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Female Figures in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Portuguese Occult Periodicals*

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Abstract

The medium of almanacs and prognostication literature has, since at least the fourteenth century, occupied a relevant position within the Portuguese letters, reaching its apex during the extremely troubled nineteenth century, with women at this time stepping out of the literary shadows and taking to this medium as almanac correspondents, directors, and owners. Associated with this moment is also the emergence of occult- and magic-themed almanacs, arising from the overlap of Portuguese prognostication literature and the *Books of Saint Cyprian*, nineteenth-century grimoires with long-reaching early modern roots.

While the majority of these magical almanacs were associated with either a female name or with a world of (stereotyped) female preoccupations, their roots mark them as distinct from the phenomenon of female occult authorship, which came to prominence in Europe and America during this same time period. Thus, this article explores these almanacs and questions their social and cultural role in late nineteenth-century Portuguese society. Rather than revealing these as expressions of contemporary magical practice, somehow related with other international female-oriented occult publications, what is found is that these represent a continuity with female-dominated forms of folk magic practice in Portuguese urban centers from the early modern period. By providing such identification, this article hopes to offer a new and unexplored avenue for esotericism studies into the Portuguese contemporary period.

Keywords: Folk literature; Almanac culture; Pulp literature; Prognostication; Feminism; Magic

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1. Introduction

After a long and rich history, Portuguese prognostication literature had its peak during the nineteenth century,[1] a period in which one can find evidence of the publication of over five hundred different yearly titles.[2] This peak, and the increasing thematic variability of these same almanacs and periodicals, has long been accepted as a result of the troubled Portuguese nineteenth century, when the rise of liberal, republican and revolutionary sentiments generated a booming printing culture of an extremely heterogeneous nature.

While many of the more noted and historically relevant almanacs were somewhat political in nature, many were more ambiguous in their purpose or even in the audience with which they were seeking to engage. As prime examples of this last group, one can find a number of magic- and occult-[3] themed almanacs which seem to form at the crossroads of two different lines of Portuguese esoteric literature: those of prognostication, and the tradition of the *Books of Saint Cyprian* (local Iberian grimoires). Additionally, these same almanacs often claimed (be it truthfully or not) to either be written and directed by women or to have women as their main contributors.

While female almanac authorship was not particularly rare, with the budding Portuguese feminist movement using this as one of its mains forms of public engagement, these magic almanacs, even if subversive in their values and representation of female identities, did not fit into the general ideology of the feminist movement, nor did they seem to have any particular preoccupation with it. Equally, even if female authorship on the topics of magic and occultism during this same period was not rare elsewhere in Europe or America, the

1. Lisboa, 'Almanaques," 13.

2. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 64.

3. In this article, the words "occult" or "occultism" will be used to refer to the specific nineteenth century historical developments within the history of Western esotericism as arising from the writings of Éliphas Lévi and later developed by several authors of the *fin-de-siecle* and other groups associated with the Occult Revival up to the present day. See Hanegraaff, "Occult/Occultism."

authors who engaged in this seemed to, most often, be connected or associated with magical or occult organizations, such as in the cases of Emma Hardinge Britten, Annie Besant, or Dion Fortune, and such writings had a clear doctrinal or promotional purpose. Furthermore, these same writings often dealt with what might be considered novel magical conceptualizations, as emerging from the nineteenth century Occult Revival. In contrast, there does not seem to have been any preoccupation with such novel esoteric concepts in these Portuguese almanacs, nor was there any relevant formal magical or occult group in Portugal with which these could have been associated. Yet, their continuous existence for almost four decades indicates that there was a considerable, albeit historically invisible, portion of society interested in these same topics.

All of these particularities make such publications extremely promising for the understanding of historically understudied expressions of Portuguese magic and esoteric culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With such in mind, this article seeks to explore these same almanacs and tackle several questions their very existence poses, namely, the reasons behind their claims of female authorship, the identities of their readers and, probably the most relevant, what functions these same almanacs fulfilled in Portuguese society.

The answers to these questions only become clear if these publications are not solely taken as products of a cosmopolitan contemporary period, but rather as particular expressions of a more *longue durée* form of female-dominated magical practice typical of Iberian and South American urban centers. Thus, these almanacs, in themselves, do not represent a novelty in terms of magic ideas or practitioners. Meaning, only their printed form and distribution is contemporary; their content and social function is early modern.

Furthermore, international studies on Portuguese esotericism in the contemporary period typically focus on internationally recognized authors or cosmopolitan artistic circles, such as Fernando Pessoa and the *Geração*

d'Orpheu.[4] Such translates an implicit disregard for Southern European cultures, as their local expressions of esotericism are only offered academic validation if these somehow relate to Protestant, Norther European or North American esoteric movements, such as the Theosophical Society or Thelema. Thus, the identification and understanding of such local expressions of esotericism, and how they relate to contemporality, may offer further elements for the continuous definition and construction of current esotericism studies as a non-ethnocentric academic discipline.

2. Portuguese almanacs and periodicals

2.1. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth century

Prognosticative and prophetic literature has long held a relevant position not only within the Portuguese letters but in the very notions of Portuguese national identity and culture. While "nationality" may be considered largely a modern concept,[5] ideological trends which might be identified with such an idea can be found in Portuguese history as early as the medieval and early modern period. These trends frequently based themselves on idealized narratives of providentialism and divine favor which inflate Portuguese history with a persistent sense of sacrality and symbolic meaning, and the constant proclamation of an imminently glorious future based on local millenarian and messianic ideas, such as those of the Miracle of Ourique, Sebastianism and the biblical Fifth Empire.[6]

4. See Leitão, "Phantoms and Figments."

5. Smith, "Hierarchy and Covenant in the Formation of Nations," 22–23.

6. Sebastianism refers to a long-standing Portuguese messianic tradition proclaiming the return of King Sebastian (1554–1578) after his disappearance in the Battle of Ksar-el-Kebir to re-establish Portuguese independence and imperial glory. Such an idea based itself on previous providential narratives of Portuguese history, such as the aforementioned "Miracle of Ourique," a fourteenth-century legend describing the vision and apparition of Christ to the first Portuguese king, Afonso Henriques, on the field of the battle of Ourique in an in *hoc signo vinces* style of narrative. As a coherent literary and religious tradition, Sebastianism was founded by D. João de Castro (1550?–1628?), who firmly connected the legend of the Miracle of Ourique with the figure of Sebastian as well as with the idea of the Fifth Empire derived from

The concrete manifestations of such religiously heterodox narratives of self-identity, which have continuously circled and built upon each other in Portugal up to contemporary times, constantly carry an obligation for the Portuguese to seek the unveiling or revelation of future history. Within these ideological trends, history is not solely an accumulation of passing experiences and events, but rather something which needs to be continuously constructed by accurate astrological observation, biblical exegesis and even alchemical or teratological musings.[7] Looking at the various macroscopic manifestations of these ideas, what this generates is the periodical reemergence of a complex literary tradition of prophetic and messianic works,[8] at times fully supported by legal and regal authorities, announcing the providential return of the lost King Sebastian to reestablish Portuguese global glory and the Fifth Empire of the world. Thus, prophetism and prognostication often stood (and stand) at the center of Portuguese ontological security and national identity, particularly through instances of foreign or external aggression, or political and economic collapse.

In terms of normalized manuscripts and printed books, this prognosticative literary tradition gave rise to a rich almanac culture, starting with the fourteenth century manuscript *Almanac Perduravel* (*Durable Almanac*, presumed to date from 1321),[9] the first known astrological prediction book written in Portuguese.[10] Mainstream large-scale publication will only arrive in the fifteenth century, in the midst of the then booming Iberian seafaring empires, with the publication of Abraham Zacuto's *Almanach Perpetuum* in 1495.[11] In the subsequent century this was followed by works such as Valentim Fernandes' *Reportorio dos Tempos*

the *Book of Daniel*. It should be noted that, throughout history, Sebastianism underwent several "creation moments," being continuously reconceptualized in accordance with the everchanging Portuguese political landscape.

7. See Leitão, "Anselmo Castelo Branco."
8. Most of which remain in manuscript form, see Capelo, *Profetismo e Esoterismo*.
9. Albuquerque, *Os Almanaques Portugueses de Madrid*, 9.
10. Guerreiro and Correia, "Almanaques ou a Sabedoria e as Tarefas do Tempo," 45.
11. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 11.

(*Report of the Times*, an adaptation of an earlier Spanish work by Andrés de Li) in 1518, André Avelar's *Chronografia ou Reportorio dos Tempos* from 1582,[12] and many others. Also from this century is the work by the Valencian "master of counting" Jerónimo Cortez, the *Lunario Perpetuo*, from 1592,[13] one of the most influential and widely read books in Iberia and South America to date.

What distinguishes these early modern texts from the later forms of Portuguese almanac literature that would come to dominate the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is their explicit mathematical complexity, being aimed at the more-or-less affluent and educated social groups. These publications present themselves as thick and complex books of a "perpetual" nature, supplying numerous tables and mathematical instructions for the calculation of calendars and astronomical patterns. As mentioned by João Luís Lisboa, such almanacs intended to present a particular organization of space and time, breaking these into understandable elements which could be used to describe a predictable universe of clear rules and functioning.[14] Besides befitting the commercial necessities of countries with significant seafaring activity, these same astrological calculations were meant for the prognostication of practical phenomenon, such as weather, agricultural surplus, natural disasters, wars, political and civilian turmoil and even individual fates, such as potential diseases and cures and the physiognomy of newborns.[15]

Gradually, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, such literature became increasingly fragmented, and new commercially attractive publications begin to emerge. These newer publications, while having a foundation in the complex perpetual almanacs, present their material as already "resolved" for the current year, mixed and matched with folk tales, poetry and songs, religious imagery and information of local relevance, establishing a new form of periodical folk literature.[16]

12. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 14–15.
13. Peris Felipo, "Aportación a la Divulgación Zoológica Valenciana del Siglo XVII," 61.
14. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 11–12.
15. Capelo, "Sebastianismo e Esoterismo na Arte do Prognóstico em Portugal," 54.
16. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 57–58.

Figure 1. *Left*, cover of the eighteenth-century folkish almanac *Pronostico Serrabal* (1767), Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 17052, PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/CX1639/17052. Imagem cedida pelo ANTT. Fol.69.recto.
Figure 2. *Right*, cover of the eighteenth-century folkish almanac *Prognostico Metaphorico* (1767), Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 17052, PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/CX1639/17052. Imagem cedida pelo ANTT. Fol.77.recto.

By the eighteenth century, this periodic form gave rise to a new conception of almanac which was to exist in parallel with its folkish form, and in which the previously essential astrological and prognosticative aspects seem to take a step back in favor of a more elitist appeal. While in Portugal the eighteenth century was still replete with Sebastianist literature and prophetism,[17] from this period on one may find titles such as the *Almanak das Musas* (*Almanac of the Muses*), a direct importation of the historical French *Almanach des Muses*,

17. Capelo, *Profetismo e Esoterismo*, 98.

which became an important vehicle of dissemination for a new generation of Portuguese poets.[18] Those high-society publications which still fell in line with the previous conception of an almanac seemed to now do so from a strictly institutional background, such as the *Almanaque de Lisboa*, published by the Lisbon Academy of Science, or the *Diario Ecclesiástico*, a Catholic publication aimed at an urban female audience.[19] While these new forms of almanacs did gain their ground, the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 fueled an editorial renaissance in term of astrological, prophetic and apocalyptic publications which kept the folk almanacs alive and booming, as well as related literature aimed at not only justifying this catastrophe but also at predicting future ones.[20]

2.2. The nineteenth and twentieth century

While never a dying literary genre, the very particular circumstances of the Portuguese nineteenth century are what brought almanac and periodical production into a new level of relevance and visibility. As a result of the Peninsular War, Lisbon was occupied by French forces in 1807, establishing a strict control of newspapers and other popular media outlets. The immediate result of this, besides the resurfacing of Sebastianic prophetic sentiments,[21] was the emergence of an ever-increasing number of alternative and underground periodicals, mainly in the cities of Lisbon, Porto, and Coimbra.[22] These not only presented themselves as part of a newly patriotic anti-French political ideology, but many, for the first time, also aimed to reach social groups typically excluded from literary engagement.[23]

Almanacs began a transition from aiming at a more-or-less strict rural and semi-urban audience to targeting the city's educated, with new titles of

18. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 62–63.
19. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 13.
20. Capelo, *Profetismo e Esoterismo*, 93–94.
21. Azevedo, *A Evolução do Sebastianismo*, 93.
22. Santos, *Lisboa e a Invasão de Junot*, 99–100.
23. Santos, *Lisboa e a Invasão de Junot*, 91–92.

political and ideological orientations becoming increasingly available.[24] Having a broad distribution, almanacs and similar literature became a major vehicle for a novel democratization of written culture outside of restricted academic circles,[25] giving rise not only to the non-erudite reader, but equally the non-erudite author,[26] the local contributor who now had a concrete avenue to reach a wide and heterogeneous audience. Consequently, almanacs came to represent a channel of folk communication, often dealing with local politics,[27] becoming an instrument for social conflict and positive reinforcement of local identities in times of war or extreme social stratification.[28] Equally, they became a form of literature which seemed to largely resist political or religious control, becoming an attractive channel for all of those wanting to create or politicize a new audience.[29] This trend would continue during the Portuguese 1820 Liberal Revolution, the later Liberal Wars (1828–1834, another hotbed of Sebastianism)[30] and the Portuguese September Revolution of 1836.[31]

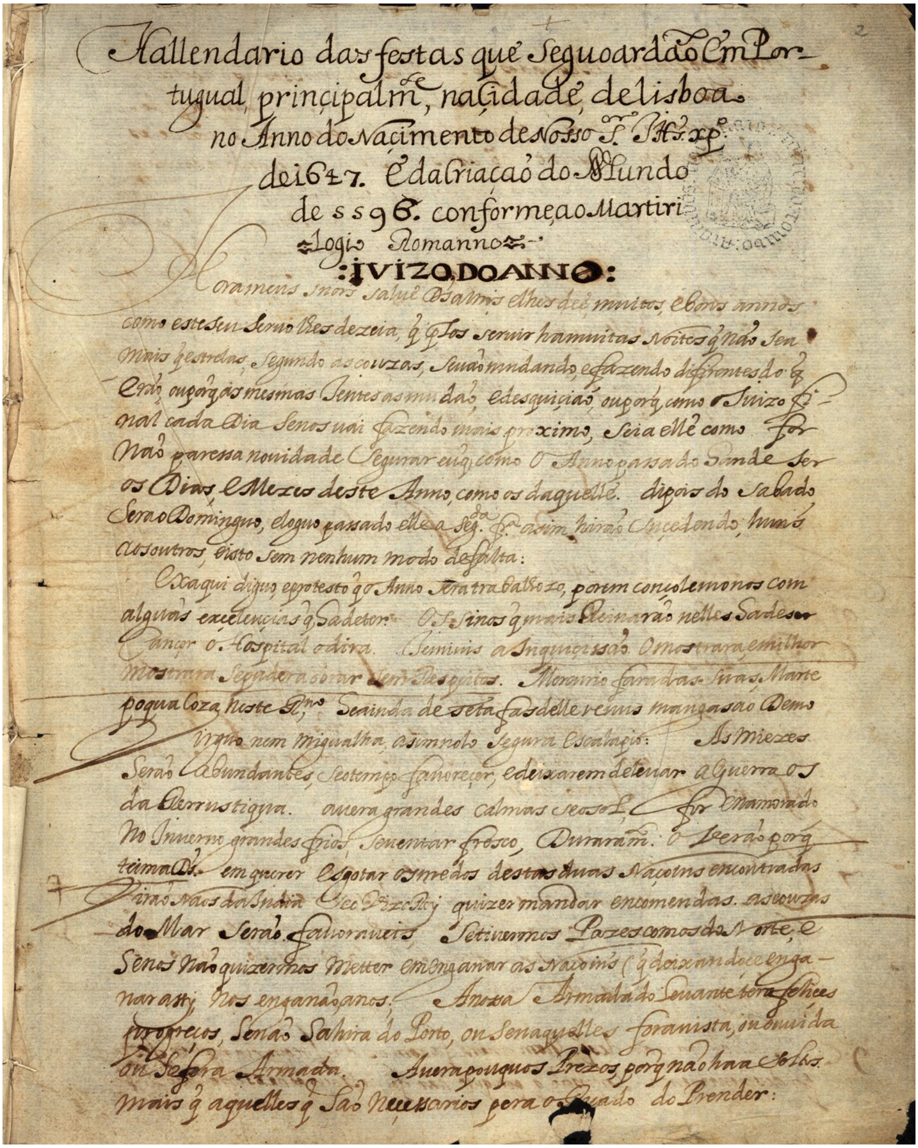
During the second half of the nineteenth century, increased literacy further signified an ever-increasing audience with new and specific reading predilections and necessities,[32] both from low- and high-social ranks. Here almanacs took a further variation, with new titles following a new intellectual and encyclopedic model of French inspiration. The first among these, both due to its extreme popularity and longevity, is the *Almanach de Lembranças* (*Almanac of Souvenirs*), whose title was gradually changed to *Almanach de Lembranças Luso-Brasileiro* (*Luso-Brazilian Almanac of Souvenirs*) and finally to *Novo Almanach de Lembranças Luso-Brasileiro* (*New*

24. Guerreiro and Correia, "Almanaques ou a Sabedoria e as Tarefas do Tempo," 48.
25. Tengarrinha, "Um Importante Instrumento de Trabalho," 10.
26. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 67.
27. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 13.
28. Cunha and Amphilo, "Almanaques de Cordel," 174.
29. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 13.
30. van den Basselaar, *O Sebastianismo*, 184–85.
31. Tengarrinha, "Um Importante Instrumento de Trabalho," 11.
32. Lisboa, "Almanaques," 21.

Luso-Brazilain Almanac of Souvenirs), a transatlantic publishing endeavor founded by Alexandre Magno Castilho and active from 1851 to 1932. The truly innovative aspect of this publication was the opening of a solid and reputed avenue for all social classes to participate as collaborators. In this way, in a very short time, the *Almanach de Lembranças* would inflate itself from its initial one hundred pages to over five hundred, adding to the already traditional astrological and feast day calculations a number of new sections on poetry, biographies, short stories, and general essays.[33] Its astrological content was also distinct, as it did not contain general predictions or prognostications, preferring rather to include information on eclipses, tides, weight and currency conversions, and other similar mathematical tables.[34] In essence, the wide popularity of the *Almanach de Lembraças* would, by the end of the century, create a new standard for all similar publications.

This new line of periodicals, even if prevalent in literary and educated circles, did not in any way impose upon the humbler low-class almanacs, which had arrived at a mostly stable form by the end of the century. As mentioned by Rosilene Alves de Melo, referring to the Brazilian case (but equally valid for Portugal), contrary to the hundreds of pages of the generalist middle- and high-class almanacs, the low-class examples were rather made up of either 8, 16 or 32 pages, containing a front illustration, a few woodcut images, and considerable interior space dedicated to the advertisement of other titles issued by the same publisher.[35] In terms of internal structure, in the 32 page model (the most commonly observed), the first 16 pages of these almanacs typically focused on information regarding Catholic movable feast days, saint calendars, market days, agricultural advice according to the time of year, prices of several local commodities and public transports, tax information and a "judgment of the year" – a prophetic or astrological prediction for the year that the almanac in question was written for, a feature that had accompanied such literature from as early as the seventeenth century.

33. Chaves and Lousada, "Apresentação," 12.
34. Romariz, *O Almanaque de Lembranças Luso-Brasileiro*, 21.
35. Melo, "Almanaques de Cordel," 115.


Kallendario das festas que se guoardão em Portugual, principalmᵗᵉ na cidade de lisboa no Anno do nacimento de Nosso S. Jhs. xpº de 1647. E da criacaõ do Mundo de 5596. conforme ao Martirilogio Romanno.

:IVIZO DO ANNO:

Figure 3. “Ivizo do Anno,” “Judgment of the Year,” of the seventeenth-century jocose manuscript almanac *Kallendario das Festas que se Guoardaõ em Portugual* (*Calendar of the Feasts which are Observed in Portugal*, 1647), Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa, proc. 7277, PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/07277. Imagem cedida pelo ANTT. Fol.2.recto.

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The remaining sixteen pages were what distinguished each almanac from all of the others, this being where the author/director would set his editorial vision loose and create a specialized publication for his target audience. Contrary to the middle- and high-society almanacs, the low-class definition of "almanac" was always tied to the first half of the publication: a fairly continuous and stable set of information and instructions which, in Iberia and South America, had the several editions of Cortez' *Lunario Perpetuo* as its most relevant trend-setter.[36]

3. Women and Portuguese nineteenth-century periodicals

While women were mostly absent from active contribution to the almanac market before the nineteenth century, already by the eighteenth literate bourgeois women were often the preferred audience for such publications. It is the nineteenth century that finally brought the novelty of female periodical contributors to the mainstream, as well as that of female periodical directors and even owners.[37] Such is obviously not an unexplainable situation as, resulting from the abovementioned Liberal Revolution of 1822, for the first time the Portuguese constitution had established the basis for education equality between genders, and the industrial development of the country equally allowed for partial economic emancipation for females.[38]

Still, even if the legal foundation for a general education of the country's population was established, the implementation of such a project was challenging. As a basis for the increase and dissemination of literacy, various methods for "vulgarization of culture" were established, among which was the dissemination and liberalization of the printing press, something which was quickly seized by literarily excluded social classes seeking in this new media the road towards social and intellectual valorization.[39]

36. Medeiros, "Notas Sobre a Produção, a Circulação e a Leitura do Lunário Perpétuo de Jerônimo Cortez entre Portugal e o Brasil," 169–70.
37. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 63.
38. Romariz, *O Almanaque de Lembranças Luso-Brasileiro*, 27.
39. Rafael, "A Leitura Feminina na Segunda Metade do Século XIX em Portugal," 37–38.

As early as 1836 one can find the periodical *L'Abeill*e, a Francophile publication directed by Catarina Andrade Douthat, whose public was precisely that of educated women. *L'Abeille*, while historic in its novelty, is not what might be called a feminist publication (be it by current or period standards). While its director also operated a women's school from her own home,[40] *L'Abeille* was explicitly an apolitical publication[41] whose idealized model of womanhood was intrinsically linked to a normalized domestic and reproductive role. Overall, Douthat's idea of female education was that of creating educated and idealized daughters, wives, and mothers.

Another case was that of the writer and journalist Antónia Pusich, daughter of the Governor of Cabo Verde and founder and owner of the journal *A Assemblea Litteraria: Jornal de Instrucção* (active from 1849 to 1851).[42] Though closer to ideals of universal education and gender equality, this publication, as well as the several others headed by Pusich, was not dissociated from a strong sense of Christian idealism.[43]

The *Almanach de Lembranças*, given its frequent open call to contributors, was equally a relevant avenue for new female voices, beginning with its 1852 issue.[44] However, while it numbered one thousand two hundred sixty-seven different female contributors during its full run,[45] similarly to *L'Abeille*, the contributions accepted for publication can be seen to mostly promote normalized female roles and expectations. Particularly revealing in this regard is the overwhelming presence of poetry submissions among female contributors, this being the most socially accepted literary practice for Portuguese women of the time.[46] In addition, all female contributors to this almanac would be listed in its pages under the header of "Senhoras" (Ladies), while all male contributors would be offered under the title of "Autores" (Authors). Such a division of titles among

40. Esteves, "Imprensa Periódica Para Mulheres na Primeira Metade do Século XIX," 531.
41. Esteves, "Imprensa Periódica Para Mulheres na Primeira Metade do Século XIX," 528.
42. Rafael, "A Leitura Feminina na Segunda Metade do Século XIX em Portugal,", 25.
43. Rafael, "A Leitura Feminina na Segunda Metade do Século XIX em Portugal,", 30.
44. Chaves and Lousada, "Apresentação," 15.
45. Chaves and Lousada, "Apresentação," 22.
46. Romariz, *O Almanaque de Lembranças Luso-Brasileiro*, 26.

contributors clearly revealed a considerable degree of misogyny by barring women from the validating title of "authors," thereby implicitly relegating them to the subservient position of a socially validated "lady."[47] Also, such cases of female periodical author and ownership need to be always considered as an absolute minority, as Portuguese female illiteracy rates by 1900 were still around 85%[48] and the rapid acceptance of this particular type of female authorship by the editorial market was likely due to it being widely considered a form of lesser literature.[49] Nonetheless, the periodical press, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, became a privileged avenue for Portuguese women to gain power and autonomy.[50]

This implicit undermining of female authorial legitimacy and limited publication range was also obvious to early Portuguese feminist authors, such as Guiomar Delphina de Noronha Torrezão, a frequent collaborator in the *Almanach de Lembranças* who created her own *Almanach das Senhoras*[51] (*Almanac of the Ladies*) in 1870/1871. This was an explicitly feminist publication that, while following the model of the *Almanach de Lembranças*, presented itself with the purpose of rescuing its female readers from purely passive and domestic roles as attributed by patriarchal and androcentric society. This same example was later followed by Albertina Paraíso, founder and director of the *Almanach das Senhoras Portuenses* (*Almanac of the Porto Ladies*) in 1885, both of which eventually expanded to include transatlantic distribution.[52]

Overall, both of these almanacs were part of the emergent Portuguese feminist movement. Yet, in time, this would reveal itself to be counterproductive to the general Portuguese female intellectual and literary emancipation, as the early

47. Cardoso and Lousada, "Mulheres Que Dão a Cara," n.p.
48. Esteves, "Os Primórdios do Feminismo em Portugal," 87.
49. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 67.
50. Rafael, "A Leitura Feminina na Segunda Metade do Século XIX em Portugal,", 41.
51. Romariz, *O Almanaque de Lembranças Luso-Brasileiro*, 34.
52. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 68.

feminists would gradually close themselves off within restricted intellectual circles and female literary groups.[53] The end result of this was that feminist periodicals, and Portuguese feminism itself, became an entirely elite movement that had little to no preoccupation with lower class or under-educated women (who did not qualify as "ladies" by either standards). Consequently, the two main groups of women who found themselves catered to by the most visible and influential periodicals were those of affluent and highly educated non-conformist feminists and lower- and middle-class non-feminists.

4. Women and Portuguese nineteenth and twentieth century occult periodicals

4.1. Context and content

Within the world of lower-class almanacs, the large majority that explicitly presented themselves as catering to a female audience, such as the *Almanach das Cozinhas* (*Kitchen Almanac*), the *Almanach Familiar* (*Family Almanac*), the *Almanach das Lavadeiras* (*Washer's Almanac*) or the *Almanach das Sopeiras*[54] (*Soupmaker's Almanac*), clearly promoted a standardized domestic and reproductive role for women. Other relevant female-targeting titles were themselves supported by either the Catholic Church or Catholic interest groups or associations, once again promoting socially normalized female identities, such as the *Almanach da Virgem Mãe do Céu* (*Almanac of the Virgin Mother of Heaven*) or the *Almanach da Imaculada Conceição*[55] (*Almanac of the Immaculate Conception*). In stark contrast, a new category of almanacs started to make its presence known by the 1880s, namely almanacs dealing with magic and occultism, the large majority of which had their title associated with a female name and built themselves around an imagery of witchcraft and authoritative female figures.

53. Esteves, "Os Primórdios do Feminismo em Portugal," 88.
54. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 68.
55. Anastácio, "Almanaques," 66.

A possible way to interpret this novelty can be done through the lens of the rise of republican sentiments in late nineteenth-century Portugal, which cannot be separated from the multiplicity and relevance of Portuguese almanac culture during this entire period. The 1880 celebration of the 300-year anniversary of the death of the poet Luís de Camões[56] could be seen as the initial call-to-arms of Portuguese republicanism, as the writer and philosopher Teófilo Braga (1843–1924) would take such an event as a starting point for his lifelong project of constructing a form of Portuguese civil religion, being directly inspired by Auguste Comte.[57] This was his attempt to undermine Catholicism as an integral part of Portuguese national identity and, consequently, the crown as a divinely ordained institution still supported by the narrative of the Miracle of Ourique (even if later republicans, such as Sampaio Bruno in his book *O Encoberto* from 1904, would re-aim their ideas of civil religion and state sacrality back towards Sebastianism). Sentiments of dissatisfaction towards the crown would only increase with the British Ultimatum of 1890,[58] which would spark the first republican uprising in 1891 and an escalation of violence culminating in the Regicide of 1908.

There is a direct correlation between the increasingly troubled political atmosphere in Portugal and the increase in periodical publications of a growing variety of topics and interests. The crescent segmentation of society during this period meant the rise of numerous factions and interest groups which would also spark the creation of newspapers and periodicals of general interest or indoctrination.[59] Thus, the booming periodical market was both a symptom and an agent of republican ideals,[60] and, interestingly, the collective lifespan of all known Portuguese occult almanacs can be seen to coincide almost perfectly

56. Author of the epic *Os Lusiadas* (1572), the Portuguese "national poet."

57. Domingues, *De Ourique ao Quinto Império*, 306.

58. The ultimatum by the British government demanding the retreat of all Portuguese military forces from the territories between Angola and Mozambique.

59. Tengarrinha, "Um Importante Instrumento de Trabalho," 10–11.

60. Samara, *As Repúblicas da República*, 173–74.

with the rise of republicanism in 1880 and the end of the first Republic in 1926. Even though it was chaotic in all of its aspects, Portuguese republicanism, while it existed – be it as an underground movement or an established regime – looked at national literacy and the publishing market as its lifeblood, pushing women towards literary engagement.

Related to the previous observation, though somewhat conjectural, is another possible interpretation for the emergence of these occult almanacs: faulty representation of females in the publishing market resulting from the enforcement of the two opposing female identity models offered by the feminist and the folkish low-class periodicals. The novel female-faced, magic-themed almanacs do seem to fill a clear gap in the social groups covered by all previous female-oriented publications. The tenuous relationship between the feminist movement and lower-class women meant that those women who, even if not affluent or highly educated, were still literate and economically stable were left without literary engagement or viable models of female empowerment. Even if such magical and occult almanacs were almost certainly owned and directed by men, did not cater to a solely female audience, and the literary characters they presented were all emergent from male imaginations of dangerous female magic, they still brought to the public eye a radical alternative to the concepts of womanhood or female power promoted by all of the other periodicals in a time when all women were being pushed by multiple social forces towards literary engagement.

In terms of content, most magic-themed almanacs clearly derived their astrological material from Cortez's *Lunario* once again, as well as from his book of natural secrets, the *Phisonomia y Varios Secretos de Naturaleza*, (*Physiognomy and Various Secrets of Nature*) translated into Portuguese in 1699, occasionally even quoting these books by title. Parallel to this, their magical or occult material largely derived from the Portuguese grimoire referred to as *O Grande Livro de São Cypriano*, or the *Great Book of Saint Cyprian*.

Although references to apparent grimoires entitled "The Book of St. Cyprian" can be found in Portuguese sources as early as the seventeenth century,[61] the contemporary versions of this book, from which these almanacs derived their content, are nineteenth century productions of uncertain authorship.[62] As it is known today, the *Grande Livro* can be considered a fragmented or composite book, with several elements within it being identifiable with different forms of magical practice from different backgrounds and time frames. Primarily, the attribution of any magic book to the figure of St. Cyprian, the Iberian and South American magical hero[63] (akin to Solomon or Faust in other Central and North European magical traditions) can be seen to be most often related to the presence of the prayer of St. Cyprian within its pages. This prayer, even if often banished or outlawed in the environment where it is most common,[64] is often taken to be talismanic in itself, and is part of a wider "Western" magico-religious arsenal, being consistently used as a method for the banishment of evil spirits, sorcery, and the evil eye in countries and regions as varied as Italy,[65] Scandinavia[66] and the Arabic world.[67]

Following the general theme of the prayer of St. Cyprian, the very few references to seventeenth- or sixteenth-century *Books of St. Cyprian* paint it as a book of general folk magic preoccupations, focusing on health and the banishment of evil. Yet, by the eighteenth century this same book can be seen to gradually change its function to that of treasure hunting, utilizing the prayer of St. Cyprian as a method for the banishment of dangerous treasure-guarding spirits or sorceries. While both of these historical aspects of the *Book of St. Cyprian* are still present in the nineteenth century's *Grande Livro*, what are likely its most noticeable sections are several loose collections of folk magic practices. In this sense, this is a

61. See ANTT, Coimbra Inquisition, trial nr. 5634.
62. Castro Vicente, "O Libro de San Cibrán," 95.
63. Smid, "The Magic of Saint Cyprian," 341.
64. See Londoño, *Las Oraciones Censuradas*.
65. Duni, "Esorcisti o Stregoni?," 273.
66. Björn Gårdbäck, "Cyprianus Förmaning," 36–50.
67. Basset, *Les Apocryphes Éthiopiens – IV*, 6–24, 38–52.

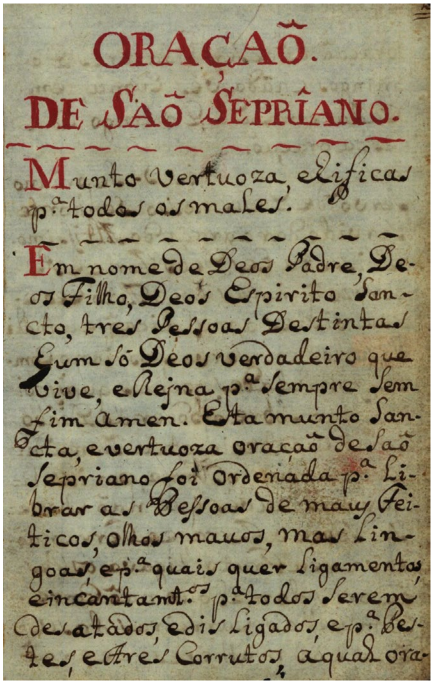

ORAÇAÕ.
DE SAÕ SEPRIANO.
Munto vertuoza, eficas
p.a todos os males.
Em nome de Deos Padre, De-
os Filho, Deos Espirito San-
cto, tres Pessoas Destintas
Eum só Deos verdadeiro que
vive, e Reyna p.a sempre sem
fim amen. Esta munto San-
cta, e vertuoza oraçaõ de Saõ
Sepriano foi Ordenada p.a Li-
brar as Pessoas de maus Fei-
ticos, olhos mauos, mas Lin-
goas, e p.a quais quer ligamentos,
e incantam.tos p.a todos serem
desatados, e dis ligados, e p.a bes-
tes, e Arres Corrutos, a qual ora-

Figure 4. Prayer of St. Cyprian from the Inquisition trial of Paulo Caetano Teixeira Leite (1783). Processo de Paulo Caetano Teixeira Leite. Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Coimbra, proc. 3952 PT/TT/TSO-IC/025/03952. Imagem cedida pelo ANTT. Fol.45(1).

book with a clear ethnographical background, deriving large portions of its current content from a particular form of magical practice which might be referred to as urban folk magic, an essentially oral tradition which, throughout the entire modern period, can be consistently found in urban centers in Portugal, Spain, or Brazil.[68]

Taking Lisbon as an example, an analysis of this city's Inquisition records reveals that, among the several styles of magic described, between the dates of 1619 and 1758 a total of 87 urban folk magic trials can be identified from voluntary testimony/confession or duress. These cases are typically characterized by a great

68. See Bethencourt, *O Imaginário da Magia*; Paiva, *Bruxaria e Superstição*; Tausiet, *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain*; Souza, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross*.

focus on eroticism/domination and harmful sorcery, various forms of divination in order to determine a lover's/spouse's thoughts and whereabouts, and the recourse to a somewhat coherent and recurrent roster of (Christian) saints and demons. Socially speaking, the practitioners of this form of magic tended to organize themselves in loose and fragmentary groups who would occasionally gather in order to trade new magical procedures, rare *materia magica*, and clients; there being a great fluidity between the categories of "client" and "colleague." In terms of gender, such a style of magic was overwhelmingly performed by women, with 81 of the abovementioned 87 trials being against this gender. In particular, it should be noted that these same magic practitioners tended to belong to vulnerable and marginal social groups, namely, widows, prostitutes, sailors' wives, immigrants, and the illicit lovers of noblemen, collectively referred to as "mulheres erradas," wrong/evil women, or "mulheres de trato/vida ruim," women of bad dealing/life.

Keeping in line with its roots, the *Grande Livro*, as it stands even today, offers procedures for the performance of abortions, the magical acquisition of a husband/lover, and the cartomancy systems it contains are clearly tailored for a female user dealing with issues of love and betrayal. Consequently, this grimoire was always, and is still, a troublesome book in Portuguese society, as besides such apparent "mundane" preoccupations it contains clear instances of the promotion of free and same-sex love and an overall sex-positive discourse. These overall preoccupations largely inform all known magic-themed almanacs, and even when they do not simply copy the urban folk magic content of the *Grande Livro*, the magical procedures they offer are still in line with these same pre-nineteenth-century magical practices, be it in terms of functionality or practical methodology.

4.2. Almanac description

Consulting the catalogue of the Portuguese National Library, in total there were seven different occult-themed almanacs in circulation between the 1880s and the 1920s; a few of them had title changes throughout their publication history, and all followed the 32-page format described previously. Two of them, while

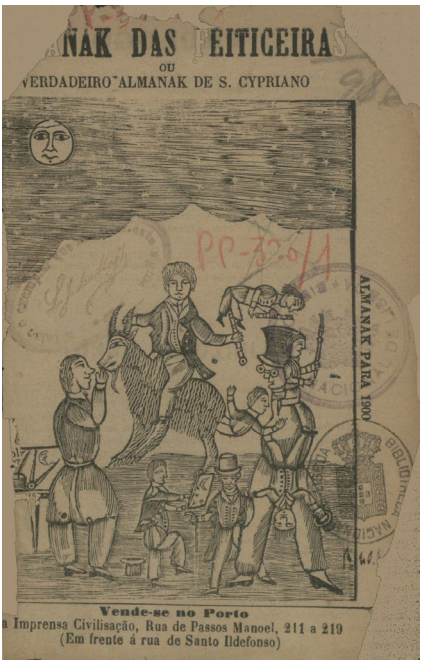


Figure 5. *Left*, cover of the *Almanak das Feiticeiras* (1900), Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 7703 P.

Figure 6. *Right*, cover of the *Verdadeiro Almanach das Feiticeiras* (1889), Biblioteca Nacional, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 188 P.

not associating themselves with any female name, still refer back to a world of female magical practitioners: the *Almanak as Feiticeiras* (*Almanac of the Sorceresses*), a rare Porto publication with only two known issues, from 1879 and 1900, and the *Verdadeiro Almanach das Feiticeiras/Almanach Saragoçano das Feiticeiras* (*True Almanac of the Sorceresses/Sarogossan Almanac of the Sorceresses*), with known issues from 1887–1890 and 1895–1921, also published in Porto.

Other than these, only one almanac did not claim either a female director or the contribution of female magic practitioners: the *Almanach de S. Cypriano* (*Almanac of St. Cyprian*), with known issues from 1890–1894. All of the remaining four not only claimed female participation but, more importantly, female

directorship/ownership. The titles of three of these are explicit in this respect, being named after particular female magical practitioners who are presented as either directors or their main contributors: the *Almanach da Bruxa d'Arruda* (*Almanac of the Arruda Witch*), known issues from 1892–1909; the *Almanach da Tia Monica* (*Almanac of Aunty Monica*), known issues from 1886–1909; and the *Almanach da Tia Monica e da Tia Michaela* (*Almanac of Aunty Monica and Aunty Michaela*), known issues from 1888–1896. The last remaining almanac, the *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano* (*True Almanac of St. Cyprian*), known issues from 1892–1914, even if not directly associated with a female name by title, still offers various female contributors and a female director.

Apart from the Arruda Witch, in all likelihood all of the female names offered in these publications did not refer to actual existing women. While, as stated, many of the procedures they offer can be identified with historical magical practices, their descriptions and presentation are closer to fictional (male) stereotypes of witchcraft, displaying several narrative and personality inconsistencies throughout their full run. Thus, such women were most likely literary characters to whom magical practices and procedures from various sources could be attributed in order to provide them with a new and local context for their acceptance by the almanac's intended audience. Focusing on each of these in particular, the *Almanach da Bruxa d'Arruda* is attributed to the character of the Arruda Witch. Historically speaking, mentions of the Arruda Witch usually refer to an actual magic practitioner of the late nineteenth and twentieth century: Ana Loura, from the small town of Arruda dos Vinhos in the district of Lisbon. According to the description given by Aurélio Lopes, Ana Loura could be easily fitted into the category of a *Benzedeira*,[69] a blesser, a folk magical worker dealing mostly with prayers, blessings, the use of herbs, teas and olive oil. Gathering all the information collected on her by ethnographers and journalists, in all likelihood she had nothing to do with this almanac, as

69. Lopes, *Religião Popular do Ribatejo*, 330.

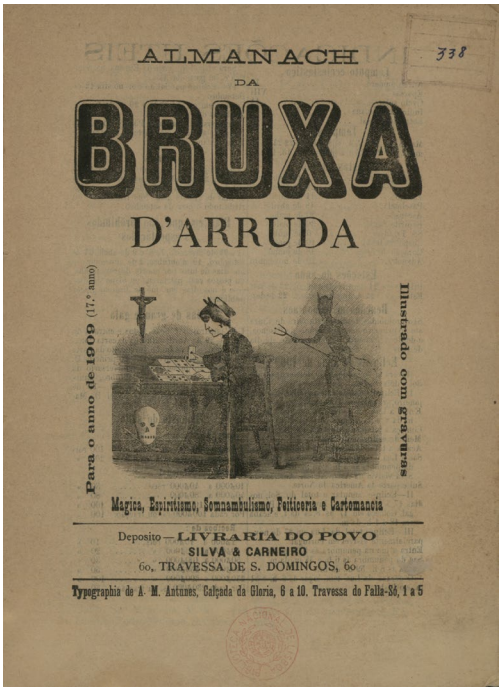


Figure 7. *Left*, cover of the *Almanach da Bruxa d'Arruda* (1909). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 13246 V.
Figure 8. *Right*, cover of the *Manual da Bruxa de Arruda: Tratado Completo de Feitiçaria*. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Monografias, cota S.A. 13960 P.

it is doubtful that she was even literate. Furthermore, this Arruda Witch, to whom this almanac was attributed, was directly referred to in its pages as D. Mafalda da Santa Cruz, a former nun, a completely different "person" from the historical Ana Loura. Still, Mafalda da Santa Cruz could also be found associated with a much larger magic book issued by the Livraria Portugueza of João Carneiro, a publisher/bookstore located in the Travessa de S. Domingos in Lisbon, entitled *Manual da Bruxa d'Arruda* (*Handbook of the Arruda Witch*), whose content was a mix between the *Great Book* and various French sources, such as the *Grand Grimoire* or the *Grand* and *Petit Albert*.

Figure 9. *Left*, cover of the *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1909). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 332 V.
Figure 10. *Right*, cover of the *Almanach da Tia Monica e da Tia Micaela* (1892). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 390 P.

All remaining occult almanacs were interconnected among themselves by their publishers, sharing a common universe of magic practitioners and contributors, making them difficult to analyze separately. From all of the names offered in them as contributors or directors, Aunty Monica, or Monica Vaz, seems to both be the most frequent collaborator in all known almanacs, and appears in the greatest number of different titles. This name can obviously be seen as being first and foremost associated with the *Almanach da Tia Monica*, but also with the *Almanch da Tia Monica e da Tia Micaela* and the *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano*.

Focusing on the first of these periodicals, the *Almanach da Tia Monica* seemed to follow a narrative-like structure focused on the character of Monica, having three distinct story arcs. These roughly correspond to the three blocks of issues

currently found in the Portuguese National Library, namely those from 1886 to 1889, 1892 to 1894 and 1905 to 1909. In the first of these (in 1886), the editors of this almanac, establishing the general orientation of the publication, opened it by offering a description of Monica, an old widow and witch from Lisbon, further establishing that this publication was meant to spread her famous sorceries.[70]

Subsequently, in the few following issues, Monica herself apparently contacted the publisher to complain about the improper use of her name, with her supposed letters being published by its directors. At this point, the character of Monica stood as strongly opposed to the publication and frequently threatened its editors with sorcery and misfortune. In the next story arc, starting in 1892, Monica appeared instead as an official sponsor and contributor of the almanac, voluntarily offering her sorceries and magical procedures for publication. Finally, in the last arc, Monica's name appeared as that of director, and the almanac's new content was largely provided by letters sent by her own contacts, friends, and colleagues.

Regarding the magical material associated with this name, from the 1892 issue onward the magical procedures offered by Monica were at times also associated with the name of a male sorcerer, as was often the case with the remaining female names, and these new female contributors often presented themselves as the heiresses, students, or discoverers of these practices for a new age and public. Again, these male names, often ridiculous-sounding (for a Portuguese reader), did not seem to relate to any existing person, and most likely all of them were literary artifices meant for the construction of a legitimate narrative for new magic enthusiasts. Thus, besides a few nameless sorcerers, Monica presented herself in 1893 as the heiress of the sorcerers Romoaldo and Chrauso, disciple of Saluspitan, who was himself the favorite disciple of St. Cyprian; and in 1908 as the discoverer of a cartomancy system created by the alchemist Espetatudo.

One other peculiarity regarding Monica was that, besides having numerous magical procedures attributed to her, hers was the only name which was given a

70. Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1886), 17.

certain "magical virtue" in itself. In this way, after the 1905 issue of this almanac one may occasionally find magical incantations which call upon Monica as a spiritual agency. A domination sorcery from the 1905 issue:

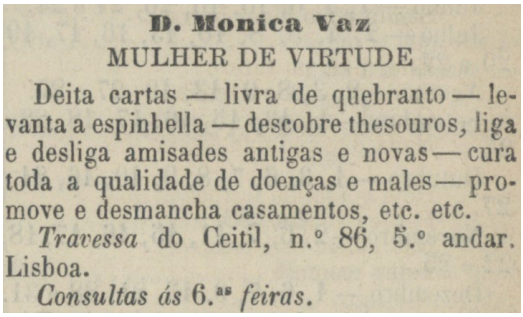
> Toad, I sewed thine eyes, by the power of Aunty Monica so as (NN) may not have peace nor rest while he (or she) is not in my company. May he (or she) be blind to all other women, (or men) and solely see me and only carry me in his (or her) thoughts.[71]

Analyzing all such incantations found in the *Grand Livro* or in the *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano*, Monica's name can be observed as simply substituting that of a particular spirit (Lucifer in the above example, a spirit frequently petitioned in urban folk magic), or, most commonly, that of St. Cyprian. Overall, the image which is gradually constructed for Monica is precisely that of a female St. Cyprian, the Iberian and South American magical hero *par excellence*.

In the capacity of director of her own almanac, Monica further presented two other witches as correspondents: Andresa da Purificação and Michaella das Chagas (occasionally spelled Mikáéla das Xágas). The first of these appeared as a contributor in the 1905 and 1906 issues, one time being referred to as the "Witch of Estarreja" and the other as the "Witch of Verdemilho" (both are locations in the district of Aveiro). In the first of these appearances, Andresa described herself as the heiress of the sorcerers Alexandrof and Bertiandos from 324 BCE, offering a few points taken from the *Grande Livro* and a few others favoring nineteenth-century occult magnetic techniques; secondly, in 1906 she offered the sorceries of D. Ramon Gallino, most notably the instructions for the construction of four "idols," poppets for magical self-defense and attack.

Michaella das Chagas, presented as the "Witch of Alcoentre," featured as a contributor in the 1907, 1908 and 1909 issues (the last known issue of the *Almanach da Tia Monica*), in the first of them as the heiress of Dr. Alberto Serrano. After Monica,

71. "Sapo, eu de cosi os olhos, pelo poder da Tia Monica para que fulano não tenha socego nem descanço emquanto não esteja a minha companhia. Ande cego para todas as mulheres, (ou homens) e só unicamente me veja a mim e só a mim traga no pensamento." In Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1905), 13.



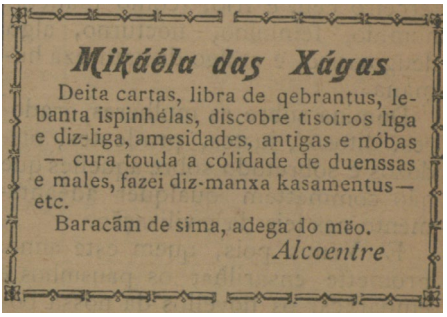


Figure 11. *Left*, D. Monica Vaz // Casts cards – frees from the *quebranto*[72] – raises the *espinhela*,[73] discovers treasures, binds and unbinds friendships, old and new – cures every quality of disease and ill – does and undoes marriages, etc. etc. // Ceitil bystreet, no 86, fifth floor. Lisbon // Consultations on Fridays.[74] Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 332 V.
Figure 12. *Right*, Mikáéla das Xágas // Casts cards, frees from the *quebranto*, raises the *espinhela*, discovers treasures, binds and unbinds friendships, old and new, cures every quality of disease and ill, undoes marriages, etc. // Upper shed, middle cellar. // Alcoentre.[75] Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 390 P.

Michaella the most relevant and frequent female name to feature in Portuguese magical periodicals. On par with Monica, she is the only contributor given a "business card," complete with an "office" address. Monica's and Michaella's cards were largely similar, but while Monica's address did actually seem to describe an existing Lisbon location, possibly suggesting that there was someone behind this name, Michaella's card was notoriously vague.

There was thus an effort to endow Michaella with an extra sense of "personhood," second only to Monica, further reinforced by her name also being found in the *Almanach da Tia Monica e da Tia Micaela*, published by Livraria

72. Literally "the breaking," a set of symptoms frequently associated with the evil eye.
73. A folk designation for a set of symptoms frequently associated with lumbago but also involving Xiphoid process.
74. Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1888), 17.
75. Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1909), 10.

Verol Junior. While this second almanac presented a distinct publisher from that of the *Almanach da Tia Monica*, the Livraria Popular de Francisco Franco, if one analyses the related *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cyprian*, one can find the names of both publishers in the same periodical, meaning that the Livraria Popular and the Livraria de Verol Junior were somehow related, and that both publishers seemed to consciously share the same "universe" of contributor witches and sorceresses.

The *Almanach da Tia Monica e da Tia Micaela*, contrary to the *Almanach da Tia Monica*, did not present a narrative structure, and, apart from Monica and Michaella, had no further contributors or revealed any extra relevant biographical information on its supposed authors. Still, in terms of content attribution, in the 1891 issue Monica is further presented as the discoverer of the writings of the sorcerer Kosmisky, from São Brás de Alportel (district of Faro). Also, Monica's and Michaella's names were frequently featured together as authors of horoscopes and general birth prognostications, and on those occasions where their names were presented separately, Monica, the most frequent of the two, was often associated with harmful sorcery, while Michaella was associated with protective or healing magic.

The last relevant almanac, the *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano*, was also an explicit part of the Monica and Michaella universe, and was by far the one with the greatest amount of urban folk magic content not derived from the *Grande Livro*. Largely contrasting with the remaining almanacs, it was noted as having a clear preference for incantations calling for the aid of St. Cyprian and explicitly demonic forces, as well as presenting a much higher number of harmful sorceries.

The *Verdadeiro Almanach* can be understood as having two distinct moments. In its initial presentation, from its first issue up to 1911, it did not present a clear narrative structure, much like the Monica and Michaella almanac, simply attributing its various points to either St. Cyprian or other ambiguously named contributors. Yet, after 1911 we once again find the name of Monica placed as almanac director, and the publication falls into a similar narrative pattern as that of the *Almanach da Tia Monica*, with its content being attributed to Monica's

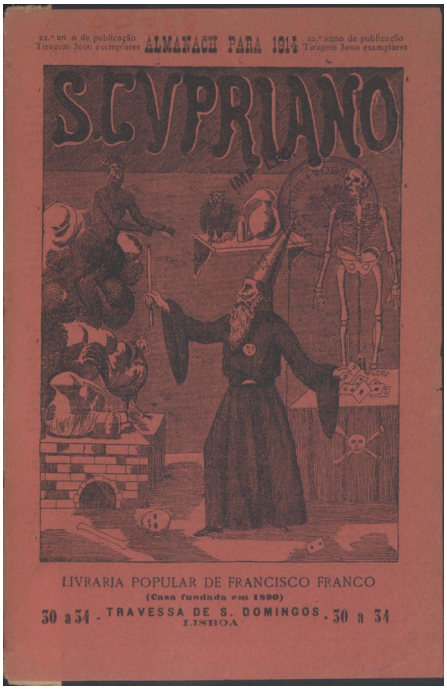


Figure 13. Cover of the *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano* (1914). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Fundo Geral Revistas, cota P.P. 368 V.

colleagues and associates. It should also be noted that, out of all the magic-oriented periodicals, this was the only one which explicitly dealt with political topics in its "judgment of the year," something which happens from its 1909 issue onward as an explicit response to the Portuguese Regicide of 1908.

The *Verdadeiro Almanach* doesn't seem to have had a 1910 edition, as the 1909 one presents the publication number of 18, and the 1911's that of 19. There was then a small hiatus in publication after which this almanac not only acquired a narrative structure and was inserted into Monica's and Michaella's universe, but equally became a politicized periodical, all of which happened immediately after the last known issue of the *Almanach da Tia Monica*.

Before its 1911 issue, it had already presented a number of female correspondents, none of whom were given a particular first name. This was the case of the "Witch of Repouso," heiress of the "Witch of Codeçal" from Porto, who contributed a system of cartomancy in the 1908 issue. In this year were also the ten sorceries offered by the "Sibyls of the Hood," a supposed group of South African witches. Similarly, the 1909 issue had the sorceries of the ten "Gipsy women."

From the moment Monica appeared as almanac director only one instance was given of a female contributor with an ambiguous name: the "Witch Artemisa" from the 1912 issue, contributor of one single set of instructions for the raising and training of a magical divining owl. Regarding more concrete contributors, the first name offered in 1911 is that of Rita Caçappa, the "Witch of Arrentela," who also appeared in the next two issues of this almanac. This was this almanac's most frequent collaborator, being a contributor of female love magic procedures, either meant to get a wayward lover/husband back or to discover his doings and whether he thinks of his lover/wife or not.

Finally, the last name offered by this publication, in its 1914 issue, the last known issue of the *Verdadeiro Almanach*, was that of Martinha da Soledade, "Aunty Martinha," heiress of the love sorceries of Don Juan. Contrary to many of the above-mentioned contributors, Martinha's contributions were associated with various procedures with little coherence among themselves, such as magical advice on how to raise happy children, poppets meant to insure the eternal happiness of a couple, astrological predictions, general physiognomy and a non-magical health regiment.

As a whole, the *Verdadeiro Almanach* presented a much more ominous roster of contributors. Even if the sorceries and magical procedures offered in them were often characterized as beneficial, more than any other publication the *Verdadeiro Almanach* contained many spells explicitly described as aggressive and harmful, and the almanac was often amoral in its offering of such practices. In particular, the presentation given to its nameless contributors, such as the "Sibyls of the Hood" and the "Gipsy Women," was meant to shroud them in an

aura of mystery, offering hints of secret underground communities of foreign and non-European magic practitioners functioning outside social conventions.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century esoteric female writing was a result of specific social, political, and economic circumstances that gave women the possibility of validation as authors. Female participation in open debates and in the global dialogue on magic and the occult was a phenomenon that cannot be separated from the emergence of a cheap and accessible book market, increased literacy, or the breaking of traditional social and gender roles of this time period, with occultism being an intellectual and literary tradition itself rooted in these same circumstances.

Even if the Portuguese almanacs analyzed in this article were not cut-off from global ideas and discourses on the occult, and were themselves irreducible products of their time, the practices they presented, and the purposes to which they prescribed themselves, were not solely contemporary, but rather modern and early modern. They may resort to novel esoteric language and concepts, but these were used in a largely superficial manner; words of the present used to describe practices from the past.

If one would focus solely on the superficial similarities between these almanacs and other forms of European and American female-oriented occult publications of this same period, one will fall into the temptation of projecting equally superficial parallels between them, and given their early modern roots, the place and role these almanacs played in Portuguese society is largely obscured. Rather, they should be seen as a particular literary expression of long-standing Portuguese magical traditions overlapped with local and global notions of occultism and related cultural phenomena.

Looking in depth at this problem of perspective, Miriam Wallraven suggests the struggle of women writers was primarily that of "periphery" *versus* "center,"

or the struggle to be accepted by the dominant patriarchal culture. The same position was occupied by occult discourse in relation to normalized ideas on religion and spiritual practice.[76] Thus, women occult writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found themselves doubly excluded, at the periphery of the periphery, needing to conquer not only the acceptance of general society, but also the acceptance of the men at the center of occult discourse. This struggle was largely absent from these almanacs and the women they portrayed; they were not "authors" of periphery literature seeking acceptance from the center. Rather, they were periphery "authors" aiming for periphery readers, themselves either female or inserted into a form of magical practice historically dominated by women. Also, while there was a tension between men and women in the narratives these almanacs established, such as the direct conflict between Aunty Monica and her almanac directors, or the various instances where the several female contributors presented themselves as heiresses of older male magicians (such as St. Cyprian), these same female contributors were not in competition with any authoritarian man within the esoteric world they occupied. Consequently, the presence of women as associated with urban folk magic was not itself a vehicle or expression of female emancipation, as this had been a source of female dominion and power since at least the sixteenth century; what was indeed emancipatory was their public visibility in printed form.

Analyzing these occultist almanacs from within their own publishing environment, both feminist and non-feminist periodicals, even if liberating in their ambitions, ended up as normalizing agents of female discourse and agency, being almost by definition incapable of encompassing within them the full spectrum of possible female identities. "Women," as they understood them, even if educated and literate, were meant to occupy a specific place in society and were thus still restricted to the spaces attributed to them, be it by masculine society or the feminist movement itself. Feminism in Portugal, instead of elevating all

76. Wallraven, *Women Writers and the Occult in Literature and Culture*, 22.

women, in fact generated a new form of social stratification among them, where a privileged class was able to determine the position, education, opinion or social function of a woman. The characters and names brought to life in these almanacs, within their own fictions, created an alternative network of literary support for women finding themselves excluded from the movements of conventional female empowerment. Such characters represented the socially uncomfortable woman, the woman everyone in Portuguese urban society knew existed, and had always existed, and who had always drawn identity and power from her marginal state.

Looking at the work of Francisco Bethencourt, since the early modern period, folk magical practice in urban centers was often at the base of the creation of social networks of solidarity and mutual aid between marginal and socially vulnerable women, or simply between those who depended on their own labor for sustenance.[77] Such appears to still be the case and function of these occult almanacs; the same women who, up until the eighteenth century, would engage in the practice of urban folk magic or enter into one of its many informal circles, be it for themselves or a client, were exactly the same who, in the nineteenth, would read and follow these almanacs and potentially put their content into practice.

The insistence upon describing their several female directors and contributors, the several supposed letters they sent each other, sharing new magical procedures and details about their lives and mundane difficulties, was meant to simulate what, until the eighteenth century, had been a common occurrence among urban magical practitioners. As the new social dynamics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century came into place, with the emergence of capitalism and a work market of growing egalitarian opportunities, this generated a fragmentation of society into increasingly small parcels, from neighborhoods to families to individuals. There being an increasing difficulty in the establishment of "in-person" networks of magical practitioners among working class women, these almanacs could fulfil the function of virtual/literary focus points for the creation

77. Bethencourt, *O Imaginário da Magia*, 209–10.

of a magic urban subculture. While, previously, a group of women was able to easily gather and share information about magical practice and new clients, now they could read the same periodicals and engage (at least as spectators) in the same dialogue which had historically been their domain and source of authority.

Finally, as a more-or-less macroscopic concluding point, this same time period, the period of the rise and fall of Portuguese republicanism, was the only one in which one might identify the initial makings of what might have been called a "magical revival" – a period in time when literacy among new audiences and social groups was at an all-time high, publications on magic, the occult and esotericism were abundant and cheap and the authority of the crown, the state and the church was wavering under the winds of revolution. Even if targeting a female audience and claiming a place in society traditionally occupied by women, the fictional descriptions of characters such as Monica are also clearly derived from a male imagination of witchcraft and sorcery, and yet they were not depicted as inherently negative, condemnable or evil; they were simply ambiguous, as was the very nature of urban folk magic and the social morality of their own time. Monica, in her initial feud with the directors of her almanac, is referred to as a "Devil ridden woman,"[78] dangerous if crossed, in league with infernal powers and at war with the law and local government. Yet, she is equally presented in this publication as a saint, and her favor can bring forth treasure and prosperity.[79]

This same ambiguity can also be perceived in the very names given to the various female almanac correspondents and authors. Names such as Mafalda da Santa Cruz/Holy Cross (described as a former nun), Andresa da Purificação/ Purification and Michaella das Chagas/[Holy] Wounds, all refer to a Catholic religious universe which is subverted by the portraits of such women as old, fearful witches. The very nature of Portuguese urban folk magic is one of religious subversion, meaning, the use of non-sanctioned methods for the

78. "mulhersinha é levada da bréca," in Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1888), 17.
79. Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1887), 17.

manipulation of cosmological aspects belonging to the socially dominant religion (Catholicism). These and other female names thus construct an image of an unknown underworld for a recent and newly literate and politically aware audience, an underworld populated by subversive religious and social ideas, articulated by powerful and authoritarian women. Although a few male names are offered in these almanacs, such as Aristolitoff,[80] Dequejarlekes,[81] Thomaz d'Olquicoroff[82] or Mr. Donizzéttil,[83] the lion's share of page space, as well as active speech, is always given to a female name of uncertain social allegiance, whether this name had any actual woman behind it or not.

That Monica most likely was not real in no way erases the fact that she was still presented as an authority figure, and eventually as the director of widely distributed publication, establishing a figure not only of knowledge and authority, but also of autonomous economic power. Monica, being a widow, through her magic is able to define herself without the aid of a husband, and, as she demonstrated in her initial feud with the owners of her almanac, has the skill and capacity to bend men to her will and command their obedience, be it through fear or respect.

Such potential for a novel visibility and conception of womanhood and magic in Portugal does not seem to have carried itself very far. The social and political chaos of the Portuguese First Republic, whose lifeblood was itself grounded in the several periodicals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, might have proven too harsh for the survivability of publications as specific as these occult almanacs. The last known issue of any of them is the *Almanach Saragoçano das Feiticeiras*, from 1921, published five short years before the revolution of 1926, which would end the First Republic, establish the National Dictatorship and finally cement itself as the *Estado Novo* in 1932. The self-constructed identity of this new social order, grounded once again in Portuguese

80. Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica* (1907), 12.
81. Anon., *Almanach da Tia Monica e da Tia Micaela* (1896), 19.
82. Anon., *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano* (1893), 19.
83. Anon., *Verdadeiro Almanach de S. Cypriano* (1905), 15.

Catholic millenarian and messianic ideas such as the Miracle of Ourique and the more recent Apparitions of Fátima (as well as in an essentialist notion of the irreducible Catholic identity of the Portuguese "blood"[84]), in a short time established an efficient censorship office which promptly banned literature such as the *Grande Livro*[85] by the end of the thirties. Besides this quick literary and intellectual purging of what was likely the liveliest period of esoteric publishing in Portugal, the *Estado Novo* also reinforced normalized male and female social roles, according to standard Catholic idealism, killing off any potential seeds Monica or Michaella might have planted as alternative role models for both women and men, and driving urban folk magic back into the shadows.

Such a state of affairs would stand largely unchanged until the Carnation Revolution of 1974, which banned most forms of state censorship and reopened the publishing market for esoteric literature. Yet, even if the late 70s and early 80s were relatively prolific in terms of esoteric publications, the production of Portuguese esoteric literature, and ideas, placed under the name of a real author or a fictional character who could be used as inspiration for the creation of new and unique esoteric identities, never really materialized. We are thus left to imagine the history that fictional women could have written.

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84. Salazar, *Discursos e Notas Políticas,* vol. 3, 233.

85. See ANTT, SNI Secretariado Nacional de Informação Direcção dos Serviços de Censura, report nr. 00886.

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