

Gonçalo Anes Bandarra: The Craft of Prophecy and the Literature of Apocalypse

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Students of Gonçalo Anes Bandarra's prophetic *Trovas* are borne ahead ceaselessly into the future. In the case of Bandarra's early acolytes, this was the inevitable consequence of their interpretive task, deciphering the poet's predictions about Portuguese and global Christian empire. But it has often been true of modern scholarship as well: because the *Trovas* gave rise to the cultural phenomenon of Sebastianism, inspiring towering figures such as António Vieira and Fernando Pessoa, and perhaps because as a literary object they manifest a potentially empty opacity, scholars have been likelier to investigate their cultural and political legacy than their poetics. To be clear, there is little doubt that the *Trovas*, beginning with their first audience of *cristãos-novos* (Jews subjected to D. Manuel's edict of forced conversion in 1497 and their descendants), were appreciated more as prophecy than verse, and my purpose here is not to afford them an aesthetic rehabilitation. Rather, what can be gained by staying with the *Trovas*, focusing on their poetic structure and context and resisting propulsion into their undoubtedly rich legacy, is precisely a finer understanding of prophecy and of the relationship of prophecy to phenomena such as messianism, millenarianism, and apocalyptic. It is the complex entanglement of these phenomena in the *Trovas* that, I argue, made them a constant reference for those desiring imperial glory but that also made them ultimately unsuitable for this task.

Bandarra was a cobbler from the town of Trancoso in Portugal's northeastern Beira region, home in the early sixteenth century to an abundant population of New Christians. The precise dates of his birth and death are unknown, but his *Trovas* seem to have begun circulating in the 1520s; according to Bandarra himself in his Inquisition trial, however, they did not circulate widely until 1537, when the New Christian Heitor Lopes made a careful copy from Bandarra's battered notebook (Lipiner 41).¹ He is known to have made

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two trips to Lisbon, in 1531 and 1539, where he was sought out as “a kind of rabbi” by the New Christians (Besselaar 278).² Eventually, his *Trovas* and the reputation they earned him aroused the suspicions of the Inquisition, established in Portugal by D. João III in 1536. Nevertheless, Bandarra’s 1540 trial resulted in a relatively light sentence: Bandarra was ordered to renounce his *Trovas* in the procession of the auto-de-fé of October 23rd, 1541, and never again to interpret Scripture or write about it in any capacity (Besselaar 279).³ The *Trovas* would be prohibited by the Inquisition again in 1581 and 1665, in the latter case owing to António Vieira’s own trial (Besselaar 303); by the time they were prohibited by the Real Mesa Censória in 1768, their authorship was even attributed to Vieira himself and the Jesuits (Lima 449). Despite this repeated censorship, copies never ceased to circulate: “[N]o book was so often prohibited; and yet it was never rare” (Azevedo 32).

The *Trovas*’s clandestine circulation makes for a thorny textual history; already in 1603, the editor of their first, partial, edition, João de Castro (grandson of the well-known Viceroy of India by the same name), complained that the manuscripts in circulation were “very full of errors for many reasons,” chief among them that they were frequently copied by “idiots” (4r). The first complete edition was published in Nantes in 1644 by D. Vasco Luís da Gama, count of Vidigueira, and served as the direct or indirect basis for all subsequent editions, with apocryphal second and third corpuses emerging in the eighteenth century (Besselaar 283–96). The *Trovas* themselves open with dedicatory verses to D. João de Portugal, Bishop of Guarda, followed by sixteen stanzas decrying “as maldades do mundo, e particularmente as de Portugal” (the evils of the world, and particularly those of Portugal) and then 143 stanzas recounting three prophetic dreams, the first and longest of which is in the pastoral mode.⁴ The common interpretation of the *Trovas*’s prophetic content has been summarized by José van den Besselaar:

Portugal will give to the world the great Hidden King [*Rei Encoberto*], whom the author identifies as D. João III, but the 1644 editors associate with D. João IV.⁵ He will rout the armies of the Turks in Africa, in the Holy Land, and in Constantinople, will be crowned emperor, and will inaugurate, along with the pope, the universal monarchy, in which all peoples and all religions and cultures will submit to the Law of Christ. (293)

Bandarra also predicts the return of the ten lost tribes of Israel, one element that seems to have made his *Trovas* attractive to both his contemporary audience of New Christians and to António Vieira (Besselaar 293), a point to

which I will return. The principal sources of the *Trovas* are the Bible, especially Daniel and Jeremiah; the Spanish legends of the *Encubierto* and of the lion and pig, along with Arthurian legend; and a series of prophecies attributed to Isidore of Seville that circulated throughout Iberia in Castilian versifications by Pedro de Frias and Juan de Rocacelsa (Pires 75–76).⁶

Those scholars who study the *Trovas* in the context of Bandarra's own lifetime often focus on the question of the cobbler's religious origins, which have remained ambiguous and disputed throughout the centuries, despite Bandarra's straightforward denial of Jewish heritage in stanza CXIX: "[N]ão sou dessa gente" (I am not of that people).⁷ Indeed, Bandarra was not accused of Judaism in his trial, a fact certified by the Holy Office in 1687 at the request of António Gomes, one of Bandarra's descendants (Besselaar 279 n. 15). Nevertheless, Inquisition records show that at least some of his New Christian acolytes took him to be Jewish (Lipiner 36), and the familiarity with the Talmud revealed in Bandarra's own trial has recently led one scholar to doubt his status as an Old Christian (Hermann 46). What is perhaps more interesting, and certainly more revealing, than the question of Bandarra's crypto-Judaism is the undeniable fact that the *Trovas* were received enthusiastically by Christians New and Old, apparently antagonistic groups that each saw their hopes reflected in the cobbler's prophecies: "Bandarra's allusions, which could be explained, fundamentally, in both the apocalyptic Christian sense and the messianic sense of the Jews, were for this reason used at the same time for both causes" (Lipiner 42). Yet the open appeal of the *Trovas* cannot be fully explained by their allusions to the Old and New Testaments—they were hardly alone in this among prophetic texts of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance—or even by their dense weave of vague figuration. Rather, this appeal must be understood through reflection on the literary quality of prophecy and its relation to the apocalypticism and messianism that have been described, along with the national poetic sentiment of *saudade*, as "inseparable from the Portuguese soul" (Azevedo 7).

Bandarra's *Trovas* and Messianic Undifferentiation

In the case of prophecy, apocalyptic, messianism, and millenarianism, the virtue of defining one's terms runs up against the historical problem that these putatively discrete phenomena overwhelmingly occur together, in dizzying permutations. Aquinas defined prophecy as "most properly the prediction of future events," which thus "did not necessarily entail concern with the structure and imminent End of history" (McGinn, *Visions* 4). Bernard McGinn has argued that it is precisely this sense of imminence that differentiates apoca-

lypticism from eschatology more broadly (*Apocalyptic Spirituality* 5). Yet, as is well known, the notion of apocalypse involves not just a given eschatology but the means of its revelation, and some scholars have seen these means as more central to its definition (Bull 48). Meanwhile, the term “millenarianism” arises from the Apocalypse of John, where a thousand-year reign of Christ is promised (20: 1–16)—yet the Jewish apocalypse most important for Bandarra, Daniel, already contains the notion of a “perennial and long-lasting kingdom” alongside the messianism of Daniel’s vision of the beasts (Lima and Megiani 8). Indeed, even John’s millenarianism was held by some critics to be too “Jewish” in view of the material and historical reality of the kingdom it predicts (McGinn, “John’s Apocalypse” 17–18). And if, in the Christian apocalyptic tradition, “[t]he action of messianic figures always takes place within a scenario of events, and this scenario is the product of a total vision of history that theories of messianism do not always comprehend” (McGinn, *Visions* 28), in the Jewish tradition the messianic idea “always occurs in the closest connection with apocalypticism [. . .] Apocalypticism appears as the form necessarily created by acute Messianism” (Scholem 4). Here, the difference between prophecy and apocalyptic resides in the fact that the prophet loudly proclaims what the apocalypticist reveals in a form that remains partially hidden (Scholem 6). And like Bandarra’s *Rei Encoberto*, a Hidden Messiah was believed by some already to have been born, on the day of the destruction of the Temple: “Beginning at the moment of the deepest catastrophe there exists the chance for redemption” (Scholem 11).

Indeed, the combination of “dread and consolation” identified by Gershom Scholem as central to apocalyptic thinking has also been attributed to the consultation of oracles (Wood 6) and to the very concept of hiddenness: “Our anxieties are fuelled by the play of imagination, our fantasies by the numbing fear that there may be nothing hidden, that what we already know is all there is” (Bull 1). These “emotional modalities” have their political counterparts to the extent that, as McGinn has argued, apocalyptic may respond to crisis, but it can serve continuity as well (*Visions* 30); the recurrently prophesied Last Christian Emperor, of whom Bandarra’s *Encoberto* is surely an example, is just such a figure of continuity, in that it guarantees that Christian empire will persist until the End of Days, even if the current crisis indicates that such an End is imminent (*Visions* 33).

Iberian *Encubertismo* tended to arise in moments when territorial sovereignty was threatened, typically by Castilian encroachment (Lima and Megiani 11): a Jewish *Encubierto* arose during the revolt of Valencia’s *germanies* in 1532, and Sebastianism was of course a response to the 1580 annexation of Portugal after D. Sebastião’s disappearance at the battle of Alcácer-Quibir in 1578. In this sense, the crisis of territorial integrity is thus resolved in favor of

continuity by a messianic figure. Yet to the extent that messianic prophecy and millenarian apocalyptic are historically linked and combine aspects of crisis and continuity, they may at first seem divided at the time Bandarra composed his *Trovas* between a fearful community of New Christians in crisis and a hopeful community of Old Christians eager to usher in an era of political and spiritual preeminence for Portugal. In fact, however, the New Christian community had reason to believe that it was Christianity that was in crisis: Rhodes had fallen to the Ottoman Empire in 1522, and even within Christendom, Charles V's troops had sacked Rome in 1527, and the Reformation was beginning to expose fissures in the Church (Tavares 142). Meanwhile, António Quadros has argued that the "patriotism of expansion" and "imperial dream" expressed in popular terms by Bandarra can be read as a response to the "foreign ideas" (*ideias estrangeiradas*) of João III, who, along with establishing the Inquisition in Portugal, had replaced the Manueline architectural style with an imported, "uninspired" late Renaissance style; whose court had popularized Italianizing poets; and who favored the Jesuits over the autochthonous Ordem de Cristo (I: 33–34). It was in this context, then, that the hopes of Portugal's New and Old Christians could mix, such that intensifying Jewish messianism could fuel Portugal's broader national imaginary (Novinsky 69).

Viewed in this way, the circumstances of Bandarra's adoption by divided communities instantiate a broader apocalyptic pattern in which a crisis of undifferentiation is resolved by "the inclusion (or reinclusion) of a concealed or celestial individual whose authority is imposed on the world" (Bull 75). Drawing on a broad range of anthropological, historical, and philosophical sources, Malcolm Bull has argued that human social order almost always rests on clear binary differences, and that taboo and sacrifice are two approaches to suppressing or excluding those elements of society that mediate or blur these binary structures (52–82). The apocalypticist foresees a future not of perfect differentiation, but of the transcendence of taboo and sacrifice. Thus, the "concealed individual" does not reestablish the oppositions of the past; rather, "[t]he undifferentiated returns, that which was excluded is reincluded, and a new order is created, less exclusive than that which previously existed" (Bull 79). Whatever one's reservations about structural anthropology, this is certainly an apt description of the future prophesied by Bandarra, in which the return of both the *Encoberto* and the lost tribes of Israel brings about the establishment of universal Christian dominion.⁸ Forced conversion had created a social group, the New Christians, that shared key aspects of two previously differentiated groups, and the symbolic damage to the social order—to say nothing, of course, of the material damage, which led to events such as the 1506 Lisbon massacre—was in deep need of repair.

It is important to recall that Bandarra was not the only figure associated with messianism during this period; he was not even the only cobbler. The prophecies of Simão Gomes, the illiterate *Sapateiro Santo* (Holy Cobbler), were championed by high functionaries of the court of Cardinal Henrique between 1562 and 1576.⁹ A biography of Gomes was published by the Jesuit Manuel de Veiga in Lisbon in 1625, but he is already mentioned in João de Castro's 1597 *Da quinta e última monarquia* (*On the Fifth and Final Monarchy*) among other Portuguese prophets (cited in Azevedo 37). Gomes was preceded not only by Bandarra but by a series of messianic figures such as David Reuveni, his disciple Diogo Pires (whose name after returning to Judaism was Solomon Molkho/Malkho), and Luis Dias, the tailor of Setúbal.¹⁰ Like Gomes, Reuveni was known to the Old Christians and is likely alluded to in Gil Vicente's *Auto da Lusitânia*, first performed in 1532 at the court of João III (Tavares 143–44). The question that remains, then, is not that of messianism's cross-confessional appeal, but of Bandarra's preeminence in Portugal's parallel cultures of prophecy and apocalypse. What aspects of the *Trovas* beyond the disputed and undecidable content of their prophecies made them stand out to the point that Fernando Pessoa could write of Bandarra, in the poem dedicated to him in 1934's *Mensagem*, that his heart was “not Portuguese but Portugal” (83)? In what follows, I seek to answer this question by analyzing, first, Bandarra's equivocal description of his poetry/prophecy as a craft in the *Trovas*'s dedicatory verses, and, second, his use of a pastoral setting throughout their *Primeiro Sonho*.

Prophetic Craft and the Pastoral Vision

It was long believed that Bandarra had been illiterate, and this putative illiteracy was a double-edged sword: for believers such as João de Castro, it was evidence that his verses were inspired by the Holy Spirit, while for detractors it proved that he was at best deluded, at worst an outright fraud (Lima 451). Yet even once this question was definitively answered in favor of Bandarra's literacy, modern critics have tended to downplay any question of the literary regarding the *Trovas*.¹¹ Azevedo, for example, in (wisely) disavowing the search for the “true” meaning of the *Trovas*, goes on to describe them as a “torrente verbal que ocorria ao sabor do ritmo e da rima” (28) (verbal torrent that followed the lead of rhythm and rhyme). This image of a torrent of words governed only by sound and rhythm denies the *Trovas* not just meaning, but also the polish associated with worthwhile poetry, be it the result of inspiration or effort; no wonder that Azevedo concludes that Bandarra's verses are “insignificant” as a literary work (51). Not all scholars of Bandarra disavow

him as a poet so explicitly, but the main lines of investigation seem to follow the spirit of Azevedo's words.

Nevertheless, when João de Castro describes Bandarra as illiterate, the quality of his *Trovas* is central to his argument for divine inspiration:

Não sabia ler nem escrever, o qual compôs estas trovas tão bem feitas em seu género que nenhum famoso poeta português querendo meter noutros algumas profecias sagradas ou quaisquer se lhe pudera na perfeição delas igualar, porque não tem palavra que sobeje nem fora de seu lugar, ou consoante que se sinta: sendo mui fáceis e correntes de mui excelente linguagem, mui cortesãmente dita, ornada de mil figuras de eloquencia, sendo a parte donde era e onde morava das mais impolidas do reino para se bem falar: de modo que em semelhante sujeito e metro só o Espírito que por ele as fez e não outrem as poderá quando quiser fazer.¹² (Cited in Azevedo 39).

(He did not know how to read or write, but composed these *trovas* so well in their genre that no famous Portuguese poet wanting to put in others [i.e., other genres] some holy prophecies or others could equal him in their perfection, because there is no superfluous or out-of-place word, or rhyme to be heard: they are very natural and habitual in very excellent language, expressed in a very courtly manner, adorned with a thousand figures of eloquence, although the region where he was born and lived is one of the kingdom's least polished in speaking well: so that in such a person and meter only the Spirit that made them [i.e., the *trovas*] for him and no one else could make them.)

Castro praises Bandarra's prophecies for their perfect expression in the *trova* form and suggests that this was indeed the perfect form for them. But he goes further, praising Bandarra's "courtly" language and figurative eloquence. There is no suggestion that the *trova* form, which seems already to have been understood as popular, limits Bandarra's poetic sophistication.¹³ Castro would make a similar point, but emphasizing the *trova*'s "humility," in his *Paraphrase*:

Chamamlhe todos, As Trouas de Bandarra: as quaes contem em sy o Prologo, & o Sonho: profetizando elle em dous humildes generos de Troua Portuguesa: Redondinha, & de Pequebrado, ou de Cesura, que no seu tempo se vsuam. As quaes trouas estam segundo a materia & as que nam sam corrutas tambem feytas, com tam bellos termos, figuras, & correnteza: que nem os mais famosos poetas de Portugal o poderam igualar no mesmo verso, selhes alguem dera o mesmo thema, que lho cõposessem noutro como elle. (4r)

(Everyone calls them *The Trovas of Bandarra*: which contain a Prologue, and the Dream: prophesying in two humble genres of the Portuguese *Trova*: *Redondinha*, and of *Pequebrado*, or of *Caesura*, which were common in his time. These *trovas* are, according to their material and those that are not corrupt, so well made, with such beautiful terms, figures, and flow: that even the most famous poets of Portugal could not equal him in the same verse, if someone gave them the same theme to compose in another as he did.)

Again, Castro praises Bandarra's *Trovas* for their lexical, figurative, and rhythmic beauty (*correnteza* refers to verbal "flow"), and "segundo a materia" seems to imply once more that the *trova* was a particularly apt form for prophecy. Yet shortly before this passage, in arguing for the *Trovas*'s divine inspiration, Castro has claimed that Bandarra's verses were not even taken for prophecy by their early popular audience: "[N]am as entendendo ô vulgo, nem as tendo por profecias: & nam sendo ellas iograes nem de chocarrice, as conseruou & espalhou sempre. E perdendose muytas outras obras de poetas, que pollo seu estilo & gosto da materia eram mais populares & de mais dura: as de Bandarra todouia se conseruaram" (3v; emphasis added) (The common people neither understanding them nor taking them for prophecies: and they [i.e., the *trovas*] being neither buffoonish nor in jest, the people preserved and spread them always. And many other works by poets being lost, which owing to their style and the taste of their material were more popular and durable: those of Bandarra were still preserved). In both form and content ("estilo & gosto da materia"), Castro argues, Bandarra's *Trovas* were in effect too sophisticated for their original audience—it is thus miraculous that they survived.

To the extent that the earliest editions of the *Trovas* reflect the form in which they actually circulated in the mid-sixteenth century, it is hard to imagine any reader or listener failing to recognize their prophetic character; the

messianic hopes they aroused in the New Christian community also militate against Castro's claim. Yet perhaps it should not be so quickly dismissed. After all, Bandarra himself, in his trial, never claims to have seen the future in dreams, but only to have "uma veia de fazer trovas, e que tem grande memória, e lera muitas vezes por uma Bíblia em linguagem, a qual lera por oito ou nove anos, pouco mais ou menos" (Lipiner 108) (a way for making *trovas*, and that he has a great memory, and had read a vernacular Bible many times, for eight or nine years more or less). Bandarra thus presents himself as a versifying interpreter of Scripture rather than a visionary.¹⁴ Meanwhile, one of the New Christian witnesses in Bandarra's trial, João Lopes, describes the *Trovas* as "algumas trovas graciosas del-Rei nosso senhor que [Bandarra] fizera em louvor do senhor Deus e del-Rei" (Lipiner 96) (some funny *trovas* about the our lord the King that [Bandarra] had made in praise of our lord God and the King). There is some ambiguity in this testimony; it is possible that Lopes is referring at this point to some other *trovas* by Bandarra. Indeed, the nickname "Bandarra" means either "a lazy and idle man" (*homem vadio e ocioso*) or "clown that amuses the masses reciting humorous *trovas*" (*palhaço que diverte os populares recitando trovas engraçadas*) (Hermann 47). But I believe that contextual evidence from the trial, along with Castro's statement above, makes it likelier that Lopes understood Bandarra's *Trovas* to be an entertaining but ultimately pious poem of praise.

There are, of course, numerous concrete references to prophecy in the *Trovas*. When, at the end of the *Sonho Segundo*, Bandarra imagines a skeptical audience asking what proof he can offer of the truth of his visions, he responds, "Se lerdas as Profecias / De Daniel e Jeremias / Por Esdras o podeis ver" (CVIII) (If you read the Prophecies of Daniel and Jeremiah, in Esdras you can see it). The allusion to Daniel is particularly significant, since it once again constitutes a point of confluence between Bandarra's two main audiences. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of mixed iron and clay in Daniel 2 became a key source for the theory of Portugal as the Fifth Empire, elaborated by João de Castro and Vieira.¹⁵ But in the decades before Bandarra's *Trovas* began to circulate, Isaac Abravanel (d. 1508), the prominent Jewish philosopher and exegete who became Afonso V's treasurer, had used the book of Daniel to calculate the (imminent) time of the coming of the Messiah (Netanyahu 217), contributing strongly to the messianic expectations of the New Christians.¹⁶

Old Testament prophecy is not composed in verse, but the analogy in Hebrew poetry between poetry and prophecy first developed in medieval Iberia (Pagis 142).¹⁷ Meanwhile, in the Portuguese poetry of the turn of the sixteenth century, as represented by Garcia de Resende's monumental *Cancioneiro*

Geral (1516; henceforth *CG*), a different association between prophecy and Judaism emerges. There is a general feeling that an abundance of prognostication indicates the kingdom's poor health, as in Álvaro de Brito Pestana's instructions to city councilor (*vereador*) Luis Fogaça on how to dispel Lisbon's "bad airs": "Alympemos braffemar, / alympemos negrygençyas, / & sefifmas / de falso pronosticar, / & mourifcas gyomançyas, / feytas, çyftmas" (I: 217; emphasis added) (Let us clean up blasphemy, let us clean up negligence and sophisms of false prognosticating, and Moorish geomancy, sects, schisms). Divination is here associated not only with others, such as "Moorish" geomancers, but also with sectarianism and heresy within Christianity. Other poems associate portents with artisans, especially Jewish tailors. Thus, in a collective poem mocking the embroidered velvet shirt of Francisco de Crasto, Sancho de Pedrosa writes, "Nesta era de quinhentos / veremos muytos flinays, / & aqueftes feram tais, / que nos dem contêtamentos. / Pera folguarmos, & rryr, / & fler muyto apodado / a quem cuida quem vestir / era boa a debrumada" (IV: 398) (In this era of 1500 we will see many signs, and these will be such that they give us happiness. To relax, and laugh, and be very witty to the one who thought it would be good to wear the embroidery). Finally, in another collective satire against Pero de Sousa Ribeiro, who secretly ordered some festive shirts (*louçainhas*) that were discovered in Lisbon's *judaria* because Ribeiro himself had remained there, Francisco da Silveira, attracted to the area by the hubbub (*ruje muje*) of the alternately alarmed and amused Jews, sees a series of foreboding signs: "O çeo andaua trouado / & a noyte fez trouam, / fol fahyo emflangoentado: / ver o dia neuoado / me fez gram maginaçam. / Hũa eftreela vy correr, / a terra toda tremia: / ora vede o quaa de fler / naquele dia" (IV: 258) (The sky was thunderous, and the night thundered, the sun arose bloody: to see the day snowy impressed me greatly. I saw a shooting star, the whole earth trembled: now see what is to be on that day). In the largely aristocratic poetry of the *CG*, the interpretation of natural and unnatural signs almost always appears in marginalized, artisanal urban spaces.¹⁸

How, then, should we read Bandarra's description of his *Trovas* as *çapataria* in their opening dedicatory stanzas: "Determinei de escrever / A minha çapataria: / Por ver Vossa Senhoria / O que sahe de meu cozer" (3) (I decided to write down my shoemaking: So that Your Lordship might see what comes from my sewing)?¹⁹ Castro interprets this passage—much like the rest of the poem—in an entirely prophetic key (6v–15r). But bearing in mind Jacqueline Hermann's description of Portugal's popular culture throughout the period of imperial expansion as an "artisanal apocalyptic culture" (40), we should not lose sight of the artisanal in favor of the apocalyptic: Bandarra's *çapataria* refers equivocally to his prophetic and poetic craft. It is necessary here to quote this passage at some length:

Que me quero entremeter
Nesta obra, que offereço
Porque saibão o que conheço,
E quanto mais posso fazer.

Sahirá de meu cozer
Tanta obra de lavoires,
Que folguem muitos Senhores
De a calçar, e trazer.

E quero entremeter
Laços em obra grosseira,
Quem tiver boa maneira
Folgará muito de aver.

Cozo com linho assedado,
Encerado a cada ponto;
Cozo meudo sem conto,
Que assim o quer o calçado.

Se vier algum avizado
Requerer algumas solas,
Eu as corto sem bitolas,
E logo vai sobresolado.

Tambem sou official:
As vezes cozo com vira,
E sei bem como se tira
O ganho do cabedal.

Se vier algum zombar
Fazer me qualquer pergunta,
Dir lhe hei, como se ajunta
A agulha com o dedal.

Minha obra he mui segura
Porque a mais he de correia,
Se a alguem parecer feia,
Não entende de costura.

Eu faço obra de dura,
 E não ando pela rama,
 Conheço bem a courama,
 Que conve[m] à creatura.

Sei medir, e sei talhar,
 Semque vos assim pareça:
 Tudo tenho na cabeça,
 Se o eu quizer usar. (4–13)

(For I want to intervene in this work, which I offer so that you learn what I know and how much more I can do. My sewing will produce so much stitched work, that many Lords will be happy to put it on and wear it. And I want to weave laces into rough work; whoever has a good manner will be happy to have it. I sew with silken thread, waxed at every point; I sew with great precision, for the shoes want it this way. If some wise man comes demanding soles, I cut them without a gauge, and he leaves right away with new soles over the old. I am also an artisan: I sometimes sew with *vira*,²⁰ and I know well how to profit from capital. If someone comes mocking to ask me some question, I will tell him how the needle meets the thimble. My work is very sturdy because it is mainly of leather; if it seems ugly to someone, he does not understand sewing. I make work that lasts, and I don't beat around the bush, I know leatherwork well, what's fitting for each creation. I know how to measure, and how to cut, although to you it seems otherwise: I hold everything in my head, if I want to use it.)

“Entremeter” (4), rather than conjuring the image of a cobbler engaged in shoe production, demonstrates an implicit awareness that the *Trovas*, an intrusive product of knowledge (“o que conheço”) and ability (“quanto mais posso fazer”) that surpass expectations, will arouse skepticism and perhaps disdain.²¹ This sense of incongruity continues with the *laços* that Bandarra also wants to “entremeter” (5); these are literally a beautiful adornment of an otherwise simple work, but perhaps they also figure the work's seductive capacity to entangle or rope in its audience.²² In a similar way, the silky and precise (“meudo sem conto”) sewing called for by the final product (“Que assim o quer o calçado”; 7) is more apt as a description of poetic than prophetic prowess, since in prophecy notions of adornment, seduction, and smoothness are likelier to signify fraud than truth.

In the next three stanzas, Bandarra depicts himself as responsive to challenges: if some “wise man” (*avizado*) questions the underpinnings of Bandarra's work (that is, its *solas*), he can improvise a response (“as corto sem

bitolas”; a *bitola* is a type of gauge, although, according to Bluteau, to govern oneself “pela sua Bitola” also meant following one’s own sense of things) or, as he explains in the following stanza, sew up any holes that have been exposed (with *vira*, a thread for mending tears). The idea is summed up in stanza 10: those who mock Bandarra should remember that he knows how to wield the needle and the thimble, that is, to attack and defend. Again, although there have certainly been cases of competing prophecies, collectively these images bring to mind the thrusting and parrying of the oral performance of poetry throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.

The final three cited stanzas refer to Bandarra’s expert work with leather. Shoes made “de correia” were, as Castro explains (9v), ugly but durable, hiding their stitching on the inside. For Castro this is unsurprisingly a figure for Bandarra’s esotericism, but Bandarra may also be referring to his use of a plebeian verse form that is not, in fact, ugly: “Se a alguém parecer feia, / Não entende de costura” (11), where “costura” refers to metrical expertise. If his verse is direct (“[N]ão ando pela rama” [12], “I don’t beat around the bush”), it is because it is the right material for this particular creation (“a courama [. . .] Que conve[m] à creatura”). Finally, Bandarra’s knowledge of measuring and cutting, “Sei medir, e sei talhar” (13) describes much more closely the skill of metrical composition (especially given Bandarra’s occasional use of the *pé quebrado*, verses that are “cut short” in the middle) than of prophecy.

These shoemaking metaphors continue into the next section of the *Trovas*, a brief jeremiad given the editor’s rubric *Sente Bandarra as maldades do mundo, e particularmente as de Portugal*. Bandarra’s critique of corruption in the palaces and in the Church (I–IV) would not be out of place in Álvaro de Brito’s abovementioned poem in the *CG*, which is replete with cultural and political satires. One of the most common frames for cultural critique in the *CG* is the view from the countryside: attacks on the court and on Lisbon from the poet’s country estate or other rural retreat. Thus, Nuno Pereira writes to Francisco da Silveira (whose above-cited satirical poem relates a series of signs above and within Lisbon’s *judaria*) that he would rather garden than serve as a trusted court counselor: “Priuar em caſda rrainha / deos vollo deyxe fazer, / & a my huã vinha, / & rregar huã almoinha, / em que tenho moor prazer” (I: 304) (To give the queen private counsel, may God let you do it, and let me water a vineyard and orchard, which gives me more pleasure). Similarly, Duarte da Gama writes to Diogo Brandão from his estate, “Tenho mays o que nõ tem / quẽ eſtaa la ondeſtays, / nunca ver offiçiais, / a que fale mal nem bem” (III: 364) (I have more than what someone where you are has, never seeing officials to whom one may speak ill or good), concluding succinctly, “val mays a fazenda / que ho paço” (III: 366)

(the farm is worth more than the palace). Yet the same Duarte da Gama, in his *trovas* denouncing Portugal's numerous "disorders," could turn his wrath away from the palace and toward the village:

Em qual quer aldeazinha
achareys tal corruçam,
ca molher do escriuam
cuyda ã he hũa rraynha.
E tam bem os lauradores
com fuas maas nouydades
querem ter as vaydades
dos fenhores. (III: 374)

(In any little village you will find such corruption, for the scribe's wife thinks she is a queen. And the workers as well, with their bad novelties, want to have the vanities of the lords.)

In fact, Bandarra's critique also turns quickly to disorder in this sense, that is, the betrayal or inversion of established social roles. For example, he laments that "agora a cadaqual / Sem letras fazem Doutores" (VI) (now any illiterate is made a Doctor), while "A linhagem dos Fidalgos / Por dinheiro he trocada" (XI) (noble lineage is traded for money). Portugal is subject to rudderless mixing: "Vejo tanta misturada / Sem haver chefe que mande" (XII) (I see such a jumble with no one in charge). Although Bandarra concludes this section with a populist critique—"Os que não tem que comer / Fazem trajos mui prezados, / Ficão pobres, Lazarados / Por outros enriquecer" (XVI) (Those with nothing to eat make glamorous attire; they end up poor, suffering to make others rich)—his diagnosis of Portugal's troubles is thus not far removed from that of the *CG*'s aristocrats.

It is here that Bandarra's *Sonho Primeiro* begins, with the famous lines, "Vejo, vejo; direi, vejo, / Agora que estou sonhando" (XVII) (I see, I see; I will say, I see, now that I am dreaming). The vision seen by Bandarra in dreams is a pastoral one, the interactions of a Grande Pastor with a group of loyal shepherds and some other interlocutors. The editorial subtitle for this section of the *Trovas* reads, "Que finge a modo Pastoral" (Which feigns the Pastoral mode). Before turning to the question of dreams and prophecy, then, we may begin by asking in what sense Bandarra can be said to be *feigning* the pastoral mode. After all, following Petrarch's belief that the pastoral genre "brought with it enigmas which the author alone could decipher," Renaissance authors came to see pastoral as "an ambiguous style, full of allegories" (Nepomuceno 127). In Bandarra's immediate context, against the background of a kingdom that was

still fundamentally rural (Hermann 35), authors such as Francisco de Sá de Miranda and Bernardim Ribeiro were writing innovative eclogues exploring philosophical themes of love, death, exile, and the nature of literature itself. In fact, prophecy is a consistent narrative and thematic element in both authors: Sá de Miranda's elegiac *Celia* (composed in Castilian) opens with the shepherd Aurelio's description of foreboding natural portents such as the daytime flight of nocturnal birds and a mule's giving birth while the cows are suddenly barren (*Obras Completas* I: 169); in Ribeiro's second eclogue, *Franco e Jano*, the latter recounts another shepherd's prophecy of Jano's exile from his land and from his own will (*Obras* 249–251).²³ In short, while not all pastoral poetry is presented explicitly as a dream, it is a self-consciously artificial genre that was furthermore self-consciously innovative in early-sixteenth-century Portugal.²⁴ In this context, it is hard to see what separates a “feigned” pastoral mode from a “true” one.²⁵

It is precisely sight, along with dreams and their articulation, that is in question at the beginning of the *Sonho Primeiro*, whose opening lines I quoted above:

Vejo, vejo; direi, vejo,
Agora que estou sonhando,
Semente d' el Rei Fernando
Frazer um grande despejo.

E seguir com grão desejo,
E deixar a sua vinha,
E dizer esta casa he minha
Agora que cá me vejo. (XVII–XVIII)

(I see, I see; I will say, I see, now that I am dreaming, the seed of King Fernando make a great clearing [away]. And carry on with great desire, and leave his vineyard, and say this house is mine, now that I see myself here.)

The pairing of *despejo/desejo* introduces the apocalyptic “emotional modalities” of despair (Fernando's death led to the succession crisis of 1383–1385 from which the Aviz dynasty arose) and hope—the latter, in this case, embodied by a figure who takes possession of a house in which he “sees himself” after an initial “clearing away.”²⁶ Castro reads “darei” as a hesitating question (“Direi?”) answered by Bandarra's repeated assertions of sight (22v). Yet the repetition has an incantatory feel that seems to emphasize rather than diminish the otherworldly character of Bandarra's vision. It is different, for example, from fifteenth-century court historian Fernão Lopes's “literary strategy

of verisimilitude” in which retrospectively fulfilled prophecies underlie the current order (Macedo, “Rhetoric” 10). This esoteric sight is similarly opposed to rationalist, Maimonidean thought regarding the proof of prophecy in the Jewish tradition: where Maimonides explicitly rejected miracle-working as grounds for prophetic authority (Halbertal 127), miracles were central to Isaac Abravanel’s view that “the entire phenomenon of prophecy belongs to the sphere of the miraculous” (Netanyahu 122).²⁷

The *Sonho Primeiro* includes a lengthy pastoral dance inaugurated by the Grande Pastor (here referred to as the Pastor Mor) with another reference to sight:

Pois se cumpre a figura,
E nós outros bem o vemos:
Pois que ja tudo se apura,
Ao Senhor da altura
Com prazer mil graças demos. (XXXV)

(Since the figure is [being] fulfilled, and we see it well: since everything is now [being] purified, may we to the Lord on high with pleasure give great thanks.)

The sense of a prefigured and imminent purification (related to the *despejo* above) pervades the rest of the *Trovas*. The constant presence of animals—gathering wolves threatening the Grande Pastor’s flock (XXI); a cow bellowing in grief for its lost offspring, a bull turned dark from a tender pink (XXVII–XXXI); and most famously, the Lion that will cause the pig to flee (LXXV, LXXVIII) and will oppose the *Grifa parideira* (LXXXVII) (child-bearing Griffin)—is consonant with the “unclean animals” and “strange hybrids” found throughout the apocalyptic tradition (cf. Bull 71–72).²⁸ These figures populate an overarching apocalyptic vision that oscillates between land and sea, where, respectively, God protects his flock from the lupine forces of evil and the *Rei Encoberto* leads Portugal to worldly and spiritual glory (Hermann 62).²⁹ This fusion is symbolized by the Portuguese king’s arms:³⁰

As chagas do Redemptor,
E Salvador
São as armas de nosso Rei:
Porque guarda bem a Lei,
E assim a grei
Do mui alto Creador.
Nenhum Rei, e Imperador,

Nem grão Senhor
 Nunca teve tal signal,
 Como este por leal,
 E das gentes guardador. (XCII)

(The wounds of the Redeemer, and Savior are the arms of our King: because he keeps the Law well, and thus [also] the flock of the very high Creator. No King, and Emperor, nor great Lord ever had such a sign as this one for loyalty and for protecting the peoples.)

Although much of the *Trovas*'s concluding sections deals with the fate of the lost tribes, an explicitly Christian millenarian symbolic framework, as in the above stanza, comes to dominate the prophetic vision. Thus, immediately after Bandarra's denial of Jewish heritage, he explains that "Muitos estão desejando / Serem os povos juntados: / Outros muitos avizados / O estão arreceando" (CXXI) (Many are desiring the joining of the peoples: many other wise people are fearing it).³¹ Despite the fears of the latter group, such a union is finally prophesied: "Todos terão um amor, / Gentios como pagãos, / Os Judeos serão Christãos, / Sem jamais haver error" (CLVI) (All will have one love, Gentiles and pagans; the Jews will be Christians without ever erring).

Yet this triumphal vision is followed by a final, ambiguous note. After again insisting that all of his prophetic claims have their roots in Daniel and Jeremiah, Bandarra writes that those who do consult these books "Acharão, que nestes dias / Serão grandes novidades, / Novas leis, e variedades, / Mil contendas, e porfias" (CLIX) (They will find, in these days, there will be great novelties, new laws, and varieties, a thousand disputes, and struggles). It is perhaps no wonder that apocryphal *trovas* would be added to this first corpus over the centuries, or that Bandarra's own prophesies would be joined by a bewildering mélange of prophetic sources in later Sebastianist compilations.³² While Bandarra's prophetic aspirations are clear, his poetic approach ties him much more to foregoing and contemporary literary traditions than is typically acknowledged. Bandarra's grounding in a lyric tradition oriented, in both its popular and aristocratic forms, to debate, to the give and take of public performance, and to critical reflection on Portuguese affairs, along with the esoteric openness of the pastoral form, help to explain both the *Trovas*'s appeal to those preoccupied by the diminishing prospects of Portuguese imperial glory and, at the same time, their ultimate insufficiency to this cause. The undifferentiation they themselves manifest forever tempted, and forever resisted, their national reintegration.

Notes

1. Bandarra was long thought to have died sometime after 1556, the apparent *terminus a quo* of his *Trovas*'s dedication (a point to which I will return). An attestation of his epitaph from Trancoso, found among documents associated with António Vieira's Inquisition trial, lists 1545 as his year of death (Lipiner 132). For a facsimilar reproduction and transcription of Bandarra's trial, see Lipiner 88–129.
2. It is because he seems already to have been sought out as such in 1531 that I suggest the *Trovas* began circulating in the 1520s. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
3. In fact, Bandarra was forbidden to possess any books related to Scripture except the Gospels themselves and the *Flos Sanctorum* (Besselaar 279). In the Fifth Lateran Council's 1516 decree on preaching, *Supernae majestatis praesidio*, predictions based on the interpretation of Scripture were explicitly forbidden, although the decree "allowed for the possibility of a true revelation from God and set up procedures for testing it before it was announced to the people" (Minnich 63).
4. Although Bandarra uses the word "dream" (*sonho*) frequently, the division of his *Trovas* into three discrete dreams is likely the work of his 1644 editor (Besselaar 290).
5. Jacqueline Hermann believes that Bandarra's "D. João" refers either to João II (r. 1481–1495) or even possibly to João I (r. 1385–1433), the founder of the Aviz dynasty, although it could also refer to prince João, the son of João III (r. 1521–1557) and father of D. Sebastião (r. 1557–1578) (68). New Christian audiences tended to read this name (which appears in stanza LXXXVIII) as "D. Foão" ("João" was often spelled with an initial "F" that could be taken for an "F"), that is, *fulano*, "from the Hebrew *feloni*, from *falah*, to hide," "because it was more in keeping with the wisdom tradition and, in a way, in order to make the name of the Messiah ineffable" (Gomes 260).
6. For an overview of Bandarra's life, his *Trovas*, and their editions, see Besselaar 277–313; Azevedo's *Evolução do Sebastianismo* (7–31) remains helpful as well, particularly with regard to Bandarra's sources. For a brief overview of the editions of the *Trovas*, see Pires 68–71, and for a more complete treatment of the historical textual difficulties they present, see Jiménez Sánchez. On the prophecies attributed to Isidore and their Castilian and Portuguese versifications, see Besselaar 320–30 and 355–60.
7. I will cite the 1809 Barcelona edition (which, with respect to the so-called first corpus, reprints the 1644 edition) throughout.
8. The Portuguese discovery of dark-skinned Jews in the kingdom of Ethiopia reinforced the New Christians's belief in the existence and possible return of the lost tribes (Tavares 143). Vieira, under the influence of Menasseh Ben Israel, an exiled Portuguese Jew who founded the first Hebrew printing press in Amsterdam in 1626 and authored the *Esperança de Israel* (1650), formulated a vision of a new Church in which the fortunes of the Jews and Christians would be united; Portugal had pride of place in this vision, since it was there that Jews and Christians had mixed (after the forced conversion of 1497),

- and it was these mixed Portuguese who would inherit the Promised Land (Novinsky 74). For a detailed study of this episode in Vieira's life and thought, see Saraiva 75–107.
9. On Simão Gomes, see Carvalho.
 10. On these figures, see Azevedo 23–28 and Tavares; on Malkho in particular, see Gross.
 11. Besselaar notes that besides Bandarra's own Inquisition testimony about studying Scripture, he is known to have corresponded with Francisco Mendes, the doctor of cardinal-prince D. Afonso, among others (278).
 12. Vieira shared the opinion that Bandarra was illiterate (*História do Futuro* 67).
 13. According to Massaud Moisés, *trova* was a synonym for *cantiga* throughout the Middle Ages, but came to be a synonym for *quadrinha* in the sixteenth century, once word and music were definitively separated (503). Pessoa composed some *quadrinhas* that were published as *Quadras ao Gosto Popular* in 1965 (425).
 14. In this sense, he would be more aligned with the Jewish apocalyptic tradition than the Christian one founded by John: "In traditional Jewish apocalypticism, one did not openly prophesy the future from the perspective of the present; rather, one pretended to convey an already-revealed message about what was to come. John, however, speaks as a prophet, one who asserts that he is the present recipient of a message found in a heavenly, not an earthly, book" (McGinn, "John's Apocalypse" 12).
 15. See, for example, Vieira's *História do Futuro* 243–54.
 16. Perhaps not coincidentally, it is precisely this section of the *Trovas* that features several chronological predictions, the best known of which are allusions to a period of earthly signs lasting thirty-two-and-a-half years (CXVII) and to another period of forty years "[q]ue se emmenta / Por um Doutor ja passado" (LXXXVII) (which is mentioned by a Doctor from the past).
 17. On the formal structure of Old Testament prophecy, see Kugel 3–5.
 18. On prophecy in the *CG* more broadly, see Rocha 62–63. For Aida Fernandes Dias, the poetry of the *CG* manifests a "consciousness of the world's confusion" linked to colonial expansion (4); going further, Stephen Reckert writes that the world of these poets had "not so much expanded as exploded" (39).
 19. These opening stanzas are not numbered, so I have assigned them Arabic numerals to avoid confusion with the Roman numerals of the rest of the *Trovas*. In all editions from 1644 on, "Vossa Senhoria" is said to refer to D. João de Portugal, bishop of Guarda. Because D. João only became bishop in 1556, some have doubted the authenticity of these opening stanzas, attributing their authorship to the *Trovas*'s 1644 editor or leaving it unknown (Lipiner 21 and 21 n. 3). However, Elias Lipiner has made the convincing suggestion that they were originally dedicated to D. Miguel da Silva, bishop of Viseu (Trancoso was under this jurisdiction during Bandarra's period of activity); the likeliest case is that Bandarra did not name a specific bishop at all in his dedication. Vieira accepted the dedication's authenticity and believed Silva to be its intended honoree (131–35).
 20. *Vira* was a thin strip of leather used to mend tears in shoes.
 21. Bluteau's *Vocabulario portuguez e latino* (1712–1728) defines "Homem entremetido"

- as “O que se mette em varios negocios, sem ser chamado” (He who interjects himself into various affairs, without being called).
22. Bluteau’s second definition of “laço” is “Qualquer cousa, que serve para enganar a alguem.”
 23. On “prophetic existence” in Ribeiro’s eclogues and its relationship to the Jewish diaspora, see Nepomuceno 133–34. As in Bandarra’s case, critics have long debated Ribeiro’s possible New Christian identity, without reaching a consensus. The *editio princeps* of Ribeiro’s works was published in 1554 by Abraham Usque, a Portuguese Jew exiled in Ferrara, and as Luís André Nepomuceno notes, if Ribeiro was not Jewish, then his works would constitute “the only volume published by Usque’s printworks on a non-Jewish subject” (125). Interestingly, Ribeiro’s *Menina e Moça* (entitled simply *Saudades* in Usque’s edition) contains a defense of rustic verse whose “low style” (*baixeza de estilo*) was nevertheless an ideal medium for the communication of highly inventive and moving themes (*Obras* 60).
 24. On the context of Sá de Miranda’s eclogues in particular, see Livermore and Silva.
 25. I am not suggesting, of course, that Bandarra was a reader of Sá de Miranda or Ribeiro; rather, I am trying to show how the cultivated literary expectations of the time could immediately condition Bandarra’s reception, leading it immediately in an esoteric and apocalyptic direction. As Helder Macedo has argued, the pastoral exile of *Menina e Moça*’s narrator is figured as the exile of Truth itself (*Traveling Eye* 371).
 26. For Castro, this Fernando cannot be Fernando I of Portugal (at the time, the only Portuguese king by that name; r. 1367–1383) because D. Sebastião was not descended from him (23r).
 27. It should be noted that both thinkers accepted dreams as a form of prophetic communication (Halbertal 325, Netanyahu 123).
 28. Indeed, as Bull explains, the colors black, white, and red are central to the “Animal Apocalypse” comprising chapters 85–90 of 1 Enoch, where red represents an ordinary undifferentiation that will return in the End Times (85–92).
 29. Similar figures and a similar oscillation recur in later Sebastianist poetry that otherwise distances itself from Bandarra, such as Manuel Bocarro’s ornate, erudite, and astrological *Anacephaleoses da Monarchia Luzitana* (1624): “Verás hum só Pastor, hum só rebanho, / Que o sucessor de Pedro só proveja, / Nem na terra, nem no liquido estanho, / Impugnará ninguem á Madre Igreja: / O ser de Portugal será tamanho, / Que o mundo todo só nelle se veja, / Emporio do universo summo, & grande, / Pera que seu Monarcha todo o mande” (128) (You will see one Pastor alone, one flock, which only the successor of Pedro may provide; neither on earth, nor on the liquid tin [i.e., the sea], will anyone challenge the Mother Church: Portugal will be so great that the entire world will see itself therein, the great Emporium of the universe, so that its Monarch may govern all). According to Bluteau, the metaphor of *estanho líquido* for the sea appears in Camões as well.
 30. The poetic and prophetic interpretation of Portugal’s coat of arms is also central to Pessoa’s *Mensagem*.

31. The figure of the *avizado* is one of the hardest to interpret throughout the poem.
32. For example, in Felix da Costa's 1685 *Thezouro descoberto*, Bandarra's prophecies are found alongside those attributed to Afonso Henriques, Pseudo-Methodius, the Blessed Amadeus, Isidore of Seville, the Erythraean sibyl, Cassandra, Nostradamus, and even Luís de Camões, among many others.

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