



Sousa, Luís de, Frei

Santarém 1555 – 1632 Benfica, near Lisbon

Plans elevations sections, and views of the Church of Batalha, in the Province of Estremadura in Portugal, with the History and description by Fr. Luis de Sousa; with remarks. To which is prefixed an Introductory Discourse on the Principles of Gothic Architecture by James Murphy Arch.t Illustrated with 27 Plates.

London, I. & J. Taylor, 1795

FOLIO (505 × 330 mm), (34)ff. letterpress, comprising sixteen unsigned leaves: π1 (*List of Subscribers*) (1)¹ (*Preface*) (2)–(14)¹ (*Introduction*) χ1 (part-title, *The History and Description of the Royal Monastery of Batalha...*), paginated (4) 1–26 (2, *Directions for placing the plates*); and eighteen signed leaves: A–P², paginated (27)–61 (1); plus engraved title-page (by William Lowry after James Murphy, transcribed above), engraved portrait-dedication (to William Conyngham, dated 3 May 1792), and twenty-five etched and engraved plates, of which five are bound after the ‘Introduction’ (these designated I–III, 4, *Transverse Section of the Church*) and twenty plates (unnumbered) are bound after the ‘History and Description’.

Tissue interleaves, dedication and one plate heavily foxed, occasional spotting elsewhere.

BOUND in russia leather, decorated in gilt and blind, gilt edges; by Philipp Selenka, his engraved ticket printed on white paper *Gebunden bei Ph Selenka in Wiesbaden*.

A FINELY-BOUND COPY of the architect James Cavanah Murphy’s measured plans of the Dominican Church and Monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória, founded in 1388 by John I of Portugal in thanksgiving for his victory in the battle of Aljubarrota (and thereafter known as ‘Batalha’, the Portuguese word for battle).

Murphy (1760–1814) spent thirteen weeks at Batalha in 1788, commissioned by William Burton Conyngham to make a detailed survey of the complex of buildings; afterwards Murphy embarked on a long journey throughout Portugal and Spain, which he also recorded in numerous drawings.¹ In 1790, Murphy settled in London, and began work on

¹ Murphy’s drawings of the royal monastery of Batalha are in the Society of Antiquaries of London, Ms 260; see Pamela J. Willetts, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Society of Antiquaries of London* (Woodbridge 2000), p.123. An album of watercolour views of Portugal, bound for presentation to

the plates of this book. At some point he had discovered the history and description of the complex by the seventeenth-century writer Luiz de Sousa and determined to offer large parts of it in his own translation.²

A printed prospectus was circulated in June 1792 together with the first fascicule (text and five plates). It projected ‘Five Numbers in Imperial Folio, each containing from Four to Five Plates, beside the Letter-press’, available in two states, priced ‘Half a Guinea each Number [10 shillings], or Fifteen Shillings elegantly Printed on superfine Vellum Paper’. Subscriptions were collected by Murphy at his London home, or by the booksellers Cadell, Edwards, Macklin, and Taylor.³ The second fascicule appeared in the spring of 1793 (continuation of printed text and six plates); sometime thereafter Murphy transferred responsibility for the work onto the publishers Isaac and Josiah Taylor.⁴ The third fascicule appeared under their name in the spring of 1794 (continuation of text and five plates) and the fourth and fifth fascicule appeared in 1795.⁵

Murphy’s patron, William Burton Conyngham, is National Library of Ireland, Prints & Drawings, 3085 TX; see Michael McCarthy, ‘Unpublished Drawings by James Cavanah Murphy’ in *Irish Arts Review* 19 (2002), pp.114–117. Murphy’s imaginary reconstruction of the Capella Imperfeita (not engraved for this book) is in the British Museum, 1885,0509.16.

² Luís de Sousa (*i.e.* Manuel de Sousa Coutinho), *Historia de S. Domingos* [part I] (Benfca: Giraldo de Vinha, 1623), an extensively revised and expanded version of the chronicles of the Dominican order begun by Friar Luís Cácegas.

³ A copy of this prospectus was sent by Conyngham to the chaplain of the English Factory in Lisbon, Henry Hill, annotated with a date (‘June 22, 1792’) and the price in local currency (‘3,200 each Number’). Hill in turn forwarded the prospectus on 23 November 1792 to Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, and it is preserved among the latter’s correspondence in the Biblioteca Pública de Évora; see Maria João Neto, in *Arquitectura gótica: desenhos do Mosteiro da Batalha / Gothic architecture: designs of the Monastery of Batalha* (Lisbon 2008), p.28 (reproduced Fig. 1). This may not be the earliest prospectus, as in it Murphy retracts ‘what he first proposed, which was to have had Eight plates in each Number, at One Guinea each’.

⁴ A new subscription prospectus was circulated in February 1794 by Isaac and Josiah Taylor (ESTC T189056; the same, or similar text, appeared in the *Monthly Review*, vol. 13, 1794). All copies were now ‘elegantly printed on a fine Vellum Paper. The Price to Subscribers Fifteen Shillings per Number’; ‘Subscriptions for the Author are received by Messrs. Taylors, No. 56, High Holborn, where Mr. Murphy requests all Orders relative to the Work to be sent.’ A third prospectus is also recorded (ESTC T197074); it is considered ‘slightly later than 1794’ (British Architectural Library, *Early Imprints, op. cit.*, III, p.1200), despite the participation of the author and a syndicate of booksellers in the distribution: ‘Subscriptions are received at the following places, London: Mr. Macklin, ...Messrs. Boydell, ...Messrs. Taylor, ...Mr. Stockdale, ...And by the author, ...By the following booksellers, Dublin: Mr. Byrne, ...Mr. Gerna, ...Mr. Butter, ...’.

⁵ On the chronology of the engravings, see Maria João Baptista Neto, ‘James Murphy e o Mosteiro de Santa Maria da Vitória’ in *Romantismo. Imagens de Portugal na Europa Romântica, Actas do II*

The importance of the work was recognised early, and it was heavily subscribed: the Presidents of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries, Sir Joseph Banks, and the Earl of Leicester took copies, and also the central figures of the Gothic Revival, those who commissioned, and those who drew: William Beckford, William Chambers, George Dance, John Nash, Roger Newdigate, John Plaw, John Soane, Horace Walpole, and James Wyatt among them. A second edition, newly dedicated to John Soane, was published in 1836.

‘When eventually completed in 1795 it was the first volume illustrative of medieval antiquities comparable in standard to the great volumes on classical antiquities published earlier in the century.’⁶ It led the Society of Antiquaries to initiate a project to draw the architecture of the different cathedrals and religious houses in England; its influence was felt also in Germany.⁷ ‘The massive impact that this publication exerted on late eighteenth-century British medievalism is well-documented, notably in relation to the career of James Wyatt, the dominant gothic revivalist of his generation, who adapted the Batalha source material to a succession of English domestic and ecclesiastical commissions.’⁸

Our copy was bound by Philipp Selenka (1803–1850) of Wiesbaden, brother of Johann Jacob Selenka (1801–1871), Hofbuchbinder in Braunschweig.⁹

REFERENCES *James Murphy e o Mosteiro da Batalha*, catalogue of an exhibition, Museu do Mosteiro de Santa Maria da Vitória (Batalha), 12 August–31 October 1989 (Lisbon 1989); *Early Printed Books 1478–1840: Catalogue of the British Architectural Library Early Imprints Collection* (London 1999), III, pp.1198–1201 no. 2221; *Bilderlust und Lesefrüchte: die illustrierte Kunstbuch von 1750 bis 1920*, edited by Katharina Krause (Leipzig 2005), pp.193–195 no. 31

Congresso Internacional de Sintra sobre o Romantismo 23 a 26 de Setembro de 1987 (Sintra 1998), pp.291–306. Four plates in the first fascicule have imprint lines dated 27 May 1792; the six plates of the second number are variously dated 4 February 1792–25 April 1793; the five plates of the third number are variously dated April 1794; and the plates of the last two numbers are dated 1 January and 1 May 1795 respectively.

⁶ John Frew, ‘An Aspect of the Early Gothic Revival: The transformation of medievalist research, 1770–1800’ in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980), p.183.

⁷ David Watkin, *The Rise of Architectural History* (London & Westfield, NJ 1980), pp.56–57.

⁸ John Frew and Carey Wallace, ‘Thomas Pitt, Portugal and the Gothic Cult of Batalha’ in *The Burlington Magazine* 128 (August 1986), p.582.

⁹ Two bindings by Philipp Selenka in the Fürstlich Waldeckische Hofbibliothek, Arolsen, are described by Rudolf-Alexander Schütte and Konrad Wiedemann, *Einbandkunst vom frühmittelalter bis Jugendstil aus den Bibliotheken in Kassel und Arolsen*, Universitätsbibliothek Kassel (Kassel 2002), p.54 no. 68 and Abb. 51. He was a specialist ‘Portefeuillearbeiter’; see Hektor Rössler, *Ausführlicher Bericht über die von dem Gewerbeverein für das Großherzogthum Hessen im Jahre 1842 veranstaltete Allgemeine deutsche Industrie-Ausstellung zu Mainz* (Darmstadt 1843), p.240.