ADVENTURES OF A PHOTOGRAPHER FROM MADEIRA IN THE IMPERIAL COURT OF BRAZIL

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AVENTURAS DE UM FOTÓGRAFO DA MADEIRA NA CORTE IMPERIAL DO BRASIL
Photography

What uproar goes on in the press!
What a nonsensical game!
Some say they are artists,
Others say: – they are insane!
(Modesto, Correio Mercantil, 04/06/1867)

The real victim of photography, however, was not landscape painting, but the portrait miniature.
(Walter Benjamin, Little History of photography)

Rio de Janeiro’s sky is particularly beautiful in May. The light is more diffused, the temperature is mild. An excellent day for a daguerreotype, Dr. Manoel Joaquim Menezes, lieutenant-colonel major surgeon of the Brazilian army, may have thought.

Not that the brightness of the day mattered, as the ad guaranteed that the “gallery, expressly prepared with a large skylight” allows “taking portraits every day, whatever the weather.”
(CM, 04/03/1851, p 3) The event had been planned for some months, since His Majesty had awarded him the rank of Knight of the Imperial Order of the Rose. Those portraits cost a small fortune, especially for a retired officer.

He had always been wronged. Even in the Chamber of Representatives they mentioned him as an example of how much the army surgeons were suffering! However, the Order of the Rose — the most beautiful commendation in the Empire — consolates all injustices. Dr. Menezes, promoter of the Santa Cruz dos Militares Brotherhood, leaves his house on Rua da Ajuda, near Morro do Castelo, and heads to Rua dos Ourives, the location of the workshops of Diogo Luis Cipriano, one of the four daguerreotypists that announced regularly at the Correio Mercantil that year. The retired lieutenant colonel, 66 years old, takes his wife Eufêmia Marciana Mendonça de Menezes and his single daughters Maria de Menezes and Ana Edeltrudes de Menezes.

– Come, then, to the portraits! — he may have ordered women in the family. Married children would have to pay for their own daguerreotypes if they so wished. He had waited too long for his value to be recognized. Now, sitting in front of the four daguerreotypists that announced regularly at the Correio Mercantil that year. The retired lieutenant colonel, 66 years old, takes his wife Eufêmia Marciana Mendonça de Menezes and his single daughters Maria de Menezes and Ana Edeltrudes de Menezes.

Abstract

Based on the discovery of four portraits in the collection of the Brazilian National Archives, we researched the trajectory of Diogo Luís Cipriano (1820-1870), born on Madeira Island, one of the first daguerreotypists to settle in Rio de Janeiro. We try to describe the tensions and conflicts between painters, miniaturists and photographers in search for their prestige and commercial success in the capital of the Empire of Brazil, between 1850 and 1870. On the other hand, we analyze how in the public arena of the newspaper pages and the busy corners of the Court, techniques are confronted, talents are measured and, mainly, the signs of modernity and the monopoly of saudade (nostalgia) are disputed.

Keywords: Daguerreotype; Miniaturists; Brazil – Empire; Brazil – History of Photography; Photography – Nineteenth-century.

Resumo

A partir da descoberta de quatro retratos na coleção do Arquivo Nacional brasileiro, investigamos a trajetória de Diogo Luís Cipriano (1820-1870), nascido na ilha da Madeira, um dos primeiros daguerreotipistas a se estabelecer no Rio de Janeiro. Procuramos descrever as tensões e os conflitos entre pintores, miniaturistas e fotógrafos por prestígio e sucesso comercial na capital do Império do Brasil, entre 1850 e 1870. Por outro lado, observamos como na arena pública das páginas dos jornais e das movimentadas esquinas da Corte confrontam-se técnicas, medem-se talentos e, principalmente, disputam-se os signos de modernidade e o monopólio da saudade.

Palavras chave: Daguerreotipia; Miniaturistas; Brasil – Império; Brasil – História da Fotografia; Fotografia – Sec. XIX.
portraitist, does he feel the weight of age — or is it the weight of medals that curves his chest? The eyelids give way. The surgeon closes his eyes. He had thought of his daughters and the shadow of remorse had clouded his face.

The portraits produced on that day were donated to the National Archives, in Rio de Janeiro, as part of the Collection of engineer Francisco Bicalho, a set of daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and photographs on albumen paper that had reached the descendants of the engineer through one of the great-granddaughters of Dr. Menezes. At the request of this institution, I did extensive research around these images, identifying the photographer and investigating the characters. I was especially interested in the way photography, this particular portrait session, would serve to illuminate the ordinary life of the urban middle class of the Imperial Court in the mid-nineteenth-century. And mostly, that intermediate dimension of existence, between public and private life, whose borders the photograph had helped to blur. I dedicated myself mainly to three stories that intertwine themselves in that day: that of the great-granddaughters of Dr. Menezes. At the request of this institution and accuse the opponent of conspiring against it. In an anonymous account of the episodes, we can read: “Everything is a mess, everything is in disarray. Nobody knows who is the aggressor, who defends the public cause” (Botelho, 1821, p. 9). The bishop ended up by being expelled from the island on 90 (Carita, 2007, p. 480). If Diogo, the son, could have known what they would say about that painting 150 years from then, he would have lost one of the plates. I was me who painted it, he would have said, outraged by the historical injustice that left of his family inheritance to the English and emigrated to Brazil in 1811, bringing his wife and children. According to a local historian, on the back of a painting attributed to his father, located in Rio de Janeiro in 1915, there was a note saying that he had emigrated because he did not have ‘a life of economic expansion in his homeland, having gone to Brazil that opened its doors in an welcoming manner, and where he exuberantly showed his talent as an artist’. The mentioned painting was reportedly taken to a public deposit due to an inheritance dispute between the painter’s children after his death at the age of 90 (Carita, 2007, p. 480). If Diogo, the son, could have known what they would say about that painting 150 years from then, he would have lost one of the plates. I was me who painted it, he would have said, outraged by the historical injustice that posterity reserved for him in his homeland.

A second version about his origin says that it was his son, also a painter, who took the initiative to come to Brazil. Also called Diogo Luís Cipriano, born around 1801, he became involved in one of the most complicated and controversial episodes in Madeira Island in the nineteenth-century, the liberal movement of 1821 that followed the approval of the constitution by the Courts, in Lisbon; a conflict in which the governor of the island and the bishop of Elvas are opponents. In the course of the controversy, both sides claim to be defenders of the Constitution and accuse the opponent of conspiring against it. In an anonymous account of the episodes, we can read “Everything is a mess, everything is in disarray. Nobody knows who is the aggressor, who defends the public cause” (Botelho, 1821, p. 9). The bishop ended up by being expelled from the island on 22 February, leaving for Lisbon by ship. The next day, the city would have dawned with “flags painted with saints, and some

In this text, I focus on the photographer Diogo Luis Cipriano, born in Madeira Island, one of the first daguerreotypists to settle in Rio de Janeiro, about whom, until 2019, almost nothing was known - and the few existing information was inaccurate and contradictory. His trajectory will help us to describe the tensions and conflicts between painters, miniaturists and photographers in search of artistic recognition and commercial success between 1850 and 1870. In the public arena of the pages of newspapers and the busy corners of the Court, techniques are compared and talents are measured and, mostly, the signs of modernity and the monopoly of saudade (nostalgia) are disputed.

The plates are ready, polished, they shine like mirrors. Perfect. Many people think that calling daguerreotypes “mirrors with memory” is a kind of a metaphor. It is not. The daguerreotype is born a mirror and only then becomes a photograph. Diogo Luís Cipriano observes the fleeting reflection of his face and his fingers on the silver surface while washing the plates. Sparks of light dance in the water. He repeats the gestures he learned from his teacher Guilherme Telfer, from whom he had bought the business on Rua do Ouiveis. A good deal, he thought that day, since a whole family was coming to have their portraits taken.

Diogo dreamed of increasingly large families, with their daguerreotypes hanging on the wall. He had learned the painter’s profession from his father, also called Diogo Luís Cipriano, who was already painting in Funchal, Madeira Island. Regarding his emigration to Brazil, there are conflicting versions. In one of these, his father had debts on the island, sold what was

1) This text expands the session on the photographer Diogo Luís Cipriano, originally published as part of Lissovsky, 2019.
iniquities” were exposed, particularly in favouring the British interest on the island (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 71-73).2

— Perhaps that painter was my father — Diogo, the daguerreotypist, would smile, happy with the eventual heroism of his father. Once released, Diogo would have packed his belongings and emigrated to Brazil with his family3 in my opinion, the only former political prisoner of the liberal revolution in Madeira has never left the island. He stayed there taking care of his business and people guide at the Court, brings together "distinguished and highly skilled New York teachers" (CM, 14/11/1855, p. 4) and that his galleries were “gas-lit”. (JC, 14/11/1855, p. 4). Such modernity, which the lamps emphasized, was always kept his first appointment in his ads. He was proud of his status as the only “glass portraitist” of the Court. In order to better announce that he takes portraits of all sizes, from the smallest ones adopted to be placed in scrapbooks (JC, 15/10/1850, p. 4). The smaller, undoubtedly, the closer to the heart and the easier to take with you. The teaching was accompanied by the sale of equipment, since his workshop offered "a wide range of paintings, little boxes, medallions, etc., all the objects that belong to the daguerreotype" (CM, 04/03/1851, p. 4). In the following year, there are already, at least eight, daguerreotypists active in the Court. Competition among professionals was fierce and it would not be surprising if it also passed on to their slaves, resulting in serious injuries such as the "stab in the belly" that Telfer’s slave got in a “capeira conflict” that occurred at nine o’clock in the evening, in front of the master’s workshop, “on Rua do Ouvidor near Rua do Cano” (CM, 30/9/1852, p. 1).4 That year, the Academy of Fine Arts organized an exhibition and the Concurso Mercantil, after fiercely criticizing what had been on display, said that the best was absent: Telfer’s daguerreotypes. (CM, 19/12/1852, p. 1)

In 1853, in order to face the competition, Telfer emphasized in his ads one of his specialties: “sturdied and colour photographic portraits” (JC, 03/19/1853, p. 3), but at the end of the year he gave up on Rio de Janeiro – profits started to decrease with the growing offer of paper photographs and other media, much cheaper than the daguerreotypes. And then there was this Portuguese student, who had received money from his father to buy the workshop. On the 10th of February of 1854 he leaves for Liverpool to never return.5

Since 1852, Cipriano had been keeping his miniature workshop in Rua do Ouvidor, but soon he transferred to the studio acquired from Telfer in those days, the daguerreotype still maintained its affinity with magic. On the same page that announces the new address, a curious couple of a “magnetizer” and a “sleepwalker” also offers its services (CM, 29/5/1854, p. 4). In 1857, the Almanach Laemmert, the most prestigious business and people guide at the Court, brings together photography and the daguerreotype under a single item “Daguerreotypes, and Photographers”, totalling 11 professionals. In today’s eyes, the comma between the two techniques marks the appearance of the newcomer. However, in the Correo Geral da Corte, Diogo Cipriano identified himself as a “painter”. This is not surprising because his prestige existed due to painting and miniature rather than to the daguerreotype. That same year, the “miniatrist of great merit” was appointed “portraitist of the imperial house” (CM, 23/5/1857, p. 1). Although he was later appointed photographer of the imperial house, he always kept his first appointment in his ads. He was proud of the miniature.

From 1859, photographic techniques available to the public multiplied. The daguerreotype is still being done, but Joaquim Insley Pacheco, who would become one of the most famous photographers of the court, insists on announcing himself “photographer and ambrotypist of the imperial house” (Almanaque Laemmert, 1855, p. 672). He described himself as the only “glass portraitist” of the Court. In order to better characterize his modernity, compared with the competition, he informed at the inauguration of his services, that he was a disciple of “distinguished and highly skilled New York teachers” (CM, 09/02/1855, p. 4) and that his galleries were “gas-lit”. (JC, 14/11/1855, p. 4). Such modernity, which the lamps emphasized, also required a new persona: His given name was Joaquim José Pacheco. Like Diogo Cipriano, he was Portuguese, from Cabecaes de Basto, but having studied in the United
States with Henry Insley, he decided to incorporate the Ameri-
can surname: he said goodbye to “José” and became Joaquim
Insley Pacheco.

After all, North American daguerreotypes were considered the
best in the world, thanks to the plate polishing techniques de-
veloped in that country. And if there were any problems with
the eyes, it would be the portrayed person’s fault, and not the
portraitist’s, as suggested by a caricature published in the Se-
mana Ilustrada, in 1865. (Figure 3)

Insley Pacheco’s primacy with regard to ambrotypying is, in a
way, questioned by Cipriano, who, when associating with T.O.
Smith in 1857, informalizes that it was the latter who brought the
‘American system’ to Brazil (in 1854) (Garboggini, 2005, p.
26). The offense, I believe, will never be forgiven. The 1860s
are a period of technological transition and the taste of the
public: also changes, threatening established professionals.
As a sign of the times, the comma between “Daguerreotypes
and Photographers” disappears from the Almanak from 1860
onwards. With the expansion of the market, lower costs and
fierce competition, photographers and miniaturists (often the
same person) are frequently involved in controversies around
their skills and the quality of their work. An example of this
begins when someone who signs as Aprendiz comments on the
miniatures presented by José Tomás da Costa Guimarães
at the General Exhibition of Fine Arts of the Imperial Academy
of 1860: “terrible design”, heavy colour and not natural at all,
‘lack of relief in almost all”. Ultimately, an artist “below criti-
cious people and concludes that
José Tomás is forced
with anonymous and pseudonyms that José Tomás had hinted that
Diogo Cipriano was him, believing that José Tomás had hinted that
Aprendiz’s
mentor (JC, 20/1/1861, p. 2).

On the fourth day of the controversy, there is such confusion
with anonymous and pseudonyms that José Tomás is forced
to reveal who is the “charlatan”
whom he called the Aprendiz’s mentor (JC, 21/1/1861, p. 2).

As the insults do not cease, José Tomás regrets that the
‘Brazilian press freedom’ allows slander on the part of anony-

The following day, Aprendiz challenges José Tomás to a pub-
lic artistic test. Antônio José da Rocha – a drawing teacher,
who received an honourable mention in the 1860 exhibition –,
believing that José Tomás had hinted that Aprendiz was him,
writes that when the miniaturist “was still in his homeland,
perhaps gaining potatoes, we were already studying draw-
ing at the Academy of Fine Arts”. Another polemist, who calls
himself Fího do Carpinteiro, equally offended by the insinua-
tions, challenges José Tomás to reveal who is the “charlatan”
whom he called the Aprendiz’s mentor (JC, 21/1/1861, p. 2).

What do you mean “miniatures”? A scam, yes, because a pho-
tograph made by a machine, however small, will never be a
miniature. Then, Diogo thought it over and decided that he
could create his own method of comforting the “saudade (nos-
talgia) that hurts”. On 7 June 1861, a brochure with an original
idea was included in the Jornal do Comércio: “subscriptions” of
portraits of families from Portugal mainland. It would work
like this: an associate portraitist, named Gaspar, would soon
leave for Europe and accept subscriptions from customers in-
terested in ambrotypies from distant family members. When
he returned to Brazil, he would bring the photographs ordered
(JC, 15/6/1861, p. 4). The idea was simple, but Diogo Cipriano
decided to describe it with exaggerated pomposity: “Not rare-
ly, a great thought of ennobling the art that I defend assaults
my spirit; however, I always tried to dismiss it, because I felt
that I had to succumb to the sublime of great commitment.
Later, I had the idea of making my art worthwhile, in order to
exploit the wide horizons it offers.” A rival miniaturist “translated”
this passage as follows: “He sent a man to Portugal to take por-
traits on pieces of glass with a machine, thus expecting to
make a lot of money.” (JC, 19/06/1861, p. 2)

Among the many disputes between artists and photographers
who, under pseudonyms, fight each other on the press, one
is of interest here, because Diogo Cipriano is at its centre.
In addition to the usual reciprocal challenges, it mobilizes values
that are very dear to photographs and miniatures: memory and
saudade (nostalgia). In April 1861, an exhibition of “cartes de
visite portraits” was announced at Insley Pacheco’s gallery,
which foresees the direction that the conflict would take. The
cartes de visite were the novelty of the moment: cheap, very
clear and small, they could be made in large quantities. But
the description of the product is a sophisticated provocation:
these miniatures made of three-inch cards, whose resem-
bance is of the greatest accuracy, serve mainly to comfort
those who suffer from saudade (nostalgia): they may well be

In addition to the miniaturists, who already suffered from the
loss of the monopoly of saudade (nostalgia) to which they were
accustomed, the photographers also reacted to the idea. The
day after the distribution of the pamphlet, a long anonymous
From then on, the controversy is no longer technical and artistic, but is associated with tensions between Brazilians and Portuguese in Imperial Brazil. Under the title “Insolência da imitação” (insolence of imitativeness), those who call the Portuguese “so uncouth and stupid” that they would not be able to recognize their own family members are criticized (CM, 10/6/1861, p. 2). A few days later, Diogo tries to end the discussion. “The undersigned, miniature portraitist of Their Imperial Majesties, with an establishment in Rua do Ourives, does not reply to anonymous people and thanking the people who have been served is: the aggressor should sign their name, they should be offended” (CM, 14/6/1861, p. 2). The following day, he publishes two ads in the Jornal do Comércio to attract more subscriptions. The competition’s reaction is even more violent. As the godparents in the duels usually do, someone who signs A Paixão do Brasil launches a challenge: “Admitting that everything that the masquerado (masked man) says against men who show their faces, the best way to be served is: the aggressor should sign their name, they should choose a room where they work with Mr. Diogo, seal the work of both, and call impartial judges that will decide on the good work of the artist’s merit and the charlatan’s confusion” (CM, 13/06/1861, p.2)

6) The image of a traditionalist photographer, averse to technical innovations – like his master, William Telfair, who did not overcome the end of the Daguerreotypy – seems to have affected Diogo Cipriano, after all. An ad from 1863 is full of details that seek to undo that image with several references to progress and civilization: informs that the partner H. J. Aranha acquired in Europe “the most advanced machines” and “all the accessories related to the progress of the photographic art”. Thanks to these acquisitions and the renovations of its facilities, the company was prepared to overcome “the difficulties of the fair pretension of fully correspond to the demands of a highly civilized country.” The ad invited “people who are fond of progressive ideas” to visit the renovated “establishment”. (CM, 06/04/1863, p. 4)

7) Halotype, derived from ambrotypes, was patented in New York, in 1858. It used two identical superimposed plates, one transparent and the other one painted, which gave the portrait a colour and volume effect.

The challenged, however, refuses the duel, saying that he will not decline his name or lock himself in a room with his opponent because “there are certain customs typical of the inhabitants of Mr. Diogo’s homeland which we cannot accept and that he should be locked not in a room but “in a cage so that he could be admired as something rare”. Another rival uses the traditional accusation of charlatanism: Diogo takes advantage of the “ignorance of some people” to “impersonate an artist”, when he is nothing but a “plate cleaner” and “caricature maker”. And that he hopes to see, upon the return of the “acolyte”, “the burlesque collection of aunts Marias and uncles Manuels” (JC, 14/6/1861, p. 2). Even satirical sonnets are published. One of these, entitled “Retratos de retratos” (Portraits of portraits), says:

Diogo does not regret your condition / Donkey has been a lot of good people / And Gaspar who sends to Lisbon / Like you, among the donkeys has reigned. // Portrait this time will have the soldier / Shall he hold in his hand half a crown / Photographed will he be from stem to bow / Fooled by the honour of such a place / Those Diogo’s brains are so famous / He’s already published in the gazette / How much of the silly idea is vain. // But I in this, only discover bullish / Let people know if they are doubtful / Diogo is a donkey, the rest is a lie (CM, 16/06/1861, p. 2).

We do not know if the subscription business was successful, but the controversy disappears from the newspapers. That same year, Diogo Cipriano wins a copper medal in the Imperial Academy exhibition for a miniature of the Nursing Madonna. But 1861 would not end without a reaction from Insley Pacheco.

In a big ad, the “photographer of the imperial house” informs that he now makes “halotypes” (a secret that he would have just obtained and whose beauty and ease exceed “everything that has been done in modern photography”); “the halotype process that nowadays we have the pleasure to carry out with perfection, not only matches the great contrasts of the chiaroscuro [of the ambrotypes], […] but can be made to rival the most expensive ivory miniatures” (JC, 7/9/1861, p. 4).

Thus began, in Rio de Janeiro, the war against the last bastion of the miniatures, painting on ivory. The technique had developed throughout the eighteenth-century, with watercolour and, later, in the early nineteenth-century, with oil, which allowed to give more “softness to the skin” (Johnson, 1990, p. 15-23). The use of ivory would have promoted a true “revolution” in the art of miniature, since it represented this fascinat ing combination of organic matter and artifice, jewellery and work of art. The cases used to keep the daguerreotypes and ambrotypes imitated those already used by this type of miniature work, and since the end of the 1850s, the aim is to develop photog raphic processes that simulate, both in colour and in the materiality of the surface – by applying varnishes, for exam ple –, the appearance of the ivory miniatures. It is not rare to find texts, truncated only apparently, that favoured confusion between the techniques, such as the announcement of the opening of Insley Pacheco’s workshop in 1855, where we can...
Despite of being disseminated, since 1863, as “colour snapshot, the device used is not a camera, as the news suggests, but an auxiliary device quite large glass plates, this was not yet the fatal blow in its image was significant due to the simultaneous use of two since the cost of the halotype was still high, and the weight of glass and ivory, and brush miniatures” (JC, 14/11/1855, p. 4). From then, the miniaturists will enjoy the last few years of their little glory. In 1865, Diogo sent his award-winning miniature of the Madonna to the Porto International Exhibition, which welcomes it with due honour. But the photographers’ offensive to the ultimate refuge of miniature saudade (nostalgia) could no longer be contained. In 1866, the Coronel Mercantil, after pointing out that “until today, vain attempts have been made to obtain the photograph on ivory”, reports that people have witnessed the demonstration of a discovery by the photographer J.F. Guimarães who, only with the use of chemistry and machines, without any touching, achieved the desired result in just five minutes: “the portrait we saw has wonderful soft tones and an extraordinary delicate transparency” (CM, 24/10/1866, p. 2). The successive techniques of vanishing photographic portraits had gradually transformed the substance of ivory into the tone attributed to the copy. As a consequence, in the second half of the 1860s, the conflict was no longer personal, against this or that “charlatan”, but between categories, since photographers usually called their cartes de visite miniatures and accused miniaturists of not knowing how to draw, having photographs as models (CM, 27/5/1867, p. 3). As a response, a “warning to photographers” is published stressing their vulgarity: “If they want to decompose, they should go to Paço square because there they will find their fellow coachmen” (JC, 28/5/1867, p. 3). The author of the “warning”, who signs Miniatura, will be avenged by photographers under the weirdest pseudonyms, such as O Galinha do Visconde, Bizarro Capacho, O Paraisa and O Nebilina. Although offenses such as “hunchback”, “pig painter” and “manure mushroom” are abundant, they insist that the miniaturist does not know how to draw and lives “at the expense of others” (CM, 20/5/1867, p. 3). A violent response addressed to “the hydrophobic photographer”, calls him “disgusting and gross compound of all vices”, participant of orgies, in addition to “having born in the pigsy from where you were left in the founding wheel!” Among the most heinous crimes of which such a photographer is accused is the one of letting “the miserable haggler that gave you milk, die!” (JC, 5/31/1867, p. 2). Although the targets of the offenses is obviously, the photographer’s mother — perhaps a photographer who had adopted the name of a foreign father — there is an underlying meaning to the accusation: photography would have turned its back on the one that originated it — the painting — to indulge in vulgarity. A few days later, the Coronel Mercantil publishes two extremely violent satirical poems against Miniature, and a curious note entitled “Photographic and miniaturistic question”. In it the author insists on saying that Insley Pacheco is not behind the brutal offensive of photographers. Ironically, he calls him “a distinguished gentleman, who already boasts of a habit of Christ and with several medals, for his never quite recognized merit”. And resuming the controversies of 1861 about the photographic signature, he pretends to be naive: “What does it matter if people say that what was published against Mr. Diogo Cipriano was Mr. Pacheco, as well as what was published against Mr. Gaspar?” And he adds: “Mr. Diogo Luís Cipriano was a victim of atrocious attacks”, but “Mr. Pacheco spoke and everything is over! It was not Mr. Pacheco, or any of his lackeys, the author of so much garble” (CM, 4/6/1867, p. 3). Despite the resistance of the miniaturists, the victory of the photography was already designed. In 1855, a famous photographer like Henrique Klumb said he was capable of taking “portraits on paper, glass and ivory, imitating the most perfect miniatures” (CM, 04/11/1855, p. 4), but the situation to which the painted miniature was reduced, a decade later, can be exemplified by the reduced size of an advertisement published in July 1867, in which a foreigner offers to teach drawing classes and make oil portraits and miniatures “at excessively cheap prices” (JC, 5/6/1867, p. 3). The time demanded new strategies. After acquiring the equipment from the renowned studio of Auguste Stahl and Germaine Wahnschaffe — which classes in Rio de Janeiro in 1870 — the painter-miniaturist-photogra- pher Diogo Cipriano launches another commercial creation, the Loteria Fotográfica (Photographic Lottery) (Figure 4): two hundred tickets, which were free to the customers who bought a dozen of portraits. The prize: “a magnificent gold watch with a beautiful gold chain” (JC, 21/5/1870, p. 3).
The footnote of the ad included a message common to almost all studios: “portraits are taken from the smallest miniature to natural size”. And, a little further on, as a complement, we can read: “oil, watercolour, pastel portraits, etc. etc.” The miniature now belonged entirely to the field of photography. Painting had been reduced to an “etc.” (JT, 5/21/1870, p. 3).

But Diogo Cipriano never forgot his award-winning daguerreotypes he took in 1855. So, let’s go to the portraits — Yes. A beautiful gold chain like the ones he used to paint in the daguerreotypes he took in 1855. So, let’s go to the portraits because they have never been so cheap and they give prizes to the customers! The coincidence is announced in several newspapers (JR, 11/12/1879). A legal dispute of the family against the Por-

the daguerreotype-tickets acquired by the Meneses family in 1855, Diogo Luís Cipriano — an ordinary artist of ordinary people — now has a biography. His fame will never reach that of his rival, Insley Pacheco, the Emperor’s photographer, who never gave him the chance for a duel of skills. And we will never know what other gimmicks he would have invented to attract the Court’s clientele had he not died of hydrophobia due to a stray dog.

References


Fig. 4 Cipriano & Silvera ad Jornal da Tarde (Rio de Janeiro), May 21, 1870.

Almost a decade later, a Portuguese art exhibition arrived in Rio de Janeiro. A nephew of Diogo, walking through the galleries, recognizes the miniature and his uncle’s signature. The coincidence is announced in several newspapers (JR, 11/12/1879). A legal dispute of the family against the Portuguese exhibitor begins to recover the piece. The Brazilian Justice orders the retention of the work until its property is decided. The situation drags on indefinitely and in the course of an endless action, the miniature disappears again. Why did it have to be small?

However, the Cipriano’s Madonna had the gift of reappearing. In April 1915, someone found it in the Public Depot, where it had been kept since 1879. He finds it beautiful, frames it and gives it to the minister of Justice. The mystery of the “masterpiece” found in the depot becomes a topic in the press. The minister calls an expert from the School of Fine Arts. The person in charge was the painter Zéferino da Costa, who considers it scrupulously well designed and of “fresh colour”, despite being a “copy of an original from the Italian school”, and concludes the report saying that the work would have “relative artistic merit”. In view of this, the piece is integrated into the School’s Pinacoteca. But its stay there did not last long. Cipriano had four children, but in 1915 only one was alive, Ednardo Alves Cipriano, 47 years old. The legal action of the dispute of the work with the Portuguese exhibitor, in 1879, was brought by the painter’s eldest son who, as one can guess, was also called Diogo Luís Cipriano. With the death of this son, the legal action was extinguished. Now that it has been found, Ednardo filed a new legal action for the possession of the miniature (AN, 27/4/1915, p. 1). The work, which had been given the name “Bela Adormecida” (Sleeping Beauty) by the press, returned, as a comet, to the darkness of the Public Depot — a century later, where does the reappeared Madonna now rest?

We do not know its whereabouts. We also do not know who won the first photographic lottery. But thanks to some da-


The following newspapers were consulted at the Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira: A Noite (AN), Correio Mercantil (CM), Jornal do Comércio (JC), Jornal de Recife (JR) e Jornal da Tarde (JT).