THE *BOOK OF PERSPECTIVE* OF ANTÓNIO RODRIGUES'S ARCHITECTURAL TREATISE FROM 1576

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Abstract. *The significance of the* Liuro de Perspectiva *(Book of Perspective), attributed to António Rodrigues, lies mainly in the introduction of an innovative perspective rule designed to solve questions raised by the propagation of inaccuracies and insufficiencies of previous methods. However, the author's scientific limitations prevented him from fully understanding the enormous potential of his geometrically accurate construction. Decoding and verifying the validity of this peculiar perspective rule leads to the center of the debate surrounding the origins of* perspectiva artificialis. *Rodrigues's work demonstrates a striking fidelity to central perspective, especially obvious in one centrally-planned composition with* ad quadratum *and* ad circulum *geometry. Rodrigues's own Onze Mil Virgens Chapel, built some time before 1565 in Alcácer do Sal is a prime example of these concepts.*

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss the *Liuro de Perspectiva* (*Book of Perspective*), found in the extended manuscript *Tratado de Arquitectura* of 1576, which has been attributed to António Rodrigues (c. 1520-1590) [Moreira 1982].

Considering the historical context of this work, its relevance lies mainly in the introduction of an innovative perspective rule that was designed to solve the questions raised by the propagation of inaccuracies and insufficiencies of previous methods, particularly evident in Serlio's second book, *Di Prospettiva*. However, the author's scientific limitations prevented him from fully understanding the enormous potential of his geometrically accurate construction. He employed traditional techniques of measuring distances, commonly used in maritime Portugal, related to the basic principle of similar triangles, shapes that Alberti could assemble as a *piramide visiva*, promoting its *intersegazione* with a surface (*finestra*), and thus obtaining a section that represents the exact perspective of the object. Decoding and verifying the validity of this peculiar perspective rule leads to the center of the debate surrounding the origins of the *perspectiva artificialis*, which is still a matter of intense dispute in spite of new contributions, reinforcing the theory that considers practical geometry the mathematical basis of this representational system.

Rodrigues's work demonstrates a striking fidelity to central perspective, likely evidence of the Italian school Rodrigues belonged to. This is particularly obvious in

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