480	1726	one sang Mass	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 15, 17	The same price in 1726, 1727, 1728, 1739, 1741, 1742
480	1719	monastery's monthly contribution to each nun that does not eat at the common refectory and pays for her own food	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, September 1719, image 107	
500	1673	harp strings	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-2 fl. 18v	
700	1672	harp and viola strings	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-2 fl. 11	
800	1720	one pound of English butter	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, February 1720, image 110	

900	1672	1 “arroba” (15kg) of beef	Nª Srª da Encarnação	Funchal	Eduarda Gomes, <i>O Convento da Encarnação</i> , p.216	Until the end of the 17th century, every 15 kg of beef was worth between 800 and 900 “reis”
900	1676	1 “arroba” (15 kg) of rice	Nª Srª da Encarnação	Funchal	Eduarda Gomes, <i>O Convento da Encarnação</i> , p.197	This same price in 1671, 1676, 1691, 1717, 1736, but the price of rice oscillated greatly here, from 325 “reis” to 1 500 “reis”
AMOUNT IN REIS	YEAR	WHAT IT ALLOWS TO PAY	MONASTERY	CITY OR TOWN	SOURCE	OBSERVATIONS
1000	1705	1 “arroba” (15kg) of beef	Nª Srª da Encarnação	Funchal	Eduarda Gomes, <i>O Convento da Encarnação</i> , p.216	Between 1700 and 1743, every 15 kg of beef was worth between 1000 and 1200 “reis”
1100	1689	1 “arroba” (15 kg) of rice	Nª Srª da Conceição	Beja	Alfredo Saramago, <i>Convento de Soror Mariana</i> , p.119	
1200	1741	1 “arroba” (15kg) of beef	Nª Srª da Encarnação	Funchal	Eduarda Gomes, <i>O Convento da Encarnação</i> , p.218	
1250	1701	harp strings (one package)	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-3 fl. 102	
1280	1719	half “arroba” (7,5 kg) of rice	Nª Srª da Glória	Horta	Administração 1707-1809, cx. 5, Lº 1, February 1719, image 102	Price for a pound of rice: 4 “vinténs”. A “vintém” was 20 “reis”. So, 7,5 kg were equivalent to 320 pounds, and costed 64 “vinténs”.
1500	1699	harp strings (one package)	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-3 fl. 17	
1500	1701	strings and pilar for a harp (a package)	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-3 fl. 82v	
1600	1692	sing praises and the "Exultet"	Salvador	Évora	Lº 15, fl. 53	

2000	1672	bi-annual gift to the Main Singer	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-2 fl. 11v, 18	The same price from 1672 to 1675, 1700 and 1701
2000	1727	sing the "Exultet"	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-4 fl. 27v	The same price from 1727 to 1729
2400	1738	help sing the "Passion of Christ"	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-6 fl. 44	
2500	1674	playing shawms	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-2 fl. 41v	The same price from 1672 to 1674
4800	1744	annual gift to the Main Singer	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-7 fl. 7	The same price in 1726, 1732, 1736, 1738, 1741, 1744
6000	1674	sing all the "Passions"	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-2 fl. 31v	The same price in 1674, 1675, 1702, 1727 and 1729
8000	1701	sing the "Passions" and the "Exultet"	S.Bento de Cástris	Évora	CXXXII 1-3 fl. 89	

Conclusion:

The 17th and 18th centuries are known as centuries of great expression of monastic religiousness. At that time, monasteries were the stage for important artistic manifestations and, in the case of feminine monasteries, they had female musicians as protagonists. Musical practice in monasteries occupied a good portion of the convent's daily life. Music was present throughout the day in the celebration of Mass and of the Divine Office. Besides Divine Praise, music was also a part of leisure times.

The ledger books from Portuguese feminine monasteries are a relevant source for the economic and statistic study of religious orders in Portugal. However, the reading of these documents under a musicological perspective has a peculiar reach and requires a deeper study of the *expenses with music* of feminine monasteries in the modern period. Through the registered expenses, it is possible to identify a set of musical practices that took place inside the walls. There is important data about: the presence of instrumental music in monasteries, besides the usage of the organ; the presence of cathedral musicians in the liturgy services at monasteries; the celebration of festivities to honor patron saints and other festivities which had the presence of external musicians; the involvement with the local community in popular celebrations, also with the presence of musicians; the zeal in the acquisition and preservation of choir books and musical

instruments, focusing on the organ; and, finally, the status and admiration that *Musician Ladies* came upon in the monastic communities.

As for the Monastery of São Bento de Cástris, the records of *expenses with music* that we know today are particularly interesting. Considering the number of references and the amounts of money mentioned, we have the confirmation that this monastery was an extremely important center for musical activity, in what relates to Portuguese monastic sacred music from the 17th and 18th centuries. Music was, undoubtedly, of great value for the cloistered nuns at Cástris.

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