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Spreading the canon: The arrival of the obelisk fountain in Portugal

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ABSTRACT

A study of artistic sources, iconography, and meaning of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* (1747) in Lisbon, this article attempts to reconstruct the history of the obelisk fountain from its emergence in Rome in the work of Gianlorenzo Bernini and Filippo Barigioni to its arrival in Portugal in the mid eighteenth century. An important instance of cross-cultural exchange, the creation of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* is interpreted as an act of artistic appropriation of a distinct type of fountain associated with the papal capital, placing it in the context of urban renewal initiated by King João V (r. 1706–50) with the construction of the Águas Livres aqueduct.

ARTICLE

Fig. 1. Chafariz das Necessidades, 1747, general view. Photograph by José Viriato.

Of all the fountains that exist in Lisbon, the *Chafariz das Necessidades* (dedicated in 1747) is distinguished by its unusual form that combines the gently curving outline of a four-lobed receiving basin with the vertical thrust of an obelisk that stands in its center (figure 1).[1] Commissioned by King João V (r. 1706–50) towards the very end

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Note on fountain names. Following the standard convention, only the names of fountains that have stable equivalents in English have been translated; hence, the *Fountain of the Four Rivers*, but the *Fontana del Pantheon* and the *Chafariz das Necessidades*. The word *chafariz* in contemporary Portuguese designates a public fountain, emphasizing the practical role that such structures played in supplying the population with water; this usage was also common in the eighteenth century (cf. Henriques 1726: 58, 60–62, 64, 177, 198).

1 This date is carried by the dedicatory inscription on the fountain's pedestal (transcribed in Vilhena Barbosa 1866: 73): B. V. Mariæ Dei

Fig. 2. Bird's-eye view of Lisbon, 1572, from Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. The large open space in the center is the Terreiro do Paço; another clearing further inland, directly behind it, is the Rossio. The large building towering above it to the left is Carmo. The Alfama is on the right, stretching along the Tagus and below the castle of São Jorge.

of his reign, this fountain occupies the center of a small square, enclosed by a low parapet, in front of the church of the Palácio das Necessidades—an Oratorian convent adjoined to a palace that from 1833 served as a royal residence.[2] The whole architectural ensemble now rises above the rooflines of a populous neighborhood that grew in the western periphery of the city in the twentieth century. Originally, however, it dominated the semi-rural valley of the torrent Alcântara, being built near its confluence with the river Tagus and therefore clearly visible from the ships heading towards or departing from the Portuguese capital.[3]

The subsequent urbanization of this area was largely enabled by the construction of the Águas Livres aqueduct (1731–47) that brought running water to the western quarters of Lisbon, passing north of the Necessidades palace and the extensive enclosed grounds behind it. Until then, the distribution of this vital resource throughout the urban fabric was very uneven. The eastern part of the city was relatively well provided with water that came from the hill below the castle of São Jorge; two Medieval fountains in the locality of Alfama—the *Chafariz de El-Rei* and the *Chafariz de Dentro*—were both fed from this source. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this water was also carried westward to the low-lying Baixa: the Rossio square on this neighborhood's northern edge and the Terreiro do Paço on its opposite southern end adjoining the Tagus (figure 2). The expansion of this hydraulic network further west, however, must have been hindered by the gravity-driven technology that could not deal with the steeply rising terrain. The result was an obvious imbalance, with large sections of the city suffering from a chronic shortage of water.[4]

The two fountains erected in front of the Todos-os-Santos hospital in the Rossio square and in the center of the Terreiro do Paço after the supply of running water had been extended to the Baixa-respectively, the *Chafariz do Rossio* and the *Chafariz de Apolo* -were destroyed by the tsunami caused by the disastrous earthquake of 1755. Judging by contemporary representations, they were both freestanding structures characterized by somewhat heavy forms, but with a clear attempt at monumentality manifest in the use of sculptural centerpieces.[5] The fountain in the Terreiro do Paço, which was decorated with the statue of Apollo, must have had particular urban significance given its positioning near the port, the landing and embarkation point for various ship crews that required fresh

Gen. / Joannes V Lus. Rex. / Obse. Servatum Posuit / Die Natalis suo / An. Dom. MDCCXLVII.

2 For the history of this complex, see Ferrão 1994.

3 For the detailed analysis of this site, see Cristina Castel-Branco's chapter in Castel-Branco, ed. 2001: 15–33.

4 The concern with the inadequate water supply of Lisbon is expressed, for example, in Francisco de Holanda's *Da fabrica que falece á cidade de Lisboa* (1571) addressed to King Sebastião I (r. 1557–78) (HOLANDA 1929: 217–18). For the scholarly perspective on this situation, see Moita et al. (1997).

5 For these two fountains, see CAETANO 1991: 56–63.

Fig. 3. Fountain of the Four Rivers, from Giovanni Battista Falda, *Le fontane di Roma*..., Rome 1691. Photograph: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.

Fig. 4. Giacomo della Porta and Filippo Barigioni, Fontana del Pantheon, after 1577, modified 1711, general view. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine.

Fig. 5. Fontana del Pantheon, from Giovanni Battista Falda, *Le fontane di Roma*..., Rome 1691. Photograph: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.

drinking water. At the same time, it probably also served the needs of the neighboring communities that lived south and west of the dominant Carmelite friary of Carmo. This important practical role is evidenced by numerous water carriers with characteristic earthenware jugs gathering under this fountain's mushroom-like canopy, as represented in the seventeenth-century painting by Dirk Stoop in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon.

In purely stylistic terms, the design of the *Chafariz das Necessidades*—whose authorship remains disputed—marks

Fig. 6. Fontana del Pantheon, detail of a mascaron. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine.

Fig. 7. Fontana del Pantheon, detail of a mascaron. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine.

a departure from these traditional models.[6] The marriage of two previously distinct types of civic monument, the fountain and the obelisk, was a characteristic creation of the Roman Baroque. It was inaugurated with the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* by Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), commissioned by Pope Innocent X Pamphilj (r. 1644–55) and erected in the Piazza Navona in Rome in 1648–51 (figure 3).[7] The utterly convincing result that Bernini managed to achieve by juxtaposing such different elements—both in function and scale—as the 16.5-m-tall Egyptian obelisk, unearthed in 1647, and a low receiving basin, obscures the radical novelty of his creation that would have been evident at the time. Indeed, it would take another six decades before Bernini's solution would enter the standard repertory of forms that characterized the architecture of the papal city. This gesture of acceptance was the remodeling of the late sixteenth-century fountain in front of the Pantheon (figure 4), carried out by the architect Filippo Barigioni (c. 1680–1753) by order of Pope Clement XI Albani (r. 1700–21) in 1711.[8]

The *Fontana del Pantheon,* designed in 1577 by Giacomo della Porta, belonged to the generation of similar—decorative as well as functional, but artistically unambitious—fountains built in the Campo Marzio after the water of the newly restored Acqua Vergine aqueduct had been brought to this densely populated neighborhood of Rome. Based on a characteristic geometric plan—the superimposition of a square and a quatrefoil—it featured a centerpiece in the form of a heavy double urn with its outline terminating in a short upward jet, positioned in the center of a high receiving basin (figure 5).[9] The four rounded corners of the main receptacle contained grotesque mascarons with thin spouts of water, which originally came out in two contrasting directions (figures 6, 7). While helping unify the design, these drinking jets conveyed the largely

Fig. 8. Chafariz das Necessidades, detail of the receiving basin and mascarons. Photograph by Cristina Castel-Branco.

6 Traditionally, this fountain is attributed to Caetano Tomás de Sousa, the presumed architect of the Necessidades complex (CHAVES s.d.: 26). His authorship, however, was challenged by Leonor Ferrão (FERRÃO 1994: 97–98). See also n. 18 below.

7 This juxtaposition was not Bernini's invention: by the early seventeenth century, two out of four obelisks erected in Rome by Pope Sixtus V (r. 1585–90)—those behind the church Santa Maria Maggiore and in the center of the Piazza del Popolo—were standing in a direct relationship with a fountain or a trough; whereas another one in front of the façade of San Giovanni in Laterano had a water feature built into its pedestal by Domenico Fontana (1543–1607). It was Bernini, however, who was responsible for putting an obelisk in the center of a receiving basin, although this paradigmatic arrangement is already manifest in Francesco Borromini's (1599–1667) earlier designs for the *Fountain of the Four Rivers.*

8 For Barigioni's career, see Battaglini di Stasio 1964. A detailed account of the remodeling of the *Fontana del Pantheon* and this project's urban significance is found in Marder 1974.

9 According to Katherine Rinne's calculations, this jet could probably reach slightly over 1 m in height (RINNE 2010: 91).

utilitarian role that the *Fontana del Pantheon* played in a busy square with semi-permanent market stalls, which used to surround it on four sides.[10]

Fig. 9. Gianlorenzo Bernini, Fountain of the Four Rivers, 1648–51, detail. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine

Work initiated by Clement XI involved the partial clearing of this square, causing a fundamental rethinking of the fountain's relationship with its urban surroundings, especially the hefty bulk of the Pantheon that called for a more monumental response. The vertical rhythm of Agrippa's portico required a strong upward surge, unattainable by the weak central jet powered by the low-pressure Acqua Vergine. The solution was to replace the whole centerpiece with a more dominant architectural form, for which Bernini's *Fountain of the Four Rivers* provided an obvious model. The only obelisk that the pope appeared to have at his disposal at the time, however, was the so-called *Guglia di San Macuto* (or *San Mauto)* that stood in the eponymous square next to the nearby church of Sant'Ignazio.[11] Barigioni's decision to mount this diminutive-only 6.3-m-tall-granite pillar on an unwieldy travertine pedestal carrying the Albani coats-of-arms, commemorative inscriptions, and water-spouting dolphins at the four corners, was criticized for making the obelisk appear puny in relation to its oversized support (see figure 4).[12] Seemingly emerging from a bed of rockery (a likely reference to the naturalistic grotto conceived by Bernini), the new centerpiece also stood in clear dissonance with the crisp geometry of the receiving basin, visibly small in proportion to the bulging sculptural mass that it now contained.

Fig. 10. Giacomo della Porta, Fontana di Piazza Colonna, 1575–77, with later modifications. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine.

A close comparison between the *Chafariz das Necessidades* and these two Roman prototypes reveals that the transfer of the obelisk fountain to Portugal owed less to Bernini's original inception of the new monumental form than to its subsequent adaptation by Barigioni. This connection is particularly evident in the presence of four sandstone heads (executed in the local *pedra lioz)* with elaborate headgear, which in their number, positioning, and function correspond exactly to the sixteenth-century mascarons—similarly flanked by dolphins—that decorate the *Fontana del Pantheon* (see figures 6, 7, 8). Another shared feature is the low masonry platform with flat cascading steps on which both structures are elevated. The modest height of the obelisk, which only reaches 6.6 m, and the bronze ornament at its top—a conventional cross placed above a multi-rayed star as opposed to the heraldic Pamphilj dove holding a bough in its beak—also suggest Barigioni's project as a more immediate model for the design of the Portuguese fountain.[13] The treatment of the

10 These stalls—two of which, located closer to the Pantheon, were eventually demolished—appear in contemporary maps and plans, some of which are reproduced in Marder 1974. For the mascarons, which in 1886 were replaced with copies, see D'ONOFRIO 1962: 44–46.

11 This obelisk is shown in its original setting in Falda 1665, II (*Le chiese di Roma),* pls. 21 and 22.

12 Cf. BLUNT 1982: 232: "… a somewhat unhappy design in which the base seems too big for what it carries, a point which is brought out by the fact that in the commemorative medals the obelisk is made to look much higher than it is in reality."

13 In the *Fontana del Pantheon,* the star probably also had heraldic significance referring to the Albani insignia; such ornaments, however, were commonly featured atop Roman obelisks. The association of its spiky form with the crown of thorns—which it does not really resemble—as an instrument of Christ's Passion (FERRÃO 1994: 132) is unwarranted. Earlier Portuguese writers like Manuel do Portal or Cláudio da Conceição refer to a globe of gilded bronze (cited, respectively, in FERRÃO 1994: 298 and RODRIGUES 2011: 131; note that both excerpts are variants of the same text). Inácio Vilhena Barbosa similarly mentions "um globo espinhoso" rather than "uma

pedestal and the receiving basin in the *Chafariz das Necessidades,* however, seems to offer a critique of the *Fontana del Pantheon,* informed not only by references to their common progenitor in the Piazza Navona, but arguably also the knowledge of other fountains that decorated the papal capital and the villas in the surrounding countryside.

The most problematic aspect of Barigioni's design is the insufficient height of the obelisk, which he tried to increase by raising it on a plinth (see figure 4). This solution was probably inspired by Bernini, who had boldly inserted a similar block, intended to carry commemorative inscriptions, into the pedestal mounted above the sculptural panoply of the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* (figure 9). In the *Fontana del Pantheon,* however, the result is a compromised relationship between the obelisk and its support, with the *Guglia di San Macuto* soaring without any obvious transition above the rest of the structure. Moreover, the broken silhouette of Bernini's pedestal creates sharp horizontal accents, which echo the simple outline of the receiving basin; while mitigating the dramatic action unfolding below, this device also counterweighs the breathtaking vertical surge of the granite needle above (see figures 3, 9). By contrast, Barigioni's barely projecting cubic plinth does little to alleviate the visual anticlimax resulting from the steeply tapering form of his centerpiece. This disappointing effect is further heightened by the overcrowding of the sculptural decoration in the lower part of the *Fontana del Pantheon,* exacerbated by a sense of confinement created by the high rim and emphatic profile of Della Porta's receptacle.[14]

While clearly aware of these shortcomings, the architect of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* showed surprisingly little interest in playing up tensions inherent in bold juxtapositions of plastic and architectural elements that had engaged both Bernini and Barigioni. In practical terms, his approach involved giving the pedestal a simple geometric definition, with its form—broken in the middle by a slightly protruding plinth—borrowed directly from Bernini's *Fountain of the Four Rivers* (see figures 8, 9). While the north-eastern face of this block similarly carries a commemorative inscription, its proportions were flattened to increase the horizontal emphasis and reduce the height of the obelisk's support. The receiving basin was also lowered, giving it a softer profile and a more fluid gently undulating outline. Although its elongated form is reminiscent of two other Roman fountains—the *Fontana di Piazza Colonna* (1575–77) (figure 10) and, to a lesser extent, the *Fontana della Terrina* (1590), both by Della Porta—it probably originated in the garden setting, where such low-rimmed receptacles became common by the turn of the seventeenth century.

In more general terms, the design of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* marks a pronounced tendency to sacrifice sculptural opulence in favor of geometric simplicity, which sets it apart from both of its Roman cousins. In the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* and the *Fontana del Pantheon,* the role of sculpture is to guide the eye upwards visually mediating between the vertical thrust of the obelisk and the horizontal expanse of the receiving basin. Bernini's answer to this challenge is a complex ballet of formal addresses and responses that run through the lower sculpted portion of his centerpiece in waves of rising motion (see figure 9). Barigioni, less successfully, tried to achieve a comparable effect by merely agglomerating various plastic features around his pedestal. In the *Chafariz das Necessidades,* however, sculptural accents are limited to the mascarons, almost too exuberant for their austere setting. Although their visual impact is stronger than in the *Fontana del Pantheon,* the result is a somewhat sterile design, where the main elements—the obelisk, the receiving basin, and the grotesque heads—stand in relative isolation from one another, being united only by a sense of proportionate relationship that governs the whole composition (see figure 1). The display of water does little to alleviate this problem. Unlike fan-like spouts that issue from the mouths of Barigioni's dolphins—which create diagonal rhythms visually tying the pedestal to the receiving ba-

coroa de espinhos" (VILHENA BARBOSA 1866: 73).

14 Barigioni's drawing for the *Fontana del Pantheon,* now in Berlin (published in MARDER 1974: 317, fig. 13), however, shows the mascarons removed and the obelisk sitting on a "soft" masonry cushion, resulting in a much more coherent design.

sin—sparse jets coming out of the mascarons of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* only deepen the aesthetic disjunction between the plasticity of these sculpted groups and the rigid form of the obelisk (see figures 1, 4).[15] Besides, all four sandstone heads are based on the same model; this decision, perhaps economically motivated, significantly undermines their artistic appeal.

These aesthetic differences, however, only give additional prominence to the formal dependence of the Portuguese fountain on those by Bernini and Barigioni. This intensive artistic dialogue demonstrates that the design of the *Chafariz das Necessidades*, rather than embodying a generic reference to an obelisk as a common Egyptian artifact, was an adaptation to Portugal of a new type of civic fountain closely associated with papal Rome. Significantly, its centerpiece—commissioned by João V and executed in local pink marble (*marmore vermelho)* that came from the area of Sintra—was not an antiquarian object and carried no hieroglyphic writings. While being the focal element of the design, the obelisk, in other words, was treated purely as a monumental form devoid of any specifically Egyptian—solar, sepulchral, or hermetic—connotations. In this important way, the *Chafariz das Necessidades* stood in obvious contrast with its two Roman prototypes, which belonged to a long series of artistic projects that marked the deliberate appropriation of Egyptian antiquity by the papacy as a means of asserting its secular and spiritual power.[16] Although emphatic about its connection with the Eternal City, the transfer of the obelisk fountain to Portugal therefore affirmed its universal status as an urban monument by divesting it of these earlier, place-specific, layers of historical meaning.

Fig. 11. Nicola Salvi and Luigi Vanvitelli, Chapel of St John the Baptist, 1742–50, Lisbon, São Roque. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine.

The emergence of the obelisk fountain as an independent type in the first half of the eighteenth century is furthermore evident in a widening stylistic rift that separates Bernini's masterpiece from its subsequent derivations. If Barigioni went out of his way to acknowledge his artistic debt to the *Fountain of the Four Rivers*—as suggests, for example, a literal inclusion of a naturalistic snake on the southern face of his pedestal looking towards the Pantheon (which evokes the coiling serpent above the river gods Danube and Río de la Plata)—the subordinate role of sculpture in the *Chafariz das Necessidades* made it a statement of a completely different aesthetic. The design of the Portuguese fountain almost seems to anticipate the imminent move from the Baroque exuberance to the Neoclassical poise that began to predominate across Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. This departure from Bernini's principles is all the more striking given the first-hand knowledge of his work in Portugal through the *Fountain of Neptune* executed in Rome by his disciple Ercole Ferrata (1610–86) for Luís de Meneses (1632–90), third Count of Ericeira, and brought to Lisbon in 1682.[17] While asserting its formal lineage by the characteristically broken outline of the obelisk's support, the artistic restraint of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* in effect marked the reversal of Bernini's method of blending regular and organic, plastic and architectural forms, which gave his fountains a somewhat

15 This unresolved relationship was noted by Chaves: "O obelisco, simples, contrasta pela simplicidade com o violente barroquismo dos blocos dos mascarões" (CHAVES s.d.: 26).

16 For the strategic deployment of Egyptian artifacts in papal Rome, see the magisterial study by Brian Curran (CURRAN 2007).

17 For this commission, see Delaforce et al. 1998; Vale 2008.

experimental feel in the urban setting.

Moreover, the inclusion of drinking jets in the *Chafariz das Necessidades*—a common practicality conspicuously absent from the *Fountain of the Four Rivers*—confirms the influence of the *Fontana del Pantheon* on the dissemination of the obelisk type. The Portuguese fountain's connection with Barigioni's project is also manifest in the analogous task of designing it in relation to a building—in both cases, a church façade—rather than the surrounding square. The proportioning of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* to the pedimented front of Nossa Senhora das Necessidades (Our Lady of Needs) has been demonstrated by Leonor Ferrão (1994);[18] this direct relationship, imbued with subtle Baroque scenography, is also evident in the placement of the commemorative inscription (which, rather than overlooking the Tagus, faces towards the church). By contrast, Bernini's *Fountain of the Four Rivers* does not stand on the same axis with the façade of Sant'Agnese in Agone;[19] as a result, it is quite ingeniously scaled to the whole oblong expanse of the Piazza Navona that roughly corresponds to the vast arena of the ancient hippodrome of Domitian. In the context of cross-cultural exchange, the important mediatory role played by the *Fontana del Pantheon* in transmitting the obelisk type to Portugal therefore suggests a mechanism based on the appropriation of well-established rather than the most daring or pioneering artistic models, the latter being exemplified by Bernini's masterpiece before its conventional "legitimization" by Barigioni.

The *Chafariz das Necessidades* is usually interpreted as having been imbued with deep personal significance for João V, who, according to the inscription on the pedestal, laid its foundation stone on his fifty-eighth birthday (22 October 1747). Although this fountain's creation was one of the last acts of the king's lavish artistic patronage following the near-fatal stroke that left him temporarily paralyzed,[20] its design does not include any royal insignia or heraldic emblems. The four mascarons represent the Winds, whose elaborate headgear features scowling dolphins, scallop shells, and luscious aquatic plants (including fresh-water cattails). This combination of marine and fluvial motifs, along with a reference to the force that filled the sails of the royal and merchant fleets, might be suggestive of seafaring down the Tagus and into the Atlantic Ocean, being an allusion to the ancient trade on which the wealth of the Portuguese capital had been built. Indeed, the positioning of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* made it clearly visible from the river, while a sailing ship—the emblem of Lisbon—was a characteristic motif in the decoration of the city's earlier fountains.[21] The obelisk, to which the blowing Winds are visually anchored, however, is unambiguously a reference to papal Rome, the connection strengthened by the fountain's axial alignment with the Oratorian church.

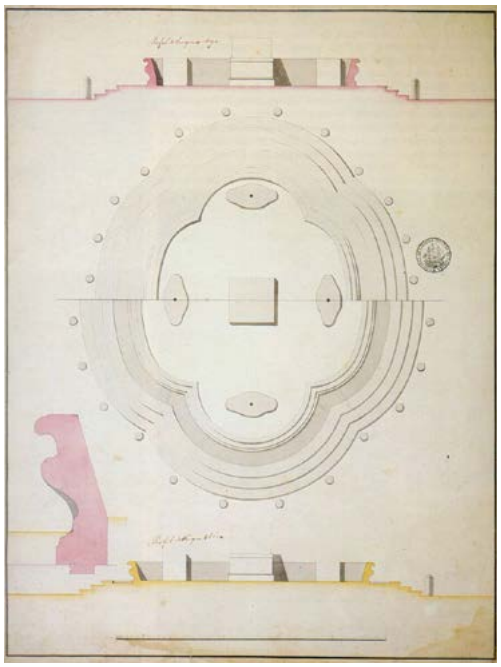

Fig. 12. Reinaldo Manuel dos Santos (att.), Proposal for the modification of the *Chafariz das Necessidades*, second half of the eighteenth century, Lisbon, Museu da Cidade.

18 See the elevation drawing in FERRÃO 1994: 178. This close proportional relationship with the façade of *Nossa Senhora das Necessidades* seems to point to Eugenio dos Santos (1711–60), who was responsible for the exterior of the church, as a likely candidate for the fountain's authorship.

19 Cf. WITTKOWER 1997: 175. It should be remembered, however, that Bernini's fountain preceded the rebuilding of Sant'Agnese (which had originally faced away from the Piazza Navona), begun by Girolamo Rainaldi (1570–1655) in 1652.

20 Hence the association of this fountain with the king's "miraculous rebirth" (FERRÃO 1994: 132), even though the inscription itself does not make this connection explicit.

21 Such plaques, which conveyed the municipal status of these fountains, are found, for example, on the *Chafariz de Dentro,* the *Chafariz do Andaluz,* the *Bica dos Olhos,* and the *Fonte Santa dos Prazeres.* Images of sailing vessels also decorate the *Chafariz de El-Rey,* although they date from its nineteenth-century refashioning.

This iconography, rather than suggesting a specific program, seems to associate the meaning of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* with the broader political and urbanistic agendas promulgated by João V. The king's life-long fascination with the papal capital provided a lasting source of inspiration for his architectural projects. This influence is testified, for example, by his persistent—if not always satisfactory—attempts to engage the services of the leading Italian architect Filippo Juvarra (1678–1736)[22] and by commissioning the opulent chapel of St John the Baptist (1742–47), almost dazzling in its rich polychromy, for the church of São Roque (figure 11). Executed in Rome according to the designs by Nicola Salvi (1698–1751) and Luigi Vanvitelli (1700–73) and originally installed in Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi, this Baroque showpiece had been consecrated by Pope Benedict XIV Lambertini (r. 1740–58) prior to its transfer to Lisbon in 1747.

The king's involvement with the papacy, however, was not limited to artistic matters. Throughout his reign, João V resorted to the papal authority to promote the standing of his realm and the prestige of its capital. His major diplomatic triumph was the establishment of the patriarchal see of Lisbon, granted by the bull *In supremo apostolatus* (1716) issued by Barigioni's patron Clement XI. The result was Lisbon's elevation to a higher ecclesiastical status among other European capitals, bringing about its temporary division into the Eastern and Western cities—the jurisdictions, respectively, of the old archbishop and the new patriarch—abolished only by Benedict XIV in 1740. Concurrent with this odd diocesan partition, the construction of the Águas Livres aqueduct certainly imbued it with the spirit of urban renewal. In this context, the message proclaimed by the obelisk in the design of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* must have alluded to the king's act of civic benefaction, through which the whole city of Lisbon, as previously Rome, had finally been provided with fresh drinking water.

The symbolic significance of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* as the earliest among the fountains of the Águas Livres and the only one created during the reign of João V—as testified by the date of its dedication has not received sufficient emphasis in scholarly literature (which instead tends to accentuate its personal significance for the king).[23] The reasons for this peculiar downplaying of this fountain's urban role presumably derive from its analysis by Joaquim Oliveira Caetano (1991), who questioned its original function as a public source of water.[24] The principal evidence for this interpretation is a drawing in the Museu da Cidade in Lisbon, which the scholar attributed to the architect Reinaldo Manuel dos Santos (1731–91) (figure 12). This interesting document is a proposal for the fountain's remodeling, with the original design, shown in the upper half, juxtaposed with the modified version below (which corresponds to the current appearance of the *Chafariz das Necessidades)*. The comparison between these two projects reveals that the changes principally concerned the enlargement of the receiving basin, which had to be dismantled and then assembled again further distance away from the mascarons (whose position, however, remained the same as did that of the obelisk). While correctly associating these interventions with the exigencies of the practical use of the *Chafariz das Necessidades,* Caetano saw them as signaling the fountain's transformation from a purely decorative into a utilitarian structure. This functional reorientation, in his opinion, must have occurred between 1772 and 1791, during Manuel dos Santos's tenure as the head engineer of the Águas Livres aqueduct.

To support his conclusion, Caetano drew attention to the previously narrower gap between the mascarons and the rim of the receiving basin. The decision to widen it, he speculated, must have meant that water had originally

22 For Juvarra's projects in Portugal, see WITTKOWER 1982: 414, 563 n. 34.

23 SEE FERRÃO 1994: 132–33, 135, whose interpretation of the *Chafariz das Necessidades* involves such far-fetched conjectures as the use of water as an allusion to the Zodiac sign of João V (begging an obvious question why the same point could not have been made more directly by including the image of Scorpio). In general, her reading, while focusing on the significance of the obelisk as a vestige of the Egyptian past, fails to address the whole new set of meanings that it acquired by being mounted on a fountain.

24 CAETANO 1991: 112. Chaves, however, was also hesitant about ascribing this fountain practical significance in view of its monumental design (CHAVES s.d.: 26).

Fig. 13A. Obelisk fountain in the garden of the monastery of Alcobaça, mid eighteenth century. Photograph by Cristina Castel-Branco.

Fig. 13B. Obelisk fountain in the garden of Alcobaça, detail. Photograph by Cristina Castel-Branco.

issued sideways instead of forwards, coming out of the snouts of the dolphins rather than the blowing heads (see figure 8). This hypothesis, however, contradicts other evidence regarding the *Chafariz das Necessidades*. The dolphins' mouths, for example, are not bored, as they should have been in order to serve as spouts; whereas the building accounts pertaining to the Necessidades complex (1752), published by Ferrão, and the fountain's contemporary description by the Oratorian Father Manuel do Portal (1756) both refer to the mascarons (*carrancas)* rather than their paraphernalia as a means of emitting water.[25] Besides, Manuel dos Santos's drawing includes two other modifications overlooked by Caetano: first, the shallow duct, colored in darker gray, carved into the upper step; and, second, the lowered rim of the receiving basin, with its profile altered by a deeply undercut molding (see figures 1, 8, 12).[26] These changes, clearly intended to help collect and channel runoff, must have addressed a serious miscalculation of the fountain's original architect, whereby water had spilled beyond its receptacle by overflowing the rim. As a measure to reduce spillage and facilitate access, however, this expensive remodeling of the *Chafariz das Necessidades*—contrary to Caetano's opinion—could have only been caused by persistent problems involving its precedent use as a public source of water.

Fig. 14. Chafariz de São Domingo de Benfica, 1791, general view. Photograph by Anatole Tchikine.

Another reason for the scholarly caution regarding this fountain's urban role might concern its peripheral location. Indeed, it was positioned at the end of a separate branch of the Águas Livres aqueduct,[27] specially built to carry water to the new Oratorian establishment and its enclosed grounds (*cerca,* sometimes also referred to as

25 Cited in FERRÃO 1994: 280, 299 (references, respectively, to "[uma] mascara para lançar agoa"; "quarto carrancas de pedra, para lançarem agoa.") It is not clear from Manuel do Portal's description whether the fountain was actually playing at the time of writing.

26 Significantly, a similar draining conduit also appears in the *Chafariz das Janelas Verdes* (1755) designed by Manuel dos Santos, indirectly confirming his connection with this drawing.

27 See the aqueduct's map (1895) reproduced in Moita et al. 1997: 20–21.

quinta). This concession, in fact, was deemed so generous that it caused a good deal of controversy at the time.[28] From 1779, runoff from the *Chafariz das Necessidades* was conducted to the neighboring convents of Sacramento and Livramento, located closer to the waterfront.[29] Apart from these religious institutions, contemporary maps and views show little development in this area except a few houses that stretched along the road to Belém.[30] In this semi-rural setting, the fountain's monumental form seems to strike a somewhat incongruous note. Once again, a comparison with papal Rome might help explain its peculiar significance. Unlike the original *Fontana del Pantheon* and other related projects by Della Porta that celebrated the provision of water to the center of the city, early seventeenth-century Roman fountains often carried a different message. For example, two of Bernini's most famous works—the *Fontana della Barcaccia* (1627–29) and the *Fountain of Triton* (1642–43)—were designed for suburban neighborhoods in the area of the Pincian Hill that were yet to be properly absorbed into the urban fabric.[31] Located next to gardens (*vigne)* and pastures, these fountains were not merely sumptuous statements of the Barberini patronage intended to share their artistic prestige with the relatively humble surroundings; in an equally important way, they were catalysts of urban expansion, signaling the availability of aqueduct water for distribution and hence the improved dwelling conditions for the populace.[32]

In conclusion, it remains to be emphasized that the three main fountains discussed here—the *Fountain of the Four Rivers,* the *Fontana del Pantheon,* and the *Chafariz das Necessidades*—were not isolated instances of the use of the obelisk in the urban context. Although driven by different agendas, they marked the emergence of the new canonical type of fountain, which originated in Rome, but soon spread across Europe owing to its monumental form and dominant vertical emphasis. Its subsequent derivations ranged from the *Obeliskbrunnen* (1777) at the Schönbrunn Palace near Vienna—where the soaring centerpiece was re-contextualized yet again by its transfer to the garden setting and the addition of bizarre pseudo-Egyptian hieroglyphs glorifying the Habsburg dynasty—to the gigantic *Obelisk Fountain* (1923–30) in the Veterans Memorial Plaza in Indianapolis. In Portugal, an intriguing example stands in the garden of the Cistercian monastery at Alcobaça north of Lisbon, where it was recorded in 1789 by the Irish architect James Cavanah Murphy (1760–1814).[33] Positioned on a polygonal island in a large elliptical pool, this fountain features a rusticated obelisk with an oddly truncated top, which must have terminated in a bronze ornament; the four faces of its pedestal are decorated with Baroque mascarons, whose bored mouths indicate that originally they spouted water (figures 13a, 13b). Although heavily stylized and lacking in volumetric richness, these masks bear certain resemblance to the blowing heads on the *Chafariz das Necessidades,* which—given the likely proximity of their dates—suggests an interchange of forms and motifs between garden and urban fountains that had also been characteristic of Bernini's Rome.[34]

In Lisbon, however, the future of the obelisk type seems to have been limited mainly to unexecuted projects. They included Miguel Angelo de Blasco's proposal for the *Chafariz do Largo de São Paulo* (1760s)—with four wa-

28 ANDRADE 1851: 229–35 (without indicating the dates of these documents).

29 ANDRADE 1851: 85 (with reference to the decree of 22 September 1779); Flores, who gives the date 22 September 1799, presumably refers to the same document (FLORES 1999: 52, 98 n. 89).

30 A representative selection of these images is published in CASTEL-BRANCO, ed. 2001: 15–33.

31 For the original setting of the *Fontana della Barcaccia,* see TCHIKINE 2011: 311.

32 Significantly, the analogous role of the Águas Livres fountains in the transformation of the urban fabric of Lisbon was noted by Caetano (CAETANO 1991: 27).

33 "In the centre of the garden is a fine oval pond, of an hundred and thirty feet on the transverse diameter, with an obelisk in the centre of it" (MURPHY 1795: 98). I am indebted to Cristina Castel-Branco for bringing this fountain to my attention.

34 The adaptation of garden motifs in the context of the city was one of underlying principles of Bernini's approach to fountain design (see TCHIKINE 2011: 323–28). In the case of the obelisk fountain at Alcobaça, as subsequently at Schönbrunn, the opposite process presumably has taken place.

ter-spouting dolphins attached to the faces of the pedestal, whose positioning and attitudes presented a less successful adaptation of Barigioni's diagonal arrangement—and the overambitious design for the *Chafariz do Campo de Santana* (c. 1789–94) by another eighteenth-century architect Francisco António Ferreira Cangalhas.[35] Besides, a short pyramidal pillar accentuates the discreet location of the privately sponsored *Chafariz de São Domingo de Benfica* (1791) in the immediate vicinity of the Fronteira gardens (figure 14).[36] Thus, while continuing to stimulate artistic imagination, the obelisk fountain erected by João V in front of the Necessidades palace did not have a significant following in the Portuguese capital. Announced by the construction of the Águas Livres aqueduct, however, its message of urban renewal soon found a direct continuation in the Pombaline restoration of the Baixa struck by the natural disaster on 1 November 1755—even if guided by different, French rather than Italian,[37] architectural models.

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35 Both drawings are in the Museu da Cidade in Lisbon; for illustrations, see CAETANO 1991: 135, 202.

36 For this fountain, commissioned by Gérard Devisme, see CAETANO 1991: 142–45.

37 For the development of the *place royale* as a model of urban planning and its adoption in Lisbon as the Praça do Comércio (which replaced the Terreiro do Paço), see SUMMERSON 1969: 154–62.

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