



ABSTRACT

Copies of classical sculpture became particularly common in the decoration of gardens between the XVII and XIX century. In Portugal they seem to tell a particular story that relates this fashionable taste for the "antique", with a new awareness of sculpture by local producers. Some evidence shows that lead casts imported from Holland and England played a stronger role than marble copies imported from Italy, and in this sense they probably influenced the Sculpture Laboratory that after 1771 was charged with the mission of adorning the Royal Villas. Soon after 1834 this trend ended or had been changed, but amidst Revivalism, classical sculpture was still recognized as a symbol of beauty that endured in time.

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ARTICLE

Without having a consistent tradition in acquiring classical sculpture and its reproductions, Portugal has known several case studies of particular interest within the mainstream of international purchases. The cast collection brought from Rome by D. Miguel da Silva (c. 1480-1556) in 1525 was one of the earliest examples of plaster casts made from the antique to be found outside of Italy (HOLANDA 1984: 11). When this clergyman fell out of favor, the collection was handed over to Prince Louis, son of king D. Manuel I. On this occasion, in 1548, the humanist painter Francisco de Holanda (1517-1585) was charged with the task of moving it from Paço de Fontelo at Viseu to Lisbon (MOREIRA 2000: 89). Even if these casts were not preserved, their testimony echoes a similar statement to the collection of Paduan lawyer Mantova Benavides (1489-1582) (CANDIDA 1967), perhaps the most ancient of this kind. In Portugal, an additional sign of appreciation for the Antique could also be recognized in the Della Robbia relief busts that around this time existed at the Bacalhoa Villa (RASTEIRO 1895: 40).

All these works must have had particular value as exclusive objects especially if we consider that not a single Roman statue would be found in Évora, by the learned intellectual André de Resende (RESENDE 1553: 41). The closest testimony of interest over the same subject occurred in 1568 when D. Álvaro da Costa (1525-1577), son of the Vicer-Roy of India D. João de Castro, brought a statue of an *Hercules* on his return from an embassy to Rome (DESWARTE 1992: 17). This statue that once had stood in courtyard of the Villa Giulia was offered as gift by Pope Pius V, and can still be seen today in the Villa of Penha Verde in Sintra. Even if these cases witness the continuous spread of interest for classical antiquity across Europe we can't however say that the country was particularly engaged into the humanist concept of the Renaissance that promoted the interest for sculptures unearthed in Italy. Through it all, the infatuation for the "Classics" was mostly directed towards literature and so, books remained the strongest foothold for the appreciation of archeological objects. In this sense, this proposal must be understood within the conventional settings of fascination for the exotic objects, such as those brought from India and Asia (MONCADA 2014); all of which are associated with a prevailing taste for Gothic art, and with many works of art which arrived from Flanders.

Nevertheless, in Italy ancient statues acquired a particular importance as models for painting and sculpting, pushing higher standards of taste and pressing artists to a defining reconstruction of the ideal of Art. Much of the appeal foreigners felt for the “Eternal city” was unquestionably related to the remains of the Roman Imperialism upon which a new stage of religious splendor would be built. Interestingly enough, their status remained unrivalled, and that could explain the reason why in 1797, 83 out of 100 works of art handed over to the French, on the terms of the treaty of Tolentino, were antique statues. (HASKELL and PENNY 1982: 109) Much of this fascination explains that no other work of modern sculpture has ever been as reproduced as often as all of those well known heroes echoed from mythology.

In Portugal it was only in the XVII century that a trend arose to adorn the interiors of noble houses with busts of eminent Greek and Roman individuals. Among these, it is worth singling out the set of 12 busts existing at the Calhariz Palace in Palmela, and probably acquired in Genoa by the ambassador D. Luis de Sousa between 1675 and 1683 (SOROMENHO 2001: 180). Although these examples fall short when compared with other refined copies made in Rome or Florence, they do however show a consistent sense of appropriateness that would be superbly complemented with the garden fountains brought from Rome and Genoa, around the same time. Although the authors of these last works are not known to us, it is worth mentioning that D. Luís de Sousa had earlier acted as a middle man in a commission made by the Count of Ericeira, for a fountain designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini and carved by Ercole Ferrata (DELAFORCE, MONTAGU, GOMES, SOROMENHO 1998; VALE 2012).

Later on, stone bust copies would become established as premier adornments for noble palaces even outside imposing rhythm on arcades or inserted into niches as can be observed in the Palaces of Belem, Galveias and

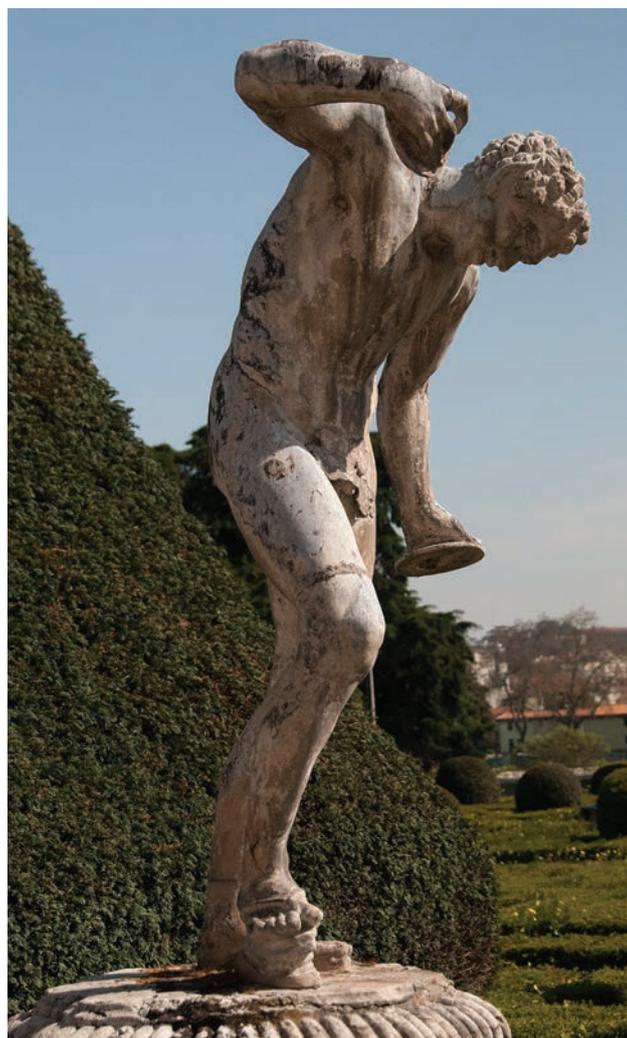


Fig. 1 – *Dancing Faun*, last quarter of the 17th century, Fronteira Palace.

Marquis of Pombal. The first approaches of local workshops to this kind of decoration must have begun with this subject matter although, this appeared mostly as unmannered representations of noble figures facing the horizon or other allegorical figures. Furthermore, the mixing of subject matter can make it particularly inappropriate to blend Roman emperors, with philosophers and mythological characters into senseless ornamentation. It is also worth mentioning the crowning on the south gate of the Botanical Garden of Ajuda (RODRIGUES 2009: 223) with two herms of the *Doryphoros* and the Emperor *Adrian* that was probably made by the stone mason João Gomes around 1787-1792. It is our belief that the identification of depicted prototypes, in many other Vilas could reveal a great deal of information regarding the arrival of classical sculpture in Portugal, and about the evolution of the craft of sculpture in the country.

Perhaps the most noticeable use of classical sculpture reproductions in garden decoration, can be found in the *parterre* of the Fronteira Palace where among several lead statues installed in the last quarter of the XVII century, we find casts made out of the *Dancing Faun*, de *Borghese Gladiator* and de *Venus de' Medici*. (Fig. 1) Ana Duarte Rodrigues and

Ronald Clark have recently emphasized the similarities between this set and the one existing at Herrenhausen garden, pointing out that both commissions were probably manufactured in the same workshop in Holland (RODRIGUES 2013: 151). From this period, it is also worth pointing out that in 1649 Philip IV of Spain, had deliberately sent, the painter Diego Velazquez to Italy, in order to acquire a set of bronze casts, destined to refurbish the Alcazar palace (TARRAGA BALDÓ 2007: 173).

After this, the most noteworthy example of the same use of casts in garden decoration in Portugal can be seen in the royal villa of Queluz where is housed one of the largest collections, of lead casts ever made by John Cheere's, (1709-1787) outside of England (NETO and GRILO 2006; RODRIGUES 2013a). This collection was commissioned by Prince D. Pedro between 1755 and 1756 is composed of 5 sculpted groups and 57 isolated statues, among which, are a "Venus" and a "Hercules" that probably were casted from the same moulds as *Venus de' Medici* and the *Farnese Hercules*, depicted in William Hogarth's view of John Cheere's workshop, precisely three years before the Queluz commission (HOGARTH 1753). For a long time both gardens would be enjoyed by foreigner visitors that passed through the country, but strangely, not a word would be said about them by the sculptor Machado de Castro (1731-1822). In fact in his analysis of the Equestrian statue of King José I made in 1775 he would actually state that besides the Mafra's Basilica imported statues and other modern statues made in the meantime, no other collection was worthy of attention (CASTRO 1810: 291). This statement is particularly unfair, especially with regards to Queluz, were among others, there could be found worthy examples of timeless sculpture that had also found their way to Versailles, such as Giambologna's *Rape of the Sabine woman* or Giamlorenzo Bernini's *Rape of the Proserpine*, (FRANCASTEL 1970: 133). It is possible that Castro had changed his mind after working in the Royal Villas around Lisbon, and in fact, some works made in the Sculpture Laboratory, seem to prove this awareness and appreciation for metal casts.

Other less valuable examples of this new awareness of classical sculpture can be seen in the De Visme villa, for which the Paduan sculptor Jacopo Gabano carved around 1774 a marble replica of the "Uffizi Mercury" (VALE 2005: 138). In this case the subject matter is barely recognizable not only for the differences of expression but especially for its asymmetry and the additions in the trunk tree of ornamental leaves that contrast to the plain and simple bole we find in the original. Another inexpressive replica of the same model and material can be seen today in the garden of the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon, although it was originally purchased around the same time for the Marquis of Pombal's Palace in Oeiras, were it once stood, probably behind the lateral arcades of the Poet's Cascade, as has been pointed out by José Meco (MECO, José (2013). These last interventions are deemed to be images of the beauty of classical statues, thus confirming that the lifelike ideal of Greek and Roman Art was best grasped through imported casts from Holland or England and not from ordinary sculpture purchased in Genoa or Padua. As we will see later, this could explain that local sculptors were particularly acquainted with both sets of casts existing in Fronteira and Queluz. Moreover, in a time when plaster casts were still relatively scarce in their workshops, this was unquestionably the best way to have a glimpse of how the best free standing statue could look.

Nevertheless, stone sculpture continued to play a key role in garden decoration and casts remained an exquisite product imported from foreign countries. If such reasoning can be allowed, the equivalent in Portugal to metal casts was terracotta sculptures, like the ones made by Machado de Castro for the Royal country house of Caxias between 1782-1817 (RODRIGUES 2009: 396). Yet again, mythology offered an excuse to promote a relationship between man and nature, for which Machado de Castro would create several works mostly inspired on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. One of these works was a *Flora Farnese* made after 1799, and placed alongside the central hall of the *parterre*. This work that ended up being destroyed in the middle of the 20th century, seems a rather



Fig. 2 – *Farnese Warrior*, Alessandro Giusti atr., 18th century, National Museum of Ancient Art.

unusual choice, given the circumstance that his master Alessandro Giusti (1715-1799), had also reportedly left us with his own interpretation of this same model. The reappearance of the *Flora Farnese* could thus be interpreted as an impulse to correct the asymmetry that the Italian had wrongly copied from an engraving (MENDONÇA 2012). Although admitting the possibility that this work did come from the Sculpture Laboratory, Sandra Saldanha, is inclined to recognize them as studying materials used within the Mafra school of sculpture (QUADROS 2012: 243). We find it hard to conceive that a work of this size and quality could exist in a school, especially when it expresses a clear attempt to adapt a given model and to convey a particular setting as we came to see in the *Hercules* that forms a pair with the mentioned *Flora Farnese*. Furthermore it is important to stress both works had always belonged to the Ministry of Public Works, just like many other statues that were waiting for a permanent location (MENDONÇA 2014b).

that, up until now, has been known as an *Hercules* is in fact a *Farnese Warrior*, also known as “Commodus Gladiator” (GASPARRI 2010: 29), presumably representing the Greek hero Achilles. (Fig. 2) It is easy to understand the reason why this last work could pass as original given the slight modifications that were introduced such as the substitution of the body of Troilus, on top of the left shoulder, with a distinctive club usually assigned to Hercules iconography. To make this identification more believable he additionally added a beard to the face of Achilles, thus making the resemblance more convincing. Nonetheless, the differences towards the originals show up in both marble sculptures, especially in the superficial handling, and confirm that the original sources for these replicas were engravings, possibly the ones made by François Perriers in his “*Segmenta nobilium signorum e statuarum*” (PERRIER 1638: 13, 62). The setting for which this commission was initially designed are unknown, together with the places they have passed through before being stored in the royal Ajuda palace, but the high quality finishing points to them being made by an experienced Italian sculptor that mastered certain subtleties, as those shown on the base, establishing a fine division between the staging zone and the foothold.

A closer attention to the *Hercules* makes it clear that the sculptor wasn't paying much attention to details, since the statue

We do sense a difference of “language”, so to speak, regarding the works made by Machado de Castro but, in fact, the authorship was only assigned to Giusti much later in 1837, when the painter Joaquim Rafael requested these works should be acquired for the Fine Arts Academy recently established (A.N.B.A. 1837). A plaster model existing at the fine Arts School of Lisbon with exactly 1/3 of the final dimension of the *Flora Farnese*, seems to prove this work was indeed carved in the Sculpture Laboratory, hence making clear the importance this would have in the tradition of making public statues in Portugal.

The particular interest of Machado de Castro for classical sculpture is well documented through its writings, speeches and books, but his plaster cast collection was particularly praised by several novelists, among which Julio de Castilho and Latino Coelho thought it should be recognized in a museum, thus providing the ultimate inspiration for those aspiring to call upon the muses (CASTILHO, Júlio de 1881: 100). Many art historians such as José Fernandes Pereira (PEREIRA 2000: 27), Ana Duarte Rodrigues (RODRIGUES 2004: 189), Miguel Faria

(FARIA 2008: 65), Ricardo Mendonça (MENDONÇA 2012) and Sandra Saldanha (QUADROS 2012: 242) have addressed this subject matter, and the importance of plaster models was particularly clear in the latest exhibition held at the National Museum of Ancient Art in 2012 (M.N.A.A. 2012). However, there is only one successfully identified plaster cast from the collection that King D. João V had designated for a Fine Arts Academy around 1750, but never took place (CASTRO 1818: 221; it is a relief plaque seen by António Ribeiro dos Santos in Castro's workshop around 1799 (SANTOS 1799: 20) that was cast from the tomb of Pope Alexander de VIII and depicts the canonization of five saints carved in approximately 1707 by Angelo de Rossi (F.B.A.U.L. Esc. 823).

Although part of the cast collection of Machado de Castro came from Maфра, his interest in sculpture compelled him to continuously enlarge this collection. From our own analysis, there seems to have been a clear preference for statues found at the Caracalla Baths and formerly in the Farnese collection, since in a new commission for the Royal Villa of Belém, Machado de Castro, yet again, was compelled to carve a *Hercules Farnese* on which his assistant, João José Elveni worked in 1806 (RODRIGUES 2004: 217). (Fig. 3) Around the same time, the sculptor had also carved a *Dancing faun* later found in the same place, for what is today's Tropical Botanic Garden (MENDONÇA 2012). Both works are represented in the so called "Book of Statues C" (MNAA c. 1806); a volume composed mostly of drawings copied after engravings that were possibly used to test the multiple possibilities of decorating the Belém garden and for that reason were left unpublished (published by RODRIGUES 2004, VOL. 2).

Machado de Castro seems to have been particularly fond of *Hercules Farnese*; in fact, from all the statues he has praised the most, this is the only one that was systematically quoted simultaneously in his writings, drawings, and also in his creative work like the "Allegory to the Fine Arts" (M.N.A.A. c. 1800) in which the statue is portrayed on his back, as representative for the craft of sculpture. It seems rather unusual that also in this case he chose to represent this statue in the same size as the stone replica existing at the Tropical Botanic Garden. Nevertheless, this was unquestionably a very solid choice considering the popularity the Farnese Hercules achieved during the Baroque, and for which several reproductions became particularly notorious both in enlarged form such as 8 meter tall copper reproduction, placed in 1717 at the Wilhelmshöhe park at Kassel, but also in small delicate porcelain reductions such as the ones produced by the Real Fabrica Ferdinanda in Naples after 1780. In Portugal around 1775 the Rato Porcelain Factory was also engaged in the production of these sort of replicas that measured 50 cm (A.A.P. 1917: 52). This is the true scale of the wide spread industrialization of copies after the antique, that invaded wealthy houses all across the world for which the recognition of depicted characters played an important role in their acceptance, hence paving the way to defining concept of general knowledge (HASKELL and PENNY 1982: 98).

The interest for reproductions in this period followed the increasing popularity the originals had achieved on the *Grand Tour*, hence making the upper classes want to experience a glimpse of the golden Arcadia in the com-



Fig. 3 – *Farnese Hercules*, (c. 1806), Joaquim Machado de Castro, Tropical Botanic Garden.

fort of their own homes. Gardens become particularly exquisite, but in Portugal, these degrees of sophistication with high quality reproductions of statues were only possible for a few, and, as it has turned out, even in the royal house, they did not quite manage to fully accomplish all their plans.

The connections between the *Hercules* and the *Flora Farnese*, have previously been pointed out by Ana Duarte Rodrigues, and in fact the choice to represent a life-size statue after two gigantic sculptures more than 3 meters tall could mean that at one point they were intended to occupy the same garden. However, the relationship between the works of Machado de Castro and Alessandro Giusti may lay in a set of fountains formerly referred to, and brought from Rome and Genoa around 1680 by D. Luis de Sousa (SOROMENHO 2001: 35). This assumption was arrived at by comparing the existing fountain at the Calhariz palace with the remains of an identical fountain that today exists at the National Museum of Ancient Art, for what had probably been a set acquired in Rome (Fig. 4). The other fountain existing at the Tropical Botanic Garden was probably acquired in Genoa, and its identification is based on the description of the assets from the Morgado de Santarém transcribed by Miguel Soromenho (Fig. 5). It was only by identifying the missing parts of these fountains, scattered between the Tropical Botanic Garden and the National Museum of Ancient Art that we came to suspect that a larger group of sculptures could bear the same origin connecting them to the activity of the Sculpture Laboratories.

Somehow this could explain the arrival of other works at the Tropical Agricultural Garden Museum after 1726, when King João V bought the Villa of Belém from the Count of Aveiras. Teresa Leonor do Vale had already noticed the coincidence that the *Roman Charity* (1737) was made by Bernardo Ludovisi (c. 1693-1749), a sculptor that four years before had equally collaborated with king João V in the sculpture program for the Basilica of Mafra (VALE 2011: 246). This coincidence seems rather unusual especially if we consider that the Mafra construction site was the starting point for both the Alessandro Giusti's school of Sculpture, and the Sculpture Laboratory's and hence the place where originally the *Farnese Warrior* and *Flora* were carved. Therefore, it is possible that



Fig. 4 – Triton fountain support, Genoa (?) c. 1675-83, Tropical Botanic Garden.

some works that were placed in Belém, came from a sculpture collection of several works from Royal Villas and Palaces and which were moved around in the XIX century. Some of these sculptures were moved by Barros Laborão to Lisbon after the shutdown of the Mafra Laboratory and some of them ended up being placed in the Ajuda Palace construction site, waiting to be placed in the royal villa of Belem. Consequently, it is likely that other sculptures were stored there, not as a collection but rather as a “warehouse” of ornamental sculptures waiting to be placed on a permanent location. Another sculpture that must have existed in the same warehouse is João José Aguiar's allegorical statue that was left unfinished and therefore abandoned. The only conclusive data on the *Farnese Warrior* and *Flora* is that they were stored there between in 1837 and 1851 when the permission to hand them over to the Fine Arts Academy was finally obtained (A.N.B.A. 1851-56.).

It is possible that the injunction to provide more suitable surroundings for the garden of the Country House of Belem had started around 1802 when a cast collection was sent from Italy to

establish the Fine Art Academy in the Ajuda Palace under the guidance of painters Domingos Sequeira and Vieira Portuense (COSTA 1936: 91). It is unclear what role this collection (destroyed in 1807), would have had on the production of sculpture, but in 1807 the former Director of the Academy of Portugal in Rome, Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi would use a plaster cast as a reference to help explain a monument that the great Antonio Canova (1757-1822) sought to design for the future King João VI (MENDONÇA 2014). This work depicting the *Genie of National Independence* was to be an exact inversion of the much acclaimed *Apollo de Belvedere*, and cost the same 8000 *scudi* as the *Perseus* from the Vatican Museum (Fig. 4). The inventive mastery of the Italian is particularly clear when comparing the composition of both statues. The similarity with the *Apollo de Belvedere* is disguised by using strict asymmetry in the upper torso and introducing several iconographic attributes such as the lower shield that is held in the left hand against the floor, and the long scepter wielded by the right hand. This indeed is a true lesson that reconciles originality and identity, and should have provided a more useful lesson for Faustino José Rodrigues (1760-1829).



Fig. 5 – Triton fountain support, Rome (?) c. 1675-83, National Museum of Ancient Art.

Although this monument was never realised, a closer look at the foyer of Ajuda Palace reveals that Faustino Rodrigues was particularly acquainted with the clay model existing at the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon (Fig. 5). The striking resemblance between the work entitled *Love for Virtue* is more than a common point but this unusual similarity can only be proven if we take into account that also the statue called *Love for Homeland*, bears straight resemblances with the lead cast of the god *Mars* existing at the Queluz Palace. In the first case an asymmetry to the pose was introduced but overall these similarities are shown not only in the composition lines, but also in many small details, proving that this unfortunate notion of creativity was excessively close to plagiarism. On the other hand, this case proves that Machado de Castro and his followers were never truly confined to the Mafra Baroque aesthetic concept, as has been implied by some art historians (PINHO 2002: 99, note 92). At most, one can only point to an ineffective notion of creativity by Faustino José Rodrigues that in an attempt to upgrade his style into Neoclassicism jumbled the differences between quoting, coping and plagiarizing. If the lessons of both Canova and Machado de Castro had been learned, these notions wouldn't have been mixed up. The Portuguese clearly stated that the artist should devise the human figure into parts, operating what came to be known as “Beauty combined” (*belo reunido*) seeking the best limbs and parts of the human body in each of the finest statues that came down to us from Ancient Greece (RODRIGUES 2006: 55).

Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that this effort was based on reasonable examples taken from casts and sculpture. And even the baroque *Mars* made by John Cheere that came to inspire the *Love for Homeland* is itself based on an unidentified model that equally inspired the author of the *Roman Centurion* existing on the Fronteira Palace. Both examples were probably known, to this sculptor as could be inferred by cast made after the *Dancing Faun* existing in this last palace; a work that as we have seen earlier, was also carved in stone by the Sculpture Laboratory. Therefore, these examples seem to demonstrate that a relatively restricted number of copies of classical sculpture were repeatedly used for the most prominent noble houses, expressing a dominant notion of taste and providing the resources for a particular statement of Portuguese sculpture and sculptors.



Fig. 6 – *Genie of National Independence* (c. 1807), Antonio Canova, National Museum of Ancient Art.

From here on, and although classical reproduction became increasingly common, their importance faded away amidst the astonishing availability of other works taken from Gothic, Renaissance and Mannerism, motifs and promoted in the Revivalist as senseless ornamental art. At most, classical sculpture would be used in staging scenes adapted to raise patriotic feelings in a time when Art found itself used in the public space. Ironically the belvedere of São Pedro de Alcântara was born from a failed project to adorn the Public Park (Passeio Público) with statues of Portuguese heroes from the time of Discoveries (MENDONÇA 2014). Finally, the personal commitment of sculptor Francisco de Assis Rodrigues (1801-1877), to this venture would be embodied into a set of portraits that his assistants carved into marble at the Fine Arts Academy of Lisbon. The Town Hall took advantage of this disposal and in 1844 demanded their handover, and it was only after being discouraged to place them in the Public Park that these works were installed in the Belvedere of São Pedro de Alcântara, where previously had been placed a *Naiade*. The first set of busts was composed solely by Portuguese heroes, such as *Luis Vaz de Camões*, *Vasco da Gama*, *Pedro Alvares Cabral*, etc.

The care taken in the first arrangement with a precise iconological programme clashes with the random criterion used later in 1876, in the display of several stone copies of classical sculptures. Once again, the Town Hall made use of its power, to enforce the Fine Arts Academy to hand over several sculptures among which was the *Farnese Flora* and *Warrior*, the river *Tagus* that today stands at Marquis of Pombal palace, as well as several busts mostly made by students as exercises of carving of stone (A.N.B.A. 1876). None of these statues was delivered but the busts were randomly dumped as can be verified by the inclusion of a portrait of the *Anton Raphael Mengs*, a painter that bears absolutely no connection to history of Portugal, or the place itself. In an attempt to cover up and justify this misuse of sculpture the bust of *Menelaus*, was labeled as an “Ulysses”, that reportedly founded the city of Lisbon on his return to Ithaca. Other busts that were included such as those of *Marcus Aurelius*, *Capitoline Venus*, *Antinous*, *Homer* and *Minerva*, do not seem to follow any specific order considering that they are usually shown in grouped affinities regarding their character as mythological figures, notable rulers, or influential writers. Not all of these works were made by students and in fact some are clearly older like the *Antinous*, which bears trepans in the hair styling, hence proving this particular specimen was probably part of the warehouse of ornamental sculpture that was placed in the fine Arts Academy.

Above all, the identification of copies, replicas and other variants of classical sculpture displayed in gardens, testify to a new aware-



Fig. 7 – *Love of Virtue*, 1826, Faustino José Rodrigues, Ajuda National Palace.

ness of sculpture in the Fine Arts. In this sense, not only was classical sculpture the basis of a mechanical approach to sculpture carving, but also paved the way to the definition of taste.

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