

# JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO LISBON. 1793-1794

A YOUNG MAN'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

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**Abstract:** In November 1793 seventeen-year-old William Withering left England in the company of his father, who suffered from consumption; a few weeks later they arrived in the coast of Lisbon. In *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon. 1793-1794*, a manuscript, Withering wrote a daily record of his experiences from the moment he left home, in Birmingham, until his return.

In this paper we focus our attention on the 168 pages of the manuscript dedicated to Lisbon and its surroundings, where father and son resided for five months. We examine them against the background of the history and «culture» of travel literature, in particular that between mid-18<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> cent. Most of our sources are from the universe of travel literature and literary history.

We emphasize the singularity of this travel account, which derives from factors such as the reputation of the author's father (known as the «English Linneus»), and the accessibility to places and objects it facilitated; the Enlightenment travel writing conventions the author followed; and the author's young age.

**Keywords:** Journal; Manuscript; Lisbon; Late 18th century.

**Resumo:** Em Novembro de 1793 William Withering, de dezassete anos de idade, parte de Inglaterra na companhia de seu pai que sofre de tuberculose. Umhas semanas mais tarde avista a costa de Lisboa. Em *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon. 1793-1794*, manuscrito, Withering regista as suas experiências diariamente, desde a partida de sua casa em Birmingham até ao seu regresso.

A nossa atenção centra-se nas 168 páginas do manuscrito dedicadas a Lisboa e arredores, onde pai e filho residem durante cinco meses. Examinamo-las no contexto da história e da «cultura» da literatura de viagem, em particular o período que decorre entre meados do século XVIII e meados do século XIX. Para tal utilizámos, sobretudo, fontes do universo da literatura de viagem e da história literária.

Sublinhamos ainda a singularidade deste relato de viagem, que advém de factores como a reputação do pai do autor (o «Lineu Inglês»), a qual facilitou o acesso a determinados objectos e locais; as convenções da escrita de viagem do Iluminismo, que o autor seguiu; e o facto de este ser ainda muito jovem.

**Palavras-chave:** Diário; Manuscrito; Lisboa; Fins do século XVIII.

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 1793, eight days after embarking on the *Expedition* in Falmouth, seventeen-year-old William Withering wrote in his *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon. 1793-1794*:

*Very fine day. N. E. wind. The Rock of Lisbon was first seen at 6 o'clock in the morning. The sun very warm. (...) As we approach'd nearer the land the Cintra Hills appear'd very beautiful & with a Telescope we could perceive the Palace of Mafra<sup>1</sup>.*

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General notes:

**a.** When quoting, we have opted to maintain the original spelling and punctuation of the manuscript.

**b.** The dates found in brackets after the name of a travel writer indicate the date the visit occurred, not the date of publication.

**1** WITHERING, 1793-1794. V. Fig. 1.

The 360-page manuscript<sup>2</sup> is a detailed record of his journey from the moment he left Birmingham, on the first day of October 1793, to his return five months later, a few weeks after leaving Portugal. He traveled with his father, who hoped to find relief for his consumptive symptoms in the warmer climate of southern Europe. Among those looking for the healing properties of the Lisbon weather, not many recorded their experiences. In a universe of more than fifty European and North-American visitors to Portugal whose accounts were published between 1750 and 1850, only three, including Withering, traveled for reasons related to health<sup>3</sup>. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a more common reason for visiting was diplomacy, as in the case of Clarke (1761-62)<sup>4</sup> – and diplomacy could involve more or less secret goals, as with Dumouriez (1766)<sup>5</sup> and Cormatin (1777)<sup>6</sup>. To others, like J. Friedrich von Weech (1823)<sup>7</sup>, Lisbon was a point of passage to the Americas. Very few came, as Richard Twiss (1772-73)<sup>8</sup> did, simply to know Portugal, a country largely peripheral to most travelers' circuits and certainly not included in the Grand Tour<sup>9</sup>. In a letter to Baretti in 1761, Dr. Johnson writes that there is no country Europeans are less familiar with than Spain, by which he means the Iberian Peninsula<sup>10</sup>. The first travel guides on Portugal and Spain were published around the time of Withering's visit, that of Hans Ottokar Reichard in 1793<sup>11</sup>. After the publication of the first two cantos of Byron's *Childe Harold*<sup>12</sup>, in 1812, there was a surge in the number of visitors; later, travelers of the Romantic period searching for the exotic and unusual would find it within the European continent in places like Portugal, Spain and Greece<sup>13</sup>. And yet, as late as 1845 Dorothy Quillinan wrote that Portugal was a «labyrinth to strangers»<sup>14</sup>.

In some ways, Withering's journal is unlike other travel accounts on Portugal at the turn of the century<sup>15</sup>. Its singularity derives, to a large extent, from the author's reasons for the visit, his father's profession and reputation, his own education and background, and his young age.

Dr. Withering's ill health circumscribed his son to areas close to Lisbon. They did not venture even to Sintra, which the doctor had visited during a previous stay in Portugal from September 1792 to June 1793. He was then accompanied by his daughter Charlotte. In a letter to James Watt of March 1793, he mentions how his health improved as he approached southern latitudes:

**2** 168 pages are dedicated to Lisbon and surrounding areas.

**3** Cf. PAULINO, 2009; PAULINO (KULMACZ), 2001.

**4** CLARKE, 1763.

**5** DUMOURIEZ, 1775.

**6** CORMATIN, 1798.

**7** WEECH, 1831.

**8** TWISS, 1775.

**9** NUGENT, T. [et al.], 1749: xi; cf. also CHANEY, 1998; and BLACK, 1985.

**10** BOSWELL, 1887: 104; Baretti is the author of *A Journey from London to Genoa, through England, Portugal, Spain and France*, published in 1770.

**11** REICHARD, 1791

**12** BYRON, 1812 (translated into Portuguese as *Peregrinação de Childe Harold: poema*, published in Lisbon in 1883).

**13** Cf. BUZARD, 1993: 41-49.

**14** QUILLINAN, 1847: vi.

(...) reaching Cape Finisterra in three days, the recovery of my strength and appetite began to take place. The more southern latitude was evident in the fine atmosphere and warmer land (...)<sup>16</sup>.

One may safely assume that he derived significant relief from this first stay, for he came again five months later. The second visit, however, did not produce the same results, and he would die of the disease five years later.

Known as the «English Linneaus», Dr. Withering was an eminent figure of the English Enlightenment. His spirit of scientific inquiry, and his connections, determined what our young author had access to. The doctor was famous for having discovered the medical applications of *Digitalis*, and generally considered a pioneer of modern medicine<sup>17</sup>. He made important contributions to the fields of geology, archeology and botany and was a member of the Lunar Society<sup>18</sup>, founded in England in 1766 for the exchange and dissemination of ideas; other members were Erasmus Darwin and Josiah Wedgwood<sup>19</sup>, James Watt<sup>20</sup>, Matthew Boulton<sup>21</sup>, and Joseph Priestley<sup>22</sup>. His presence in Lisbon did not go unnoticed: at times, they would have «30 or 40 visitors [this] morning». In their rare visits to the capital, father and son took part in the social life and mingled with the powerful and the wealthy:

(...) about 5 o’Clock E. P. & I set off to spend the Even. at Mr. Walpole’s, the British Envoy. We arrived there about 8 o’Clock & found a great deal of company; there were all the Foreign Ministers & most of the Portuguese Nobility. We had a little Concert ‘till about 9 o’Clock (...).

But they were not fond of Lisbon, with its «abominable hotels» and «dirty streets». Their preference was for research-related activities in the countryside, where Withering searched for special plants to be used by his father in lectures organized by the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon. The Academy would soon publish Dr. Withering’s essay on the chemical properties of the water in Caldas da Rainha<sup>23</sup>. Members of the Academy Domenico Vandelli, Mariano da Conceição Veloso and José Correia da Serra<sup>24</sup> were

<sup>15</sup> PAULINO, 2009; PAULINO (KULMACZ), 2001.

<sup>16</sup> WITHERING, 1793. V. Fig. 4. James Watt (1736-1819), Scottish mechanical engineer, major contributor to the development of the steam engine.

<sup>17</sup> On this topic cf. FULTON, 1953.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. ROBINSON, 1955: 349-35.

<sup>19</sup> Both grandfathers of Charles Darwin; Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) was a poet, botanist, and renowned naturalist. Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) was responsible for the industrialization of traditional manufacturing processes, in particular of pottery.

<sup>20</sup> V. footnote 16 *supra*.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew Boulton (1728-1809), eminent Birmingham industrialist, pioneer of the British industrial engineering; in 1775 he developed a partnership with Watt to manufacture and commercialize the steam engine. The company Boulton and Watt held commercial interests in Lisbon regarding minting (ROBINSON, 1955: 352).

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), theologian, contributor to the fields of philosophy and political theory.

<sup>23</sup> WITHERING, 1795. He had engaged in this research during his first visit.

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Domenico Vandelli (1735-1816), first Director of the Ajuda Botanical Garden; Father José Mariano da Conceição Veloso (1742-1811), botanist in charge of classifying flora and fauna at the Royal Garden and Museum of Ajuda; Father José Correia da Serra (1750-1823), researcher in botany and geology, founder of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon.

frequent guests of the Witherings and often acted as guides, facilitating access to areas and collections «not commonly exhibited to Strangers». For example, in the Palace of Belém:

*The Abbé Correa introduced us to a Gentleman by whom we were shewn the Collection of Paintings (...). The walls of many large apartments were entirely covered by them, in general they are very bad, but there are some exceedingly good ones; most of them are from Rome. The Cielings are magnificently gilt & tolerably well painted, but seem to be decaying from damp. (...) We were next shewn an immense quantity of Gold & Silver plate belonging to the Crown. There was 48 dozen of solid Silver plates with Dishes, [illegible] and all kinds of ornaments in Proportion: 24 dozen of rich silver Gilt Plates, with Knives & Forks &c. in proportion & an amazing number of handsome ornaments of Gold & Silver of prodigious value. In all there was enough to supply 12 large tables magnificently. There is likewise handsome services of fine China.*

Inevitably, young Withering's personal background, education, and the people he emulated influenced what he recorded and, more significantly perhaps, the way he responded to what he saw. The decision to write about his journey was not surprising. By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the popularity of travel writing was high. European libraries found it difficult to respond adequately to readers' demands for this kind of literature in the original language and in translation<sup>25</sup>. Travel texts filled many shelves in the private libraries of men like Joseph Addison (1672-1719), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)<sup>26</sup>. In Locke's library, along with texts on geography, travel literature made up the fifth largest section of books, far outweighing those on philosophy, natural sciences, general literature and history<sup>27</sup>. In a way, writing an account of his journey was almost to be expected of Withering Jr.

Equally not surprising is his decision to write a journal rather than an account, a narrative, a collection of letters or, later, a memoir. The inclusive nature of travel literature welcomed any of these forms, even hybrid ones blending fact and fiction and, in some cases, literary genres<sup>28</sup>, a circumstance that gives rise to formal and classification challenges<sup>29</sup>. Yet, a journal suited him well as he could make daily, sometimes twice daily entries recording what he observed almost immediately, in line with the prescribed

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In the letter to James Watt cited above Dr. Withering writes: «Dr. Vandelli, the professor of botany certainly possessed a spirit of inquiry when he first came here, but inactivity had adopted him for now and he is grown rusty in science which he neither wanted ability nor opportunity to adorn. (...) The royal society here is barely kept alive by the zeal and activity of the secretary, the Abbada Correa, but he I think will soon desert it».

<sup>25</sup> ADAMS, 1988: xxiv and 75.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. BATTEN, 1978: 2.

<sup>27</sup> Travel texts are the most commonly cited in John Locke's *An essay concerning human understanding*, published in 1690. On this topic cf. PAXMAN, 2003: 184.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Mary Shelley includes letters and diaries written during her travels through Europe in 1814 and 1816 in *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*, published in 1818. Cf. COLBERT, 2004: 7.

<sup>29</sup> As early as 1964 the then President of the *Modern Language Association* defended the inclusion in academic literary study curricula of «neglected literary forms», in particular travel literature (HILTON, 1966: 836-37). However, some researchers continue to deny it the status of literary genre. On this controversy cf. HOOPER & YOUNGS, 2004: 13.

behavior of the «patriotic traveler» as defined by the German philanthropist and traveler Count Leopold Berchtold. Author of an immensely successful book containing advice for travelers<sup>30</sup>, published in 1789, Berchtold suggests that trustworthy information must be noted down *in loco* and transferred at the end of the day to a well organized journal<sup>31</sup>. Withering may not have read Berchtold, but he had been brought up among people of a similar mind. Not all information mattered to him; only that which was useful, factual, objective. The golden rule determined that the authorial presence must not intrude in the description of the (always external) object<sup>32</sup>. Accordingly, very little in his journal gives the reader a glimpse of his temperament, or of his personal response to his circumstances in a foreign country with a progressively weaker father who, at times, fainted and coughed blood. Such emotions as he must have experienced he kept to himself and thus his account stands in striking opposition to those, rapidly becoming fashionable, that offered the reader what would become the norm in the Romantic period: the singular experience<sup>33</sup>, the personal impression, digression<sup>34</sup>.

A young man of the Enlightenment, Withering followed on the footsteps of Plutarch, who exalted the virtues of the journey with the goal of collecting of knowledge<sup>35</sup>. The Enlightenment emphasis on reason and exhaustive thematic knowledge was reflected in a particular love of encyclopedias and collections, including those of travel literature<sup>36</sup>. Travelers followed the precepts established by the British Royal Society, returning to their countries with data and drawings that could be put to good use by scientists as well as the common reader<sup>37</sup>. Accordingly, Withering turned the last forty three pages of his manuscript into a chapter-structured collection of information organized around themes: Portuguese jewelry, wine, beasts, cattle, the royal stables, the navy, and etiquette. Working within the framework of the *ars apodemica*<sup>38</sup> and the distinction between deambulation (*vagari*) and the purposeful journey (*peregrinari*)<sup>39</sup>, he clearly chose the latter, never missing an opportunity to add to his collection of plants and rocks, as when he walked to Alcântara to collect «some Agates from the valley. There are some very fine ones as well as good marble, but they are difficult to procure». And perhaps to prevent any danger of *vagari*, he devised his own plan of study:

**30** Cf. BERCHTOLD, 1789: 43; Cf. STAGL, 1995: 221-22.

**31** Cf. BERCHTOLD, 1789.

**32** Cf. BATTEN, 1978: 63.

**33** Cf. STOCKING, 1968: 441-42.

**34** Examples of such journals are the extremely successful *Italienische Reise* by Goethe (1816 and 1817) and *Reisebilder* by Heinrich Heine (1826 and 1831).

**35** Cf. PETERS, 2001: 596-97.

**36** One finds encyclopedic works already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Some pertinent examples are ABELIN, 1643; ANON, 1643; and BOEHSE, 1698.

**37** Cf. ADAMS, 1988: viii.

**38** A formal methodology of travel first conceptualized in Germany, *ars apodemica* or *prudential peregrinandi* was known in English as *the art of travel*, in French as *l'art de voyager* and in German as *Reisekunst*. It surfaced at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was followed through the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Its aim was to codify and improve on the travel practices of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance by combining German didacticism, Italian realism and French methodology. From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent. till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> cent. about three hundred *ars apodemica* works were published containing prescriptive rules to be applied to the collection and organization of information (STAGL, 2005: 57, 227).

**39** Cf. *idem*.

*I began to follow some regular plan of study. I got up at 7 o'clock, & at 1/2 past I went into the Study & learnt French till 9. From 9 to 10, at breakfast. From 10 to 12 Botany or drawing. From 12 to 1, reading Latin. From 1 to 3, walking, riding, or anything else. From 3 to 4 at dinner. From 4 to 6 write latin Exercise. At 6, tea time. From after tea till 9 o'clock, (the time for even prayers), studying Mathematics with Papa, or sometimes dancing.*

Dr. Withering also exerted a direct influence on his son's response to the observed. When he visited Sintra during his first stay, he described it succinctly as «The Elyseum of this country, where the rich spend their time during the heat of the summer»<sup>40</sup>. Aside from that, he mentioned only its geographic position and the temperature variations through the day. Even though he was not writing a travel account, one must wonder how a place so consensually worthy of the highest praise held no more interest to him than as a source of measurable data. His son inherited this preoccupation with measurements and facts, yet it must be said this did not render him immune to error. Sometimes his information is inaccurate, as in the description of what may well be the most minutely dissected Lisbon public square in contemporary travel literature, Praça do Comércio with its equestrian statue of King D. José I:

*We rode through a very handsome square, in which is the famous Equestrian Statue of King John [my italics]. One side of this Square is a Royal Palace which is not finished; another side is the Exchange, a very handsome edifice, the 3d side is not yet finished & on the 4<sup>th</sup> side is the River. Out of this Square go two of the principal streets call'd the Goldsmith's & the Silversmith's Streets.*

The belief in rational explanation led the young man to rather extraordinary conclusions when he walked up a hill in Almada, near Lisbon, and saw what was left of a Moorish castle. He was sure he could identify a mosque and skulls lying around:

*The skulls of the Moors were easily distinguished from those of the Christians; the former being accustomed to go with their heads bare were much thicker & more able to bear the heat of the sun. The latter being cover'd were thinner (V. Fig. 3).*

Naturally, young Withering's interest was aroused by collections such as the «Queen's Natural Curiosities», kept «in very good order» although the room «does not have good lighting». His taste was for Neoclassical uniformity and restraint, whether in clothing, architecture, or landscape. He admired the «noble» Aqueduct of Alcântara for its clean lines, strength («it stood the great Earthquake») and imposing measurements, and disliked anything that deviated from a notion of beauty and decorum that at times seems to blend with a certain English taste. For example, the «Fidalgos» attending the Grand Ball of Dec. 18 in honour of the Queen of Portugal wore «immense quantities of

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<sup>40</sup> WITHERING, 1793. V. Fig. 4.

Diamonds upon Satin Clothes, richly embroidered with Silk & gold. They looked very fine & tawdry but not half so genteel as a plain dressed English Gentleman».

These preferences find clear expression in his descriptions of religious buildings<sup>41</sup>. In the vestry of the Church of St. Roque he was shown «a remarkable fine piece & very large, which was the frontispiece to the great Altar, it is made of solid Silver, some parts richly gilt, & ornamented with historical devices». He also saw the robes of the priests, «some of which are very splendid; cover'd with the richest embroidery of gold & silver, set with diamonds» and «also some silver stands of great weight, in which were deposited the skulls and bones of Martyrs». In the Chapel of St. John the Baptist:

*The altar was composed of the richest marbles & most precious stones (...). The walls are covered with very fine Mosaic with [?] some parts of which are equal to the finest painting; the floor likewise of the same work, & the whole lighted with large [illegible] in immense candlesticks of massey Silver gilt.*

St. Roque is unfavorably compared to buildings like the «New Convent»<sup>42</sup>, where ornaments, he thought, were more elegant. Although not one of the paintings on the walls was found to be good, «the general effect of the inside of this noble edifice is very fine». Seen from a distance, the «New Convent (...) makes a very Handsome appearance but the noble simplicity of a large dome is spoiled by too much frippery & inelligent workmanship»<sup>43</sup>. And on the outside there was

*(...) a striking instance of that carelessness & inattention, (which the Portuguese shew in most of their buildings), to the uniformity of the edifice, for they have built a range of stables against the principal side front & erected a large wooden cavement against one of the domes (...)*

He disliked the disparity between the exterior, the old structure, of the Cathedral and its interior, which looked new due to recent repairs. The grand altar «is almost entirely new». The pillars, «of white veined scariola» are too heavy and large for the size of the building, and the Capitals are gilded. On the positive side, «[it] has two pretty good Organs». However, preferable to all others were the church and monastery of Jerónimos, where the cloisters

*[were] wonderfully fine, in the Gothic stile<sup>44</sup>, surrounding a large court, in the middle of which is water with fountains, which makes them always cool & agreeable. The Church itself is certainly very much more magnificent than the famous St. Rocques. The pillars are elegantly*

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion on the English and Southern Europe's churches and religious practices cf. PEMBLE, 1987.

<sup>42</sup> Real Basílica e Mosteiro do Santíssimo Coração de Jesus (Royal Basilica and Convent of the Holy Heart of Jesus de Jesus); the designation of «New Convent» is due to its recent construction (it was completed a few years before Withering's visit).

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note that Heinrich Friedrich Link (1797-1799), German botanist, follower of Linneus, who traveled through Portugal between 1797 and 1799, expressed a similar view: the white lime stone gives the building a pleasant and aesthetically successful exterior but the architect showed poor taste when he overloaded it with ornamentation (LINK, 1801: 219).

<sup>44</sup> The style of the church and monastery of Jerónimos is a controversial topic among foreign visitors. In general they waver between classifying it as Moorish, or Gothic, and they are uncertain as to what kind of Gothic it is. Vd. PAULINO, 2009: 196-97.

*light & very lofty, the Altars are magnificent gold & Silver gilt & the Pulpits are made of beautiful marble.*

One finds the same aesthetic preferences in Withering's description of exterior, non-urban spaces, such as «quintas»<sup>45</sup>, gardens, and scenery in general, which reveal a more engaged observer. He was fond of Braço de Prata, where they first resided

*(...) formerly the residence of the French Ambassador, it was about 4 Miles from Lisbon higher up the River & pleasantly situated in a Quinta or Orchard upon the banks of the Tagus which was there 12 Miles over. We had likewise a small wood to walk in (overhanging the River) which is a very scarce thing in Portugal. (...) The country was well wooded with Olive Trees. There were some of the most beautiful prospects I ever saw (...).*

As he was of the house they moved into a few months later, situated in «St. Josè de riba Mer, or St. Joseph upon the banks of the Sea (so call'd from the St. Josè Convent a little way off)». He went for long walks, both around the house and in the garden of the convent, «which is laid out in a most curious stile»: the walks were made of «Dutch tiles» and the walls and fountains «are entirely covered with shell-work». The house itself was

*delightfully situated upon the banks of the Tagus, about 5 miles from Lisbon, 1 from Belem lower down (...) open to the South, with a charming prospect of the River & the opposite shore & a very extensive view of the Forts, the Bar & the Atlantic Ocean from the hills behind the house. The Quintas on this side Lisbon are planted with Oranges, those on the other side with Olives, which are not near so beautiful as the former.*

In both passages just quoted, the adjectives «beautiful» and «charming», and the adverb «delightfully», contrast with the vocabulary he used to describe «most of the gardens in Portugal», whose artificiality displeased him. The garden of the S. José residence was «laid out in the Chinese manner, as are most of the Gardens in Portugal, with flights of steps, Basins of water with Gold & Silver Fish, Fountains & C.». In Caxias

*[t]he Royal Gardens (...) are laid out in a very odd manner; terraces one above another to a great height, ornamented with Rock Work, Fountains, Statues, Chinese Temples &c. painted with bright colours, which have a very remarkable appearance.*

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**45** Unable to find an adequate equivalent to the Portuguese word «quinta», travel writers do not venture into translation. The inclusive, multi-functional character of the Portuguese «quinta», a space that combines farming, leisure and entertainment, and often landscaped gardens, makes it essentially different from a «farm», a «country house» or an «estate», a «landgut» (German), or a «ferme» (French). In his travel account, Heinrich Friedrich Link explains that «quinta» designates an enclosed area surrounded by walls or hedges, simultaneously used as a vegetable garden, an orchard, a place for farming and for entertainment. «Quintas», he adds, do not have artistic pretensions and are delightful in their simplicity. In the rare cases when they are destined only for entertainment, the prevailing fashion is French as exemplified by the «quinta» of the Marquess of Abrantes in Benfica (LINK, 1801: 231).

Withering shows no inclination to join in the new taste emerging in travel texts from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Between then and the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, travel literature reflected, and helped shape, the movement from the Neoclassical to the Romantic sensibility; there was a prolonged Pre-Romantic phase during which writers exalted «the picturesque»<sup>46</sup>, a concept defined by William Gilpin in three influential essays<sup>47</sup> published the year prior to Withering's journey. The Grand Tour helped develop aesthetic sensibility by exposing the traveler to the real scenery of the Alps and Italy, as well as to Italian landscape painting<sup>48</sup>. There is a vast bibliography on the dynamic relationship between travel literature and the formation of the taste of large sections of European society, which became increasingly aware of the Mediterranean landscape features<sup>49</sup> as travelers brought home engravings and drawings. Withering compares the Aqueduct of Alcântara to the engravings he had seen before his visit, and concludes: «None of the prints which I have seen give an adequate idea of the magnitude of it».

By the time he arrived in Portugal, the taste for geometrically laid gardens with straight walks and carefully placed statuary had given rise to a preference for the irregular feature, the unexpected turn, the «natural» look, in short, «the picturesque»; yet, much more to his liking are the gardens at the Palace of Belém:

*(...) laid out in a very regular manner, with long streight walks with tall crop't hedges on both sides, ornamented with Statues; the Spaces between the walks are planted with Trees, chiefly oranges. We ascended a handsome flight of Steps, which brought us to a Garden, laid out in little forms with box [illegible] neatly cut, overhanging the River, in which stood the Menagerie, a most charming edifice & excellently well adapted to the Purpose, ornamented with white Statues which appeared very beautiful against the dark blue, & the orange blossoms which perfumed the air made it quite delightful<sup>50</sup>.*

The words «picturesque» and «enchanted» were often used from early on in the century to describe a view that struck travelers powerfully, such as Lisbon seen from the sea, at first in the distance, then closer as the ships came slowly up the river. Withering did not remain unaffected, but he did remain dutifully descriptive:

*About 8 we anchored off Cintra (...). A delighful day, & we had a most charming prospect before us of the Hills, the light house, the Town of Cascaes, with Forts, a pretty little white Convent situated in an orange Grove. About 2 o'clock we weighed anchor & proceeded with a*

**46** On the relationship between the pre-romantic sensibility in Portugal and the appreciation and acquisition of painting between 1780 and 1825 cf. ARAÚJO, 1991.

**47** GILPIN, 1792.

**48** Cf. HUSSEY, 2003.

**49** Cf. PEMBLE, 1987: 7-9.

**50** R. B. FISHER (1808-1811) remarks that there is little to admire in this very formal garden. The long walks have tall hedges on both sides that cross at right angles and continue into very long avenues; here and there one sees a fountain (FISHER, 1811); Lt. Gen. COCKBURN (1811) dislikes the garden, laid out in the old-fashioned way with cut hedges, with very long walks cutting across the park and others that go all the way around it (COCKBURN, 1815).

*gentle breeze towards Lisbon. (...) This entrance into the Tagus, with the great number of fine buildings, palaces, churches &c, is reckoned one of the grandest sights in Europe. Before we arrived at the City we passed Belem, which is a town, built in an irregular manner, & composed chiefly of fine Buildings, such as its famous old Church, by the river side, which is the finest in the Country; the Adjuda Palace, a long, white edifice on the top of the Hill, the Church, built on the spot, in which the late King was attempted to be assassinated, & many other Churches & Noblemen's houses. There is likewise part of an old Castle, which stands by the water side. Opposite here you see the hill & the ruins of Almada (...). Further on we had a delightful view of the city, which is situated upon a number of small hills, forming a crescent, & one of the principal objects which presents itself is the new Convent, which appears from river up.*

There are a few moments in this journal when Withering's young age gets the better of him and he allows us a glimpse of his excitement and love of adventure. At such times writing was not enough and he felt compelled to draw the objects of his attention (v. Figs. 2 and 3). In Porto Brandão, for example, he came across precipices, miniature «deserts of Arabia» and donkeys that were «beasts»:

*Mr. White came about 10 o'Clock to take us across the Water. We had a delightful row over the river to a small place call'd Porto Brandao, from whence we proceeded on Burros up the country (...) We passed over several high hills [illegible] this beautiful Valleys, where the meadows were entirely covered with wild chamomile (...). After travelling 3 or 4 miles on our Burros we at last came to a Precipice which seemed impracticable for the Buros to descend. We dismounted and left our Beasts to the care of the servants. From the top of this precipice there is an extensive view of the Ocean, Cape Aspichel & the Coast (call'd Costa) with the huts of the fishermen upon it. We descended first & when we looked up from the plain below it was astonishing to see the men and Buros come down. (...) We directed our Course across a large track of Sand (the Deserts of Arabia in miniature) & carried at the huts close to the Sea side. They are in general built of rushes & are inhabited by a very different set of people to those who live on the Northern side of the Tagus. They are chiefly fishermen, who are very stout & muscular & much accustomed to great danger in [illegible] the bar & rowing about the rocks & breakers of the coast, which they do in half-moon shaped boats, which are only to be found amongst these hardy people. In these they venture out in the roughest seas (...) (V. Fig. 2).*

In Almada he found traces of a Moorish Castle, human bones, perpendicular rocks, and tremendous heights:

*We had a delightful row up the River as far as Almada, where we landed. We walked thro' the Town, which is small & dirty, till we came to the top of the Hill on which was formerly a Moorish Castle of great strength, of which there is now scarcely sufficient remaining to trace the ground plan, but to the best of my knowledge it is thus – a. appears to have been the great entrance; b. a smaller gate way, now remaining; c. remains of a wall, parallel to a.; d. round towers; e. square towers; f. wall next the Sea, upon a high & nearly perpendicular rock; impregnable; o. the mosque*

*in which we saw many human bones. This castle is built on a rock of calcareous marble (V. Fig. 3). From this place (...) the prospect exceeds anything I recollect having seen before. You can see distinctly, on one side, far into the Atlantic, the Bar, the 2 forts, the opposite shore, Belem & the whole South side of the City of Lisbon; on the other, the country on both sides the Tagus, which is covered with Pine trees on the S. side & has a very fine appearance, the Mountains of the Arrabeda & Palmela. We descended this high hill on the north side, down a good road which is cut out of the rocks, which are here a tremendous height & nearly perpendicular.*

At the end of April 1794 Withering and his father left Lisbon on board the King George. A reader of this journal will wonder what became of this young man, so attentive to his father, so deeply shaped by his upbringing. We know only that, as an adult, he cared about keeping the memory of his father alive. He published Dr. Withering's biography, a collection of his scientific treatises<sup>51</sup>, and was responsible for four posthumous editions of *An Arrangement of British Plants according to the latest Improvements of the Linnean System*<sup>52</sup>. Of himself, we have next to nothing except, of course, his journal of a voyage to Lisbon.

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. URBAN, 1822.

<sup>52</sup> WITHERING, 1818.

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