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FAMILY ARCHIVES AND
HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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**RESEARCHING THE ARCHIVE, STUDYING FAMILY
HISTORY: A DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT ON
THE VISCONDES DE VILA NOVA DE CERVEIRA
E MARQUESES DE PONTE DE LIMA ARCHIVE**

ABSTRACT: This article briefly presents and discusses some problems, theoretical questions and methodologies relating to the author's PhD research, currently being developed at the FCSH/NOVA and at the École nationale des chartes. The main objective of this research is to study the archive of the viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira and marquises of Ponte de Lima, analyzing the social and the institutional history of the families that produced it between the fourteenth and the seventeenth century (when their house became consolidated). The aim is to determine the "sociogenetic" role of the archive for these family groups and for this house. With this in mind, an in-depth analysis of this archive is being carried out firstly as an attempt to reconstruct the informational production of the families that were both at the origin of the house of the viscounts and that later came to integrate it, and secondly to determine how that information was transformed into documents and into archive(s) throughout this period. This approach assesses new ways of archive research as influenced by the *tournant documentaire*, the archival turn, and the documentary history of institutions. Consequently, it tests the recent confluence of theories and methodologies in History and Archival Science/Information Science for the analysis of archives, which have become known collectively as the social history of archives and information, and, in Portugal, as Historical Archivistics.

Keywords: Viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira and marquises of Ponte de Lima; history of nobility; fourteenth to seventeenth centuries; family archives; history of archives

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RESUMO: Neste texto apresentam-se e discutem-se, sucintamente, alguns problemas, questões teóricas e metodologias relacionados com a nossa investigação de doutoramento, que está a ser desenvolvida na FCSH/NOVA e na École nationale des chartes. Esta tem como principal objetivo o estudo do arquivo “Viscondes de Vila Nova de Cerveira e Marqueses de Ponte de Lima”, e a análise da história social e institucional das famílias que o produziram desde o século XIV até à consolidação da Casa titular no século XVII, de modo a determinar o papel *sociogenético* que o arquivo assumiu no percurso destes grupos familiares e desta Casa. Estamos a realizar um estudo aprofundado deste arquivo tendo em vista a reconstrução da produção informacional das famílias que estiveram na origem ou se uniram à Casa dos Viscondes e da transformação dessa informação em documentos e em arquivo(s) ao longo deste período. Desta maneira, procuramos testar novas formas de perspetivar o arquivo influenciadas pelo *tournant documentaire*, pelo *archival turn*, pela história documental das instituições e, conseqüentemente, pela recente confluência de teorias e metodologias da História e da Arquivística no estudo de arquivos, que tem sido designada como história social dos arquivos e da informação ou, em Portugal, como Arquivística Histórica.

Palavras-chave: Viscondes de Vila Nova de Cerveira e Marqueses de Ponte de Lima; história da nobreza; séculos XIV-XVII; arquivos de família; história dos arquivos

“history is not simply given, but rather is first produced through
the medium of the archive”

(Wolfgang Ernst, 2009, cited in FRIEDRICH, 2018: 10)

Introduction

The study of archives has met with renewed interest over the past decades. Several authors have pointed out that archives are not plain storehouses of objective information about the past², nor are they “natural and organic residues of human activity” left intact over the centuries³. Archives have begun to be addressed as the complex social, cultural and political constructions they are, constantly recreated from the time they were produced to their organization by archivists and to their use as “sources” by historians⁴. For these

² FARGE, 1989 and DAVIS, 1987 *apud* FRIEDRICH, 2018: 10.

³ COOK, 2010.

⁴ BLOUIN, 2004: 298.

reasons, they render the past less visible and they pose serious challenges to the construction of historical narratives⁵.

Over the last two decades, Portuguese historians, namely in the field of family archives, have started to address the archive as an object of study in itself, rather than a mere depository of documents. Several studies have emphasized the potential of family archives and their contributions to investigation in History⁶. Nevertheless, the problems of studying these heterogeneous — and sometimes very scattered and (apparently) disorganized — collections are also taken into consideration, especially in the case of family archives produced during the *ancien régime*. The historical archives of today were once organizational archives, where information and documents were managed according to the needs and interests of families or family members who knew how to take advantage of them⁷.

More information about who produced and transformed these organizational archives will be found in the process of reconstructing them. This can be especially helpful in the analysis of family archives of the *ancien régime*. There are some central questions at stake: how can analysis centered on a family archive contribute to a better knowledge of the history of the families that produced and/or used it? How can the study of an “unofficial” archive contribute to reformulating knowledge about the Portuguese nobility and important figures in Portuguese and/or Iberian history during the *ancien régime*?

These two questions lay beneath my research on a family archive, the *Viscondes de Vila Nova de Cerveira e Marqueses de Ponte de Lima* archive (AVNC), one of the largest and richest Portuguese family archives known. At its origin is the Lima family (among other families), an important lineage of Galician descent who held lands, lordships and offices in Minho. Family members started to attend the Portuguese royal court, especially during the rule of the Avis royal dynasty, Leonel de Lima achieving the title of viscount of Vila Nova de Cerveira in 1476⁸. The union between the families of Brito

⁵ BLOUIN; ROSENBERG, 2011; MORSEL, 2010; ANHEIM; PONCET, 2004.

⁶ ROSA; NÓVOA, 2018; ROSA, 2009: 36-38.

⁷ ROSA, 2017: 573.

⁸ SOTTOMAYOR-PIZARRO, 2015: 25-32, 40-53.

Nogueira and Lima occurred later, in the sixteenth century. After the loss of the male heir to the Lima family, it was Lourenço de Lima e Brito Nogueira (Inês de Lima's son) who ensured the continuity of the title, property and symbolic capital of the Lima. At the dawn of the eighteenth century, the house had fully consolidated as one of the "Great Houses" of the kingdom. The characteristics and trajectories of the Portuguese great houses at the end of the *ancien régime* are well known⁹, but it is fundamental to understand the period before their consolidation. Nothing better than a long-term examination, covering the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, to consider continuities, ruptures, metamorphoses and adaptations within a broad framework. My own case study analyzes each family that contributed to the constitution and the consolidation of the archive and the house of the viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira.

Thanks to the current owner of the archive, Luís Vasconcellos e Souza, it has been possible to access it for a case study. The documentation it contains covers the period between the late thirteenth century and the nineteenth century. Considering these families' history from the perspective of Historical Archivistics presupposes a strong institutional history component, and it means to think about such issues as: the moment when the house became of central importance to the viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira; the way in which juridical-institutional configurations and the social history of the Brito Nogueira family and other families contributed to its constitution and/or consolidation; the role *morgadios*¹⁰ and other entailed assets played in consolidation; the internal organization of the viscounts' house; and, finally, the limitations to the house from a juridical standpoint.

The main objective of the research being developed is to analyze the archive and the social and institutional history of the families that produced it between the fourteenth century and the seventeenth century when the house became consolidated. The role played by documental information is essential to determine the "sociogenetic"¹¹ role of the archive to these family groups.

⁹ MONTEIRO, 2003.

¹⁰ Portuguese entailed estates have specific characteristics: ROSA, 1995: 19-22, 262-263.

¹¹ Concept as used by J. Morsel (2010: 17).

This requires an in-depth analysis of the archive as an attempt to recreate the informational production by the original families as well as by the families that later joined the house. This also involved transforming that information into documents and archive(s) throughout this period. The analysis of the information and of the archives produced by the main family (and by the branches that came to integrate it) will allow for a better understanding of the organic structure of this social body, its social ascension and the constitution and consolidation of the house. At the end, it should be possible to answer the double question: how did the trajectories of the family groups influence their documentary production and the constitution of their archives (and, ultimately, the Viscounts' archive); and, conversely, how did their archival practices and archives contribute to firming up their status and ultimately that of the viscounts' house.

In the following pages, rather than a set of results from finished research I will present and discuss some of the theoretical questions, problems and the methodologies adopted, as well as some of the results expected.

Theoretical interrogations and historiographical framework

My research is an excellent laboratory in which to test a new way of looking at archives, as influenced by the *tournant documentaire*, the archival turn, the documentary history of institutions and, consequently, the recent confluence of theories and methodologies of History and Archival Science/Information Science in the study of archives — something which has been designated as social history of archives and information, and, in Portugal, Historical Archivistics.

The *tournant documentaire* is a trend that emerged in French medieval historiography in the early 1990s. It began with a set of reflections and investigations about complex archival instruments, such as cartularies, and with an interest in the history of writing habits, moving on to interrogating the status and nature of historical “sources”, as well as the archive and the practices of documentary conservation and organization. This “turn” has led historians to return to “sources” so as to question the processes of their production, selec-

tion, (re)organization and conservation. This constituted an attempt to overcome the *fétichisme du texte*¹² which had made past scholars concentrate on the textual contents of documents, forgetting the materiality of documentation and that written records have suffered numerous metamorphoses due to an accumulation of uses, functions, values and meanings that are different from those that existed when those records were produced. Among the advocates of these perspectives — particularly expressive in Franco-Belgian historiography — are P. Chastang and J. Morsel¹³, with followers in Portugal and Spain, namely in the field of diplomatics.

In Anglo-Saxon historiography, particularly in the USA and Canada, another turn has contributed to the empowerment of archivists and to the renewal of Archival Science as an autonomous discipline¹⁴. Until the second half of the twentieth century archives were seen as static depositories and archivists as “passive guardians”¹⁵ of documentation at the service of historians. The gradual questioning of this view has contributed to some of the historiographical tendencies of positivist tradition being revised, rendering possible a social history of procedures of registration, of classification and conservation of archives, which is crucial to understanding them as spaces of power over the past and over memory¹⁶. Terry Cook points out that when a historian selects his/her subject and sources, this process is just as subjective as the archivist’s organization of the archive — which is always a construction, from the moment he/she defines the classification criteria to the choice of which documents to be preserved or destroyed¹⁷.

Due to these turns, in the last three decades archives and archival instruments such as cartularies and inventories have become an object of study. In sequence, the dialogue between History and Archival Science has also been encouraged. It has contributed, we have seen, to developing new approaches

¹² MORSEL, 2008; MORSEL, 2010: 11-12.

¹³ For example: CHASTANG, 2006; MORSEL, 2008; and MORSEL, 2010.

¹⁴ COOK, 2001; COOK, 2013.

¹⁵ COOK, 2011a: 631.

¹⁶ COOK, 2013: 107-109.

¹⁷ COOK, 2012: 35-36.

and more complex questionnaires in the historiography¹⁸. This is the case with the social and cultural history of archives, mainly in England, Germany, and the USA, where research has been carried out in topics such as knowledge, information, scholarly uses of archives in historiography, and the archivist's profession¹⁹.

Another very interesting perspective with regard to my research is the documental history of institutions: that is, the study of the history of an institution based on the analysis of its documentary production and on the archive created and used by that institution, in order to understand its structure, activity and political strategies. This perspective has been especially meaningful for Italy, France and Belgium, and is found in authors such as P. Cammarosano, I. Lazzarini, F. de Vivo, O. Poncet and J.-F. Nieuws²⁰. In Portugal it has gained some expression only in recent years, mainly through FCSH/NOVA doctoral theses in the field of Historical Archivistics.

It is at the confluence of these and other perspectives that, in Portugal, the so-called Historical Archivistics has developed. The theoretical bases were recently presented by Maria de Lurdes Rosa, who defines it as follows:

[A] perspective that aims to bring these two aspects together: the study of the informational production of institutions and their transformation into documents and into archives, in history, taking into account the production of social information in context, its “documentalisation”, the multiple faces that “archives” could have (using, for example, the concept of “archival practices”); not only with the existing archives, but complementing them with information gathered in other sources; historically characterizing the institutions and preparing organic models for the treatment of the existing documentation; analyzing how they archived and how they used the archived information, giving social importance to it; contextualizing these practices and interpreting their meaning; following the whole course of informa-

¹⁸ ROSA, 2009: 547-586.

¹⁹ As in FRIEDRICH, 2018, CORENS *et al.*, 2018, CORENS *et al.*, 2016, DE VIVO; DONATO, 2015, DE VIVO *et al.*, 2016, HEAD, 2010a.

²⁰ CAMMAROSANO, 1991; LAZZARINI, 2001; DE VIVO, 2013; PONCET, 2005; NIEUS, 2016.

tion and understanding the mutations to which it was subjected throughout time; finally, answering broader historiographical questions²¹.

The theoretical introduction is complemented with a research itinerary to be applied to Early Modern historical sources²². Even though it has come to light only recently, this research field has grown in Portuguese historiography since 2008, mainly thanks to researchers from the Instituto de Estudos Medievais and the Centro de Humanidades (CHAM) at the FCSH/NOVA, already bearing significant results in the study of pre-modern family archives²³. The appreciation and study of these archives has taken place in several European countries especially since the 1990s. In Portugal, they started gaining expression within archival research with the pioneering work of Pedro Peixoto²⁴ followed — within the scope of Information Science — by A.M. da Silva²⁵ and his followers²⁶. They made way for the development of research about family archives in Portugal, namely at the intersection of History and Archival Science/Information Science, already mentioned.

Therefore, my research results from applying Historical Archivistics perspectives to a case study: the AVNC and the entities that produced and/or conserved it. The information produced by these families/house and its subsequent transformation into documents and archives, throughout the period mentioned, is my object of study. Analysis will be based on the following ideas:

- 1) The archives are complex social, cultural and political constructs, so historians must problematize their “sources” and try to understand the logics behind both documentary production as well as the conserva-

²¹ ROSA, 2017: 550-551.

²² ROSA, 2017: 572-580.

²³ ROSA, 2012a; ROSA; HEAD, 2015a; NÓVOA, 2016; SOUSA, 2017; LEME, 2018; see GAGO and GUTIÉRREZ DE ARMAS in this volume.

²⁴ PEIXOTO, 1991.

²⁵ SILVA, 1997; SILVA, 2004.

²⁶ Such as RODRIGUES, 2007.

tion or the destruction of documents — which means that the historian must take into account the creation of “new intertextualities”²⁷.

- 2) The documents transformed into archives (“new intertextualities”) are essential to the survival, functioning and solidification of family groups, and for the construction of a shared memory and social identity²⁸.
- 3) The study of documentary production, as well as the information systems/archives of institutions, allows for a deeper understanding of the said institutions, of their structures, their activities and their political and social strategies²⁹.
- 4) The documentation in family archives may reveal lesser known or ignored realities, leading to the questioning of “official” historical narratives, only constructed — or above all based — on archives generated by public and official entities³⁰.

In fact, new perspectives and the renewed interest in family archives can significantly complement and even question the existing models of social and institutional history of the *ancien régime* nobility. The field is especially strong in the Portuguese historiography. Since the pioneering works of J. Mattoso in the 1980s, focusing on the social history of the medieval nobility, researchers have followed a similar social approach and concentrated mainly on case studies for the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries. Thus, knowledge about this social group is much deeper for the period between the eleventh and the early fourteenth centuries than for the later Middle Ages³¹. Besides, among the sources consulted it is very rare to find documentation produced, received and preserved by the noble families themselves and transformed into archives transmitted over several generations. In fact, these family groups are not usually studied taking into account their own informational production and their strategies for document management. Although the research

²⁷ MORSEL, 2010: 20-23.

²⁸ MORSEL, 2010: 23.

²⁹ DE VIVO, 2013; DE VIVO, 2010.

³⁰ ROSA, 2009: 36-37.

³¹ The state of the art is found in: MATTOSO, 2011; SOUSA, 2007: 882-889.

developed over almost last two decades namely in the area of Historical Archivististics³² is changing this, there is still much left to do to characterize the evolution of noble groups in the transition to modernity and to explore the potential of family archives for their study.

For the Early Modern period, knowledge of noble social groups has also progressed significantly, along with the study of other elites of the Portuguese kingdom and empire. These studies concern mainly the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and in the last decades have dealt with issues such as social mobility, dependency networks, the relationship between the elites and the central and the local powers, the economy of mercy, and the relationship with the military orders. Prosopography is often used, which enables identifying the common characteristics in a social or socio-professional group, as well as grasping their internal dynamics and the relationships held with other groups or individuals³³. The studies by Nuno G. Monteiro — using sources also present in family archives — on the Portuguese aristocracy at court, especially towards the end of the ancien régime, have made this group especially well known³⁴.

Yet, in Portuguese historiography, very few monographic studies have been dedicated to the Portuguese noble houses³⁵ that make use of the archives which they produced and preserved. The concept of house adopted in most of these works reflects the definition presented by Nuno G. Monteiro on his studies on the Portuguese aristocratic groups of the seventeenth to the nine-

³² ROSA; NÓVOA, 2018.

³³ Some of the authors working in this field include Nuno G. Monteiro, Mafalda Soares da Cunha, Fernanda Olival, Ângela Barreto Xavier, José Damião Rodrigues, José Subtil, Pedro Cardim and Alexandra Pelúcia, among others. For a detailed state of the art, see: CUNHA; TERRASA LOZANO, 2014; CUNHA; MONTEIRO, 2010a; CUNHA; MONTEIRO; CARDIM, 2005.

³⁴ MONTEIRO, 2003.

³⁵ Examples include the following theses: M.T. Sena about the *Casa de Oeiras e Pombal* (SENA, 1987); Mafalda Soares da Cunha about the *Casa de Bragança* (CUNHA, 1990 and 2000); J.S. Sousa about the *Casa Senhorial do Infante D. Henrique* (SOUSA, 1991); M.M. Lourenço about the *Casa do Infantado* (LOURENÇO, 1995); J.P. Salvado about the *Casa dos almotacês-mores do Reino* (SALVADO, 2009); O. Martins about the duchess of Beja (MARTINS, 2011); C. Moura about the *Casa dos condes e marquês de Vila Real* (MOURA, 2016); and M.B. Dávila about the *Casa de Viseu* (DÁVILA, 2017). Essays worth mentioning are C. Mata about the *Casa de Aveiro* (MATA, 2013), and H. Carvalhal about the *Casa do Infante D. Luís* (CARVALHAL, 2014).

teenth century. This does not simply express the place of residence, it implies possession of a certain amount of wealth (namely landed property), the high social status of its members (important offices, titles or any other exclusive rights), the administration of *morgadios*, the existence of a shared identity. Whoever was born of, or depended on, the house was therefore obliged to ensure that this material and symbolic capital was preserved and continued³⁶. According to the same author, a new reproductive model, based on the idea of “house”, began to spread among most of the main lineages, especially from the sixteenth century onwards, becoming predominant during the following centuries in the *ancien régime*³⁷. In what ways did the institutional structure of noble families change at the end of the fifteenth century, leading to the adoption of this new model of organizing the family? What role did archives play in this reconfiguration? In terms of the internal organization and the juridical framework, what we call a “house” in the fifteenth or the sixteenth century was the same thing as a house in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Was it the same for the high aristocracy and the local elites? What role did the archives play in house formation and consolidation?

In fact, the profile, nature and social behavior of families conditioned the type of documentation that was produced and preserved. Consequently, their archives provide clues as to how families self-regulated and saw themselves. Monographic, long-term studies based on family archives and on the new perspectives mentioned above, besides contributing to social history can help clarify legal and institutional components of families/houses and the social history of their archives between the medieval period and the end of the *ancien régime*; some gaps in the Portuguese historiography notwithstanding³⁸. We should bear in mind that their context is that of a corporative society, erected on the basis of law and where various jurisdictions coexisted³⁹. This said, a lot remains to be uncovered about families as formal institutions

³⁶ MONTEIRO, 2003: 83-101; MONTEIRO, 2011: 137.

³⁷ MONTEIRO, 2001: 28, 33-35.

³⁸ NÓVOA; ROSA, 2018: 82.

³⁹ HESPANHA, 2015: 5-7 and 24-28.

having their own norms and jurisdictions, as recognized by their members and by other institutions⁴⁰ (as was the case of the *morgadios*⁴¹).

Work has recently been done on some of the families represented in the AVNC, namely from the twelfth to the fifteenth century⁴², and essays beginning to explore their documentary production and the inventories for the AVNC⁴³, but the abovementioned still requires research. Based on the reconstructed viscounts' archive, we can understand the reconfiguring of the Lima and Brito Nogueira families, before and after their union, and how the concentration of a considerable number of *morgadios* and the control over information and documents was essential to this process.

An approach to the archive of the *Viscondes de Vila Nova de Cerveira e Marqueses de Ponte de Lima*: some problems and methodologies

As mentioned, the long-term analysis that is being undertaken challenges the traditional barriers between the medieval and the early modern periods and this methodological option will contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of the archive(s) and of the house. It would not be possible to analyze all the documents produced until the nineteenth century in the remit of a single PhD research. For this reason, the seventeenth century has been set as the *terminus ad quem*, following the hypothesis that the viscounty of Diogo de Lima — who died around 1685⁴⁴ — was a pivotal moment in the history of the house after internal divisions and inheritance problems that took place in the context of the *Restauração* (in 1640).

⁴⁰ NÓVOA; ROSA, 2018: 82.

⁴¹ About the “lei do morgadio” (the *morgadio* law), see: ROSA, 1995: 249-259.

⁴² Such as SOTTOMAYOR-PIZARRO, 2015; SILVA, 2012: 85-125; FARELO, 2012a: 185-204; FARELO, 2008: Appendix 1; FARELO, 2007: 145-168; GOMES, 1995: 135-136.

⁴³ FARELO, 2012a; ROSA, 2012c; and n. 63, below.

⁴⁴ GAYO, 1989: 364, FREIRE, 1930: 92.

The approach to this matter is being developed along four major phases, whose conception has been partly inspired by M.L. Rosa⁴⁵ and two PhD theses in the field, already completed⁴⁶. These phases can be described as follows.

Reconstructing the recent history of the archive

The family archive as it presents itself in our day is now under examination. For centuries an organizational archive, it has now been turned into a historical one. It is, therefore, fundamental to realize how the “links” — to a pre-modern world — “were disconnected”, to use the words of M.L. Rosa⁴⁷. My point of departure are the most recent developments: it is necessary to reconstitute the custodial history from the moment of the archive’s deactivation in the last quarter of the nineteenth century⁴⁸ to the present day. The archive (or part of it) remained in the family home in Lisbon, the Palácio da Rosa, until around 1970, when the building was sold to city authorities. The documents disappeared at that time, but were “recovered” in the late 1990s by the current owner. He first acquired a batch of documents at an auction, finding out that a second set about to be offered for sale also belonged in the same archive. This he also bought⁴⁹. The “recovered” archive was then deposited in the National Archive (Torre do Tombo) and remained there between 2000 and 2011.

Given the archive’s fragmented state and its complex custodial history, it should be determined what is currently in existence and what relationship with the viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira’s organizational archive there is. It is fundamental to identify what documents were not recovered by the family

⁴⁵ ROSA, 2017.

⁴⁶ SOUSA, 2017; NÓVOA, 2016.

⁴⁷ ROSA, 2017: 574.

⁴⁸ The most recent dated document in the archive is from 1877, the year the last male descendant of the marquises of Ponte de Lima and viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira, whose name was José Maria Xavier de Lima Vasconcelos e Brito Nogueira Teles da Silva, died (FREIRE, 1927:112).

⁴⁹ Information provided by the owner of the AVNC in an interview held on 29th March 2017.

and deposited in the national archive (ANTT), namely those probably held in the family palace at Ponte de Lima⁵⁰ when it was sold in 1876⁵¹. Part of them were lost to destruction or robbery⁵², probably at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but we do not know whether the remaining documents were kept in that palace or transferred to Lisbon (which seems highly unlikely) before the palace was sold. Finding out what happened to those papers thus needs to be established. Studying these vicissitudes, losses, reconstitutions, and trying to map out documents that were scattered around other archival fonds and libraries is crucial to understanding what family archive we have at hand, as well as to validating any conclusions.

So as to reconstitute the trajectories followed by the documentation since the nineteenth century, two types of sources are being used: written documents from the AVNC and other archives, plus oral sources. Regarding the written documents, the inventories will be employed as a means of comparing which documentation has remained and which has disappeared. All documentation associated with the sale of the estate and the auction of part of the archive will also be collected. As for the oral sources, I will be interviewing the current owner, other family members, and possibly other actors in the custodial history. About private archives, Claude-Isabelle Brelot refers to the “usefulness” of individual and family memories to retrieve information that was not recorded in written form and which is often part of the family’s oral tradition. However, she alerts to the fact that memories can be fragile and biased⁵³. So it will be important to question and cross-reference all these sources in order to detect inconsistencies and to validate information.

To better understand the archive as it currently stands, it is essential to ponder about the organization and the classification proposed at the Torre

⁵⁰ Some of the AVNC documents refer to the existence of an archive in the family palace in Ponte de Lima (VNC, cx. 14, nr. 9).

⁵¹ PAIVA, 2011: 580.

⁵² Information from a letter from João Jerónimo do Couto de Castro e Sousa to Maria Joana Monte Forjaz, viscountess of Vila Nova de Souto del Rei, on 29th November 1827 (see GAGO, 2015: 85).

⁵³ BRELOT, 2006: 83-87.

do Tombo⁵⁴: what image do the options taken give of the archive and of the family(ies) organization? What problems do they raise for its study? As pointed out about the archival turn, the act of organizing and representing documentation/information in an archive is an intentional and complex process of mediation⁵⁵. So, the archivist's classification is always subjective and a construction. In the AVNC's case, a hybrid classification exists, combining sections assigned by the archivist and sections based on an "original" order given by three archival tools present in the archive. But how can one speak of an "original" order when the archivist is in fact mixing categories provided by instruments with different natures and which were produced in different contexts?⁵⁶ The result is a mixture of organic(?), organic-geographical, functional, and thematic sections. From my point of view, this organization does not allow us to understand that, in fact, we are in the presence of "an archive of archives"⁵⁷, containing documentation of other families that joined, at different moments, with their own documents or archives, the Lima family and, after that, the Lima Brito Nogueira family. In-depth research about the organization(s) that produced and preserved the archive(s) is lacking, and so is research on the relationship they established with documents and archive(s).

Grasping the "organization" producing the archive

The archive reflects the vicissitudes of the family groups that created it. As it has been said, the archive is not the sum total of the historical existence

⁵⁴ Available online: <http://digitalq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4343878> (accessed 26th July 2018).

⁵⁵ ROSA, 2009: 14-17.

⁵⁶ The instruments used are identified in the AVNC's archival description (see "system of arrangement") available online at <http://digitalq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4343878> (accessed 26th July 2018).

⁵⁷ As Lafuente Úrien (2000: 17) stresses, family archives are made of archives inside archives, normally as a result (but not only) of marriage unions between social groups and the integration of the documentation or the archive of one of them into the other's.

of these groups but a constantly changing, “living organism”⁵⁸. It is essential to study the “organization” that produced it — the members of the families, the lineages, the house — and the dynamics dictating the creation, deletion, dispersal and keeping of the information and the documentation in question, as a succession of generations, marital alliances, social mobility, economic foundations (with the *morgadio* and, most of the times, male primogeniture shaping heritage transmission), and cultural and symbolic values.

My focus is on the individual trajectories and actions of information-producing members, with emphasis being given to the lineage/family/house leaders and/or heirs that stood out. Archival practices respond to particular needs and the families’ circumstances as regards social status, making the assessment of individual paths important. When combined with the analysis of the documentary production, the archival practices and the uses of archives, this methodology can help characterize the nature of the “organization” to which these people belonged and its evolution. It can also help to use some concepts (such as family, lineage and house) more accurately in this context, and to define when a family “ends” and another “begins”, especially in cases of female succession (something that will be very important for the authority records, mentioned further ahead).

Biographical information sheets are being prepared for each producer with genealogical, sociological and patrimonial data, as well as with information about their *morgadios* and chapels, hoping, as research progresses, to understand the importance of these “institutions” in the production, “documentalization” and archiving of information. These biographical sheets will be converted into authority records on a database (the AtoM, referred below) to be associated to each one of the documents, as well as with other authority records taking into account family (or other) relations between producers. The objective is to identify as many producers as possible, the family they belonged to and their documentary production. Then, I will focus on the main producers and the families responsible for developing and using the viscounts’ archive. Some have been identified already: Limas; Nogueiras; Britos

⁵⁸ BOURQUIN, 2010: 211.

Nogueira; Limas Brito Nogueira; and Vasconcelos e Meneses, the counts of Penela, and their descendants.

At this stage, my aim is not to put forward a “new history” of these families as based on this archive alone. I intend to use documentation from the AVNC (in documents that still exist and coming from references found in inventories) and from other archives and libraries (that were once part of the family archive), adding to the information found in specialized bibliography on some of the families represented in the AVNC (as mentioned above), including edited sources with historical and genealogical information. Not being a priority, research into the royal chancellery and other institutions’ archives is still a possibility, in order to sharpen biographical information and the documentary production and conservation numbers – for example, in comparing how many documents emitted from the royal chancellery were preserved in the family archive and the chancellery itself.

Identifying the archives within the archive and preparing archival reclassification

A large part of the documentation in the AVNC having been analyzed and its producers identified, it will be possible to pinpoint the archives within the archive — the various sub-information subsystems/sub-fonds — and to understand, based on the information compiled in the previous stage, the reasons leading them to become part of this information system/archive between the fourteenth and the nineteenth century. This step is fundamental to reorganizing the AVNC’s documents and to improve the description of some that were produced before the seventeenth century which will be analyzed in my thesis. Because the *Torre do Tombo* classification of the AVNC is inconsistent, I intend to propose reclassification based upon the “organicity” of producers — the families/the house — and on an in-depth historical study. An organic and functional classification scheme will be elaborated in view of restoring the information to the context where it was originally produced, associating it with the generation and/or the individual(s) that produced/received them or

with the house. In this context, the model proposed by A.M. da Silva⁵⁹ for the classification of family archives will be taken into account. However, a critical stance is important and will be ensured through analyzing the archive's documentation so as to determine which classification scheme best suits the organic of the producers and users of the archive.

The new classification and description will be made available through AtoM, an open-source software for multi-level description of definitive archives, in accordance with the International Council on Archives standards. The archival reorganization and the filling in of the authority records will be carried out systematically by employing the information (previously compiled) on the history of the family and its members. This will enable a new way of accessing the AVNC's information in support of the analysis to be offered in the next phase of the investigation, while it may also contribute to future research.

The social history of the archive and its “sociogenetic” role

We have to consider at what point in the social trajectory of these families it was necessary to create archives: whether after the foundation of the first *morgadios* for the Nogueira and Brito; in the case of Lima, if that happened after they established themselves definitively in Portugal and at the Portuguese royal court, securing important possessions, rents and jurisdictional rights in the Minho region. How did the use of their archives help their social ascension? Can we speak of a “house” of Lima or the viscount of Vila Nova de Cerveira, and of a “house” of Brito Nogueira before their union? How did their union contribute reconfiguring their familial organization? How did the Lima Brito Nogueira family use the information and the documents coming from the Limas, Britos Nogueira and, later, from the Vasconcelos e Meneses? How did such usages contribute to defend and increase the material and symbolic capital of the house?

It is time to understand the social history of information and of the archive as part of the history of the family(ies): how the information and the archive

⁵⁹ SILVA, 1997; SILVA, 2004.

were used and managed by the organizations already identified and what such uses reveal about the nature and the workings of the said organizations.

First of all, an analysis of the information production, of “documentalization” and of the uses, functions and meanings attributed to documents by the generations/families/lineages/house will be done. The sources for this study will be essentially the documents of the AVNC. However, documents that may have belonged to this/these archive(s), but which disappeared or otherwise were dispersed will be brought together with the respective producers. They are known because they are described in the inventories or in other instruments present in the AVNC or because they were found in other archival fonds or libraries⁶⁰. On the other hand, as far as information production is concerned, it should be borne in mind that not all of it is in written form. Therefore it may be relevant to the process of reconstructing these families’ information systems to collect and treat images, as well as symbolic, memorialist and ceremonial information. This may be found, for example, inscribed in blazons and in buildings⁶¹.

We should bear in mind that two aspects are associated with the construction and preservation of archives, as well as their successive (re)organizations and the production of instruments of description and retrieval of information. The first is the administration and management of noble households and heritage, relating to the need to prove ownership, rights and privileges; which might be called “management uses”. The second is the constitution, consolidation and survival of a shared memory and social identity — leading to the conception of the archive as “cultural patrimony”⁶². Within this arrangement, it is necessary to determine the reasons that activated a given archival organization and what purposes it fulfilled. What implications did it bring to the internal structure of the archive? Were documents destroyed? The analysis of some instruments of description, retrieval and mediation, such as inventories, can help understand what criteria were followed, how the organization

⁶⁰ In this context, it is necessary to analyze the documentation contained, for example, in the Arquivo Distrital de Braga or in the Arquivo Municipal de Ponte de Lima which concerns the viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira.

⁶¹ ROSA, 2017: 573.

⁶² KETELAAR, 2007.

was structured, which documents were described or not, who ordered (and who made) the descriptions, and how long these instruments were in use for until they were replaced by new ones. For this reason, particular attention will be paid to analyzing the AVNC's inventories, which have already started being studied⁶³, as well as other archival tools or archival marks that testify to different uses and archival organizations over time. Although the focus will be on the period between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries, I believe that in this case extending these limits in some respects, for example to include inventories produced after the eighteenth century, will be essential to better understanding how the subsequent archival metamorphoses affected the documentation produced and preserved before the end of the seventeenth century.

The archives are generally the result of a complex process of construction with a set of individual and family interests and/or aspirations behind it. Besides, we must also take into account the role played by incidents as well as inertia to explain the disappearance of documents and the transformation of archives. It is equally important to understand influences external to the families, like the impact of central power and legislation, in the transformation of the family archive.

Finally, the research will offer reflections about the “sociogenetic” role — using the concept of J. Morsel⁶⁴ — of the archives, in how they might have been essential to the survival, functioning, and solidification of the lineages and of the house, as well as for the construction of memory and their familiar and social identity.

A few hypotheses can be explored. For example, important ruptures and continuities occurred in second half of the sixteenth century. With the extinction of the Lima male line, the material and symbolic capital of the family, including the name and title of viscount of Vila Nova de Cerveira, continued on through the son of Inês de Lima with Luís de Brito Nogueira. Through this marriage, a considerable number of *morgadios*, concentrated under the Brito

⁶³ See ROSA, 2012c: 580-596; and the results of project INVENT.ARQ in ROSA; HEAD, 2015a: 108-109, 112-113, 118-119, 122-125 and 148-149, as well as on the database available online at: <http://www.inventarq.fcsh.unl.pt>.

⁶⁴ MORSEL, 2010: 17.

and Nogueira lineages, came under this material and symbolic capital: the *morgadio* of Santo Estêvão in Beja, the *morgadio*/chapel of Santa Ana in the church of São Lourenço in Lisbon, as well as other entailed assets established by the paternal ancestors of Violante Nogueira (who married João Afonso de Brito)⁶⁵. The corresponding documents, dating from before the coming of age of Lourenço Brito Nogueira (Luís de Brito Nogueira's father), were listed with fairly complete summaries in the so-called "Catálogo do Cartório da Casa"⁶⁶. Meant as an inventory or a list of documents that ought to be delivered to him, it was probably prepared once his mother, Isabel da Costa, ceased to be his tutor around 1542⁶⁷. This archival work was reused for a new inventory that was prepared after the union with the Lima family, and that marked the beginning of a new information system, that of the Limas Brito Nogueira, viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira, since it contained the summaries of documents related to the *morgadio* of Gaião, which had been integrated into the Lima heritage through marriage of João de Lima with Catarina de Ataíde⁶⁸. This was the "Tombo em que se contém todas as propriedades, rendas, foros, privilégios, bulas e alvarás dos morgados de Santa Ana e de São Lourenço de Lisboa, Gaião e Santo Estêvão de Beja", probably elaborated sometime between the 1570s and 1646⁶⁹. The reorganization of the archives took place precisely in times of internal reorganization, namely to harness the succession and the properties of the family⁷⁰. The integration of new properties and the gradual complexity of different systems of ownership brought new challenges to its administrators. There were different obligations: to control payment of the respective fees and to fulfill the duties established in the foundational documents of each *morgadio* and chapel (like some kind of "eternal law" that had to be fulfilled⁷¹), and we have to consider that their possessions had different

⁶⁵ FARELO, 2012a: 186-192; SILVA, 2012: 112.

⁶⁶ VNC, cx. 7, nr. 1.

⁶⁷ See ROSA, 2012c: 591-593, and ROSA, 2015a: 108-109.

⁶⁸ FREIRE, 1930: 86-87; ROSA, 1995: 90.

⁶⁹ It was between the Inês de Lima and Luís de Brito Nogueira's marriage and the moment the *morgadio* of Santo Estêvão in Beja left the house's patrimony, through Madalena de Bourbon's dowry, in 1646. See ROSA, 2012c: 593, and ROSA, 2015b: 112.

⁷⁰ ROSA, 2012c: 596.

⁷¹ ROSA, 2012d: 572-586.

natures⁷². There was the entailed property already referred to (*morgadios* and chapels), free assets, Crown and Military Order's properties, Crown offices and rents, a title, and jurisdictional rights. Each was administered according to specific rules for its usufruct and transmission. It was essential to know these possessions (and the associated documents) well enough to better manage them. New uses and functions were attributed to these documents, transforming them into instruments of power⁷³, to serve the administration of the house, to prove rights and privileges, to reveal norms of conduct, but also to manipulate testamentary dispositions and the transmission of patrimony. More than mirroring the archive, inventories served as instruments of control over information⁷⁴. It is interesting to point out an error in this last inventory, detected by M. L. Rosa⁷⁵, where properties that were not bound in entail were associated to the *morgadio* of Gaião, like a property in Aveiras de Fundo⁷⁶ — which, in fact, belonged to the Crown⁷⁷. These undue associations were hardly by mistake.

This need to inventory and the changing ways in how information was reused and represented indicate changes in the organization of the viscount's information system, as brought about by the integration of the patrimony and the symbolic capital of the Britos Nogueira. Besides an important material basis for the family survival, patrimonial integration also represented changes in the internal organization of the family group. We know that until the fifteenth century the Portuguese nobility depended on royal favor to survive. This was due to material insufficiency, since the family property was divided among all the heirs — a depletion of patrimony that the *morgadio* tried to solve as an institution⁷⁸. The Lima family, and then the Lima Brito Nogueira family, came to integrate a considerable number of *morgadios* and chapels, funded by different families, that became important not only as material base

⁷² MONTEIRO, 2001: 25-26.

⁷³ HEAD, 2007: 318.

⁷⁴ ROSA; HEAD, 2015b: 12.

⁷⁵ ROSA, 2012c: 595-596.

⁷⁶ VNC, nr. 2, fol. 231.

⁷⁷ MORENO, 1973: 812-813.

⁷⁸ CALDÉRON MEDINA *et al.*, 2014: 179; SOUSA, 2007: 890-891.

of the house, but also to ensure that a certain code of conduct was followed and the ancestors' memory perpetuated. It is necessary to analyze the foundational documents, how they were used and how the will of the institutors was fulfilled in practice and transmitted across the Lima Brito Nogueira family: what role the administrator played, which internal management structures were adopted (composed of members of the family or not) and how relations with the external structures were. In terms of symbolic capital, the relationship with the "pantheon-church" of the Nogueiras (the collegiate church of São Lourenço in Lisbon)⁷⁹ should be taken into account. The Palácio da Rosa was built next to it, a symbolic place that came to be associated to the viscounts' house until the end of the ancien régime, even after the union with other families of importance.

It is also essential to take into account the strategy of succession adopted and how the archive was used in the reconfiguration of these families. After the death of the fifth viscount (Inês de Lima's father) at the battle of Alcácer Quibir, the representation of the lineage fell on a woman. This time, however, her lineage did not dissolve into her husband's, and the identifying surname of the family (Lima) was kept next to the surname Brito Nogueira, with the son ensuring the continuity of the material and symbolic capital of both of the families. In this context we see some of the characteristics associated with the familial organization model that we call "house", as defined by N.G. Monteiro and others⁸⁰. Although there was a growing tendency to honor male primogeniture, there were also other strategies to ensure the reproduction of the material and symbolic capital of these families and to recreate their identities.

It is not possible in this article to detail all the hypotheses to be explored, but we should note that there were also important reconfigurations of the house and of the archive to consider from the seventeenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The troubled *Restauração* period (1640) was one of them, with a new succession problem looming over the house after the death of Lourenço de Lima Brito Nogueira's eldest son, with Lourenço's second son supporting the Spanish monarch against João IV of Portugal. The continuity

⁷⁹ SILVA, 2012: 85-116; ROSA, 2012c: 578.

⁸⁰ MONTEIRO: 2003: 83-101; MONTEIRO, 2011; SOUSA, 2013b: 49-54.

of the house was ensured by one of the youngest children, Diogo de Lima, who left a foreseeable ecclesiastical career⁸¹. This was a difficult moment in the history of the house, and several agreements were made between brothers, in particular regarding sharing the inheritance⁸². The archive played an important part in attempting to ensure the legitimacy of the younger son in succeeding to the household assets. Only after a period of consolidation and stabilization, with Diogo de Lima and João Fernandes de Lima, and after the information system of the counts of Penela and their descendants was integrated, did a new archival inventory (and a historical-genealogical narrative that accompanies it) start being elaborated at the end of the seventeenth century by Tomás de Lima⁸³. It shows the need to organize the archive, to register the house memory and (probably) to legitimize succession through a female member of the house, Maria de Lima.

Conclusion

To conclude, a theoretical and a methodological stance that privileges the dialogue between History and Archival Science/Information Science, informs a research that takes the archive as a starting point rather than the point of arrival: its aim being to reconstruct how the information was produced and the processes of “documentalization”, conservation and documentary use were carried out by the families/house represented in the AVNC. In turn, this will enhance knowledge about the institutional nature of the families/house and the evolution/transformation of their models and practices throughout the period under analysis. In so doing, other dimensions different to those already known may be revealed, namely on the activity of these families as institutions, considering their juridical-institutional configurations — often left in the dark in the archives of the Crown and Church. As explored in some of the hypothesis and ideas, I hope to grasp how this social body regulated,

⁸¹ FREIRE, 1930: 91-92.

⁸² VNC, cx. 22, nr. 1.

⁸³ ROSA, 2012c: 586-587.

organized, identified, reproduced and sustained itself, and how documentary management influenced its structuring⁸⁴.

⁸⁴ ROSA, 2009: 36.

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