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# Coimbra and Évora

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WRITTEN BY



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NEWS

O CURSO ARISTOTÉLICO  
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TOMO I

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PARVA NATVRALIA

LATEST ENTRIES

## Coimbra and Évora

The analysis of the list of teachers from the University of Evora since 1556 (year of the inauguration of the University) up to the year of 1600, shows that a good number of them moved from Evora to Coimbra to teach a course of philosophy in the Colégio das Artes. Seven teachers out of 43, moved from Evora to Coimbra, namely: Jerónimo Fernandes, João Brandão, Francisco Cardoso, João Correia, Gaspar Vaz, Baltasar Álvares, Sebastião do Couto. The later two became authors, respectively, of the treatise *De anima separata* and of the *Dialectica* of the [Cursus Conimbricensis](#).

There are no examples of lecturers who followed the opposite course, vz. lecturing first in Coimbra and later in Evora in what concerns philosophy. Nevertheless, if theology were included in the analysis there appear two notable figures moving to south: first, Luís de Molina who taught philosophy first in Coimbra and pursued his academic career in Evora as a professor of theology; second, Sebastião do Couto, who having made his studies of Humanities and Arts in Evora, still as “estudante” moved to Coimbra to work with Pedro da Fonseca in the years 1592-1593 (cf. ARSI, Catalogo Primero de los Padres y hermanos dela Prouincia de Portugal hecho en Abril de 1593, Lus. 44, fol. 86v). In Coimbra Couto graduated as Master of Arts, briefly lecture philosophy in Evora (1596-97). Then he moved to Coimbra here he lectures philosophy in the Colegio (1597-1601), works in the *Dialectica* and later on he lectures theology, returning, at last, to Evora in 1604. A small group of philosophy professors started lecturing in Braga and moved later to Evora, still this fact does not change the overall movement from south to north.

Sebastião do Couto is the best example of a native from the south who made all of his graduate studies in Évora and eventually moved to Coimbra.

The best means to ascertain the degree of collaboration between both centers would be a through analysis of the production of professors of both teaching centers, namely, their printed books, their theses and manuscripts.

A partial investigation was made by António Andrade who, in his introduction to his translation of the *Ethics* (1957:

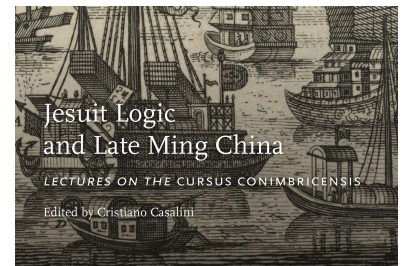
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Cláudio Alexandre Carvalho

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## THE PROJECT

## THE CURSUS CONIMBRICENSIS

LXXVII ss), had analysed the relation between the printed text of the commentary and existing Jesuit manuscripts. Based on five manuscripts (BN cod. 2535 whose author is Pedro Luís, a Spaniard who taught in Évora; BN 2361, BN 4066m BN 2433 and BN 48411) he observed that the text in the manuscripts was almost identical. Andrade concluded there was a common text taught in the lessons a fact which the manuscripts witnessed to and, moreover, was pointed to in the words of Pedro da Fonseca in his license printed earlier in the *Physica*:

*Quod iam pridem optabant multi, vt communes Philosophiae commentarii manuscripti, qui in Conimbricensi liberalium artium Academia Societati nostrae comissa quotidiano excipientium labore dictabantur, recognoscerentur, auctique et locupletati mandarentur typis, id ut fieret, aliquot ante annos a Reuerendo admodum Patre Nostro Generali Claudio Aquaviva constitutum erat. (Pedro da Fonseca, Facultas Generalis Praepositi Societatis Iesu, in Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in Octo Libros Physicorum, [f. 2v])*

It had been decided some years ago by our General, most Reverend Father Claudio Aquaviva it should be done what long since was the desire of many: that, augmented and revised, be sent to print the common manuscript commentaries of philosophy, which, with daily effort of the listeners, were dictated in the Coimbra College of Liberal Arts, committed to our Society.

One may infer from this text, as well as from the research of Andrade that the *Cursus* was based on the lessons taught in the Colégio das Artes, even if one of the manuscripts is attributed to Lourenço Fernandes who, as Andrade correctly remarks, taught in Évora from 1575 to 1578. If that were the case, the role of Evora would hardly be relevant for the *Cursus*.

João Pereira Gomes, one of the leading authorities in Jesuit studies in Portugal, particularly in the domain of theses, textbooks, manuscripts and biography of teachers of the

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University of Evora and the Colégio das Artes established a conclusion that points to a similarity of all the doctrine taught in both schools long before the *Cursus* went to printing. His statement is made in the context of the discussion about the origin of the text published in Frankfurt (so thought the authors of the genuine edition), in 1604. Some years before, Friedrich Stegmüller, who had studied manuscripts of philosophy and theology stemming from the teaching of the Universities of Coimbra and Évora, argued (Stegmüller 1959: 98) that the text of the *Dialectica* printed in 1604 in Frankfurt was none other than that of the lessons of a Portuguese ex-Jesuit, vz., Gaspar Coelho. Stegmüller having verified the identity of the lessons held in two Portuguese manuscripts advanced the following hypothesis: Coelho, expelled from the Jesuits, took with him the text and sold it to the editors. That Coelho was eccentric of a character certainly is true, still the whole plot devised by Stegmüller was dismantled by Pereira Gomes whose words, being most relevant to this issue, should be quoted at length:

*Between 1560 and 1590, approximately, professors gradually adopted some common glosses, to be lectured to students, without any change to put it simply. Since Aristotle's works were compulsory subject in the classes, once they had been properly commented upon, teachers were of the opinion that what mattered was to lecture those comments and ensure they were properly understood.*

*There were exceptions, as the *Tratado de Geografia* of Castel-Branco so well illustrates. But the overall norm, as it prevailed, brought about a great amount of manuscripts [...] which, at first sight, and within the same group, seem all identical. And, indeed, differences are to be found more in the materiality of the word than in the essence of ideas. (Gomes 1959: 193)*

Stegmüller based his argument on the identity of content of manuscripts BNP 2010 (dated 1571 and authored by

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Gaspar Coelho) and 3967 (dated 1585 and authored by João Brandão or Jerónimo Dias according to Pereira Gomes, 1959) and Evora CXVIII/1-21. Pereira Gomes, however, shows that one sample of the first two put side by side with the text of 1604 displays almost the same wording. It is worth noting, moreover, that Pereira Gomes demonstrates there were three “pirate editions”: the first and the second of 1604 (printed in Venice, Hamburg, Cologne and probably in Frankfurt), the third of 1607 (Gomes 1959: 195). Having said that, the explanation proposed by Pereira Gomes as source of the unauthorized German (and Venetian) editions is one of the many German or Italian students of Coimbra or Évora (Gomes 1959: 195).

The argument of Gomes is founded on sound evidence and he mastered as no one else the knowledge about the bibliographic details of the printed editions so that no investigation may dispense with his findings. Some remarks, though, should be made.

There may be more exceptions to the variance to be found between the *Cursus* and lessons from Coimbra or Évora. Castel-Branco, the example given by Gomes of a notable divergence between lessons from manuscripts (his lessons were delivered in Évora) and the printed text of the *Cursus*, is the author of the lessons held in two manuscripts in Lisbon: the cod. 6283 with lessons on Physics, and the cod. 5053 with his lessons of Logic. No thorough exam can be made here, two examples suffice to make the case.

In Book VII, ch. 3 of the *Physica*, the *Cursus* presents a question whose title reads: *Sit ne ad solas tertiae speciae qualitates per se alteratio an non*. In Castel-Branco’s manuscript, in turn, it can be read: *Vtrum ad solas qualitates tertiae speciei sit per se alteratio* [f. 402].

The coincidence judging only from the titles is striking. But Castelbranco proceeds with a fourth chapter on proportions, whereas the *Cursus* proceeds with the explanation of the fourth chapter deprived of any questions and followed immediately by the commentary on the eighth book.

As to the second example, it is taken from the *Logic*, more precisely, the chapter from *Categoriae* on substance. Castel-Branco inserts a disputation (his third) with the following title: *Vtrum Christus Dominus, sit simpliciter et absolute prima substantia et indiuiduum ad hoc*

*praedicamentum per se pertinens*. Again nothing similar is to be found on the *Cursus*. This points to the same direction Carvalho hinted at when he states, concerning the process of elaboration of the *Cursus*, that “considerable liberty was given during the 16th Century to the Portuguese Jesuit masters” (Carvalho 2001: 357). Therefore the identity of doctrine and text posited by Pereira Gomes does not hold when put to the test of an analysis of the content of manuscripts.

The picture of the contribution of both centers, Coimbra and Évora, to the *Cursus* is certainly impossible to disentangle or even to assess by means of manuscripts but further analysis could deliver interesting results, namely, divergences and variations that did not find their way into the *Cursus*. Academic theses, an area until now untouched by researchers, may add relevant information as to the production of each center. The Public Library of Évora holds many academic theses coming from Jesuit teaching in the last quarter of 16th cent. One is hardpressed to find theses defended in Évora among them, even if there is a good number of theses from teachers like Gaspar Vaz who lectured both in Coimbra and in Évora. The theses of Gaspar Vaz, with one exception (BPE séc. XVI 4614, defended in 1584) are later than 1585, which means they arose from his term in Coimbra.

The overall picture drawn from academic theses is that the majority of them comes from the College of Arts. A possible explanation may be a much easier access to printing in Coimbra (two printers from Coimbra appear in the theses: João Barreira and António Mariz) compared to Évora. However, this fact compounded with the movement of teachers from Évora to Coimbra, on one hand, and the more abundant number of manuscripts having as authors Jesuits who lectured in Coimbra, on the other, points to an advantage of Coimbra as an attractive and more productive center in terms of philosophical studies.

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## Related Entries

- [Couto, Sebastião do](#)
- [Cursus Conimbricensis](#)
- [Magalhães, Cosme de](#)
- [Álvares, Baltasar](#)
- [Fonseca, Pedro da](#)

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By Armando Senra Martins | March 25th, 2020 | Comments Off

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