


The Procession of *Soledade* in 1656 Évora

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Summary

Processions were an important part of the early modern city soundscape as moments of celebration and devotion including all parts of society. This text presents the Procession of *Soledade* in Évora, which took place in 1656. In the account of this procession we find several elements that contribute to its soundscape description.

The so-called Good Friday procession organized by the *Misericórdia* of Évora in 1656, was in fact the procession of the *Soledade*. This procession seemed to be a strong Iberian devotion that commemorated the solitude of the Virgin Mary on Holy Saturday, and was part of a wider devotion practised on Good Friday.

This practice seemed to have been strong among the brothers of the *Misericórdia* of Évora during the seventeenth century as noted in the decision made at the 26 March 1656 gathering. In this meeting it was agreed the terms of that year's procession noting that it had a wide and strong devotion in the city for years (Espanca, 1954: 173). The procession would also include a strong emphasis on preaching as is testimony of this practice the printed sermon that the Jesuit Luis Cardeyra gave on this feast in 1669 (Cardeyra, 1669). The 1656 celebration was no exception with the brothers of the *Misericórdia* commissioning the respective sermon to priest Fr. Sebastião Penalva, which would be given after the procession enter the church. (Espanca, 1954: 173).

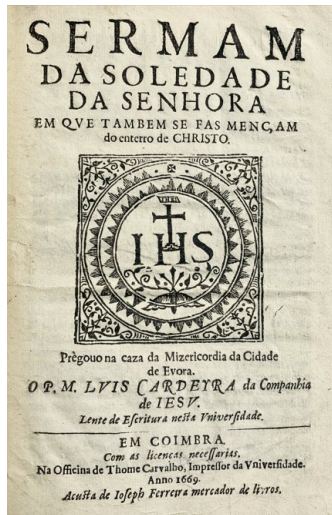


Image 1
Cardeyra (1669).

Penalva was an Augustinian friar which we assume was resident at the Graça Convent of Évora. He had been a pupil of Fr. Luis de Montoya a very important figure in that convent and later confessor to the Portuguese king D. Sebastião. Penalva was himself regarded as a famous preacher during his lifetime. We assume that, based on the choosing of a Jesuit priest to preach in 1669, each year the *Misericórdia* would commission the sermon to a different Order, probably also taking part the city Dominicans and Franciscans.



Image 2
Church of Misericórdia, Évora

So, for the 1656 procession of the *Soledade* the brothers of the *Misericórdia* agreed that it would take place late in the Good Friday afternoon. After the procession enter the church (of *Misericórdia*) the Holy Shroud relic was to be shown to the people during the sermon which, as mentioned before, had been commissioned Fr. Sebastião Penalva. Five brothers were to be chosen as angels to carry the martyrdoms and a person of greater importance would dress in purple to carry the cross (Espanca, 1954: 173).

The itinerary of the procession was also noted in the meeting's record. According to the document, the procession would leave the Church of Misericórdia and visit the church of the Dominican nuns convent of Paraíso. It would follow through the Selaria Street to the Collegiate Church of São Tiago. The last step of the procession would include the Porta Nova, Ancha Street, the Square, afterwards returning to the Church of *Misericórdia* (Espanca, 1954: 173).

The account of this itinerary raises several doubts notably regarding the places mentioned in the document. The first part after the procession leaves the Church of Misericórdia to the Convent of Paraíso (extreme right of the itinerary in the image 3) doesn't provide any street of return from the Paraíso. In our itinerary proposal we suggest that the procession returned by the same route, which certainly had been to the nowadays Misericórdia Street through the square outside the old Porta de Moura.

Taking into account the returning of the procession by the Misericórdia Church,

another doubt arises of the route it took to the Church of São Tiago. We assume it continued to the nowadays Miguel Bombarda Street reaching the Praça Grande (now Giraldo Square) following by the mentioned Rua da Selaria (now 5 de Outubro Street), cutting by the Rua de Burgos to the square outside the Church of São Tiago.

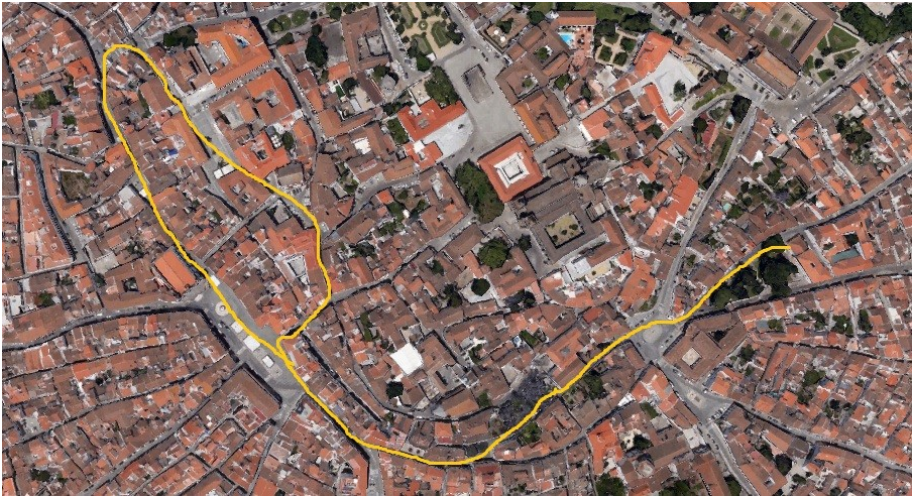


Image 3
Proposed itinerary of the 1656 procession.

The next stage of the procession seems to be clear after passing by São Tiago it certainly continued through the then fish square (now Sertório Square) until the square near the Porta Nova (now Luís de Camões Square), the extreme opposite of the itinerary.

It then proceeded through the Rua Ancha (now João de Deus Street) to the Praça Grande and then back to the Church of *Misericórdia* through the Miguel Bombarda Street.

There was certainly be music and chanting during this procession, with the participation of the *Misericórdia*'s chaplain-singers. Although we have no account of what music was performed, the celebration suggests that the *Stabat Mater* sequence would certainly be among the processional repertory, as well as the *Recordare, Virgo Mater* antiphon.



Estêvão de Brito (c.1575-1641), *Stabat Mater*, 4vv
(Cappella Angrensis, dir. Luís Henriques)

In the meeting it was also agreed that the *Misericórdia* would pay an unspecified amount of money to anyone who would go as flagellants.



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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