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**SPECIAL ISSUE:**  
**ANTÓNIO VIEIRA AND THE LUSO-BRAZILIAN BAROQUE**

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Antônio Vieira: Word and Power in the Portuguese Baroque

Mendes, Margarida Vieira. *A oratória barroca de Vieira*. Lisboa: Editorial Caminho, 1989. 597 pp. ISBN 972-21-0428-4.

Pécora, [Antonio] Alcir [Bernárdez]. *Teatro do sacramento: a unidade teológica-retórica-política dos sermões de Antonio Vieira*. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo; Campinas: Editora da Universidade de Campinas, 1994. 288 pp. ISBN 85-314-0234-4 (Edusp); 85-268-0319-0 (EdUnicamp).

Vieira, Antônio. *As lágrimas de Heráclito*. Texto original em italiano do padre Antonio Vieira com tradução portuguesa de época e proposição do padre Girolamo Cattaneo em apêndice. Fixação dos textos, introdução e notas de Sonia N. Salomão. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2001. 208 pp. ISBN 85-7326-212-5.

Vieira, Antônio. *Sermões italianos*. Edição, introdução e notas de Sonia N. Salomão. Viterbo: Edizione Sette Città, 1998. 252 pp. ISBN 88-86091-17-6.

Mendes, Margarida Vieira, Maria Lucília Pires, J. Costa Miranda, eds. *Vieira escritor*. Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 1997. 302 pp. ISBN 972-762-073-6.

Antônio Vieira's long life, spanning almost the entire seventeenth century, provides a fitting symbol for the Portuguese baroque. His Jesuit training in Christian scriptures and classical rhetoric, coupled with an agile mind and extraordinary verbal talent, allowed him to give voice and energy to the Catholic reformation. A concerned witness to the proliferation of religious wars and violence, he fully expected the Catholic Church soon to triumph over heretics, heathens and infidels, and to inaugurate a millennium of peace. Energetically engaged in the service of God and king, both in Europe and in America, Vieira proved more successful at preaching than at politics. Always a man of action, words became his greatest legacy. Among the most popular preachers of his day, his written sermons have been published in fifteen volumes. And three hundred years after his death, scholars continue to reflect on the significance of these texts.

In her magisterial work, *A oratória barroca de Vieira*, Margarida Vieira Mendes carefully positions Vieira's sermons within the seventeenth-century baroque. His greatest contribution, she demonstrates, was not to transform the tradition of preaching (contrary to what others have argued, for example, Vieira Mendes remains unconvinced that the *Sermão da Sexagésima* presents a model for a particularly Portuguese style of preaching), but to effectively use the flamboyant, rich textures of the baroque to create vibrant sermons. He was, in short, a man of his time.

Antônio Vieira emerges from his sermons as a creature who is often larger than life, acutely conscious of his place in history and of his ability to understand and to influence the destiny of his nation. In what Vieira Mendes describes as a characteristic of the baroque, Antônio Vieira inserted himself into his sermons using a technique similar to that of the great seventeenth-century Spanish painter, Diego Velázquez (who in *Las Meninas* painted himself as an artist working on the very scene he depicted). Vieira appears as a prophet/preacher within the sermons he delivered, often identifying with Old Testament prophets and with Christ's apostles. The self-referential character of baroque artists included devotion to king and nation, and as a seventeenth-century prophet/apostle, he believed he must instruct the king of Portugal on how best to accomplish the designs of God on earth.

Vieira never wavered in his belief that the Portuguese would fulfill God's providential purpose for the world. Born in a Lisbon ruled from afar by Philip IV of Spain, Vieira's family moved to Brazil when he was still a boy. Schooled at the Jesuit college in Bahia, Vieira was a teenager when Dutch Calvinists attacked Salvador. His gift for language already manifest, the young Vieira was asked to write the annual letter from the Jesuits in Brazil to their General in Rome describing the upheavals caused by the Dutch. Five years later he was teaching in Brazil when the Dutch invaded again, this time successfully seizing and remaining in Pernambuco until 1654. The political struggle between Catholics and Protestants played out before his very eyes. In 1640 when the Portuguese revolt against Hapsburg rule brought John of Bragança to the throne, Vieira's conviction grew that God had great things in store for the Portuguese monarch. He expected John IV to usher in the "Fifth Kingdom," a millennium of peace that would end the conflicts among Protestants, Catholics, Turks, and heathens. For Vieira, as the theater of human history reached its climactic scene, he and his king were destined to play central roles.

His training as a Jesuit preacher and his sensitivity to his own role in the unfolding of history characterize his baroque oratory, as does his awareness of the power of the words he spoke and wrote. For Margarida Vieira Mendes, the discourse of his sermons merits attention. While preaching took greatest possible advantage of certain classical rhetorical schemes (including gestures, inflection, use of visual props), Vieira understood that written sermons required the use of different techniques. When first ordered to prepare his sermons for publication, he hesitated, convinced that the words on a page would represent little more than the lifeless corpses of the words he had spoken. Nonetheless, in obedience to orders from his king and from his superiors in the Society of Jesus, Vieira undertook the arduous task of selecting, recomposing, and preparing for print sermons that had originally been delivered orally. Conscious of the problems involved in reconstructing (often from memory) sermons preached years before in particular geographic and political contexts, he retooled some to fit more current concerns, and wrote others strictly for publication. Published in fifteen volumes (thirteen prepared by Vieira and two edited by others after his death), this *editio princeps* comprises a body of work that is significantly different from the spoken sermons.

In the introduction to the first volume of his sermons, Antônio Vieira asserted that he would organize the sermons for publication without any particular kind of order—they were not to be *sermonários*, arranged around specific themes or particular moments of the liturgical calendar. Instead, he would publish them randomly, as they had been preached. Furthermore, he claimed, since authorities were so eager to see his sermons in print, those most easily prepared for the press should be published first. Margarida Vieira Mendes, however, suggests that Antônio Vieira used the opportunity to compose a life story. The baroque technique of inserting oneself into one's art served a particular purpose for this particular Jesuit father: after being silenced by the Portuguese Inquisition in the 1660s, Vieira could, in the ordering of his sermons, recompose his life in the 1680s and 1690s, retelling his past through the published sermons in order to justify actions for which he had been censured. The finished product served as the preacher's self-portrait. Vieira Mendes demonstrates how Antônio Vieira gave to the written word the power to (re)order his life. Thus, while situating Vieira squarely within the baroque, Margarida Vieira Mendes's ambitious work also gives to readers a sense of the passing of time as she unveils strategies used by a preacher who, late in life, prepared for posterity a body of more than two hundred sermons he had preached years earlier.

If Margarida Vieira Mendes analyzes Antônio Vieira's published sermons as a way of understanding the life of a man situated within a particular historical period, preaching and writing in a particular genre, Alcir Pécora's *Teatro do sacramento* illuminates the

"*unite profonde*" in Vieira's work. Not fully satisfied with Raymond Cantel's view that this unity lies in Vieira's "prophetic convictions," Pécora turns his attention to the central place of the sacrament in Vieira's spoken as well as written *oeuvre*. He describes Vieira's understanding and use of the sacrament as a product of the baroque. Medieval mystical longings for union with God, Pécora asserts, had focused on states of rapture whereby mystics enjoyed "out-of-body" encounters with the divine. By Vieira's time, a shift was underway: mystical union with God was now also understood to be accomplished through God's choice to present himself within his creation. Thus, rather than humans rising out of the material constraints of created forms into a union with the divine, God descended into the material world in order to unite with his creatures. Antônio Vieira, according to Pécora, believed God revealed himself sacramentally in nature, in Christian liturgy, and in politics. For Vieira, God the creator could not be contained fully within any created thing; yet he provided signs of his divine presence in his creation. In order that humans might exercise free will and choice in coming to God, the divine remained hidden (*encoberto*), albeit present, in the sacrament. Divine interaction with the human occurred most powerfully in what the Portuguese called simply the *santíssimo sacramento*: the eucharist. In holy communion, Vieira saw the possibility of mystical union between humankind and God, or a "virtual homogeneity between the human and the divine" (p. 79). In fact, Vieira concluded that Christ's union with those who partook of the consecrated host was actually greater than Christ's union with God, for Christ was begotten of God, but chose (through love) to be united with humans (p. 80). This love knew no boundaries: in the eucharist, the holiest of sacraments, Christ's passion multiplied across time and across space as the single sacrifice on the cross was repeated around the globe and across the centuries. Furthermore, the mystical union with Christ through the holy eucharist provided a union among human beings. Not only did the sacrament unite individuals to Christ: by joining them "into one body," it united Christians among themselves. Here, then, was the political manifestation of the sacrament. Christ's presence within Christians who partook of holy communion shaped a "body of believers," united among themselves through their union with Christ. They formed a polity governed by God and by his anointed king.

This sacramental emphasis, for Pécora, cannot be divorced from Vieira's prophetic voice: the reign of the *Encoberto* prince in the Fifth Kingdom would be the ultimate fulfillment in human form of the sacrament covered in material signs. For Vieira, the Portuguese role in evangelization (thereby allowing the sacramental presence of Christ to be manifest around the globe), and in countering the threats of Protestant heretics and Muslim infidels, gave to that nation a special place in the fulfillment of God's eternal plan. He had no doubt that the Christian ruler of the Fifth Kingdom would be a Portuguese king.

Alcir Pécora sees this prophetic strain in Vieira as "embedded in but not independent of his oratory and hermeneutics" (p. 66). The words of the preacher held inordinate power since the ultimate purpose of preaching, according to Vieira, was the salvation of humankind. Just as God could be sacramentally present in the eucharist, so too could he be present within spoken (and written) words. The care with which Vieira crafted his sermons and later the volumes of *Sermões* reflected his commitment to providing a "true witness" of Christ. While some scholars have viewed the *Sermão da Sexagésima* as a diatribe against court preachers for the excessive ornateness of their sermons, Pécora convincingly argues that Vieira had nothing against rhetorical verve. In fact, he has rightly been considered a master of baroque eloquence. If, however, the manipulation of words was done simply to show the cleverness of the preacher (and thus did not further the possibility that human beings might find God sacramentally embedded

in rhetoric), then it was inappropriate and, far worse, a "false witness," for it pointed away from God.

In both *Teatro do sacramento* and *A oratória barroca de Vieira*, the authors deal with an impressive range of sermons while masterfully addressing a unifying theme. Vieira Mendes focuses on Vieira's Jesuit training with its humanist emphasis on classical rhetoric, and on the literary techniques that make his work a rich example of baroque art. In the process, she demonstrates how his written sermons were composed for reasons at times quite different from those that guided his preaching. Pécora, on the other hand, analyzes a central theological theme that guided the work of an individual committed to the service of God on earth. Whether in the pulpit or at his desk, Antônio Vieira's ultimate goal was the same: to reveal the hidden presence of God and thus hasten the end of history. This religious mission could not be divorced from politics, however, since God chose to rule through a Christian prince. Pécora also demonstrates that Vieira's work cannot be divorced from history: in the seventeenth-century counter-reformation baroque, the eucharist had become a powerful mark, for Catholics, of their superiority over Protestants who accepted only the symbolic presence of Christ in holy communion.

Antônio Vieira was, without doubt, a master of rhetoric. His preaching packed churches, and his published sermons continue to amaze and delight those who read them today. His remarkable skill with language was not restricted to Portuguese: he preached eloquently and effectively in the "heathen tongues" of Maranhão, as well as in the polished Italian of papal Rome. While the *editio princeps* contains no sermon preached to Brazilian Indians, it does include twenty-one delivered in Rome. The work of Sonia N. Salomão allows these Italian sermons to illuminate a particular period in Antônio Vieira's life: the six years he spent in Rome between 1669 and 1675. There he preached both to the Portuguese community (in their own language at the Church of St. Anthony of the Portuguese) and to those who were not his fellow countrymen. Since half of the sermons he delivered in Rome were preached in Italian, they can provide a deeper sense of Vieira's oratorical skills, remarkable even in a foreign language. Rendition of these sermons into Portuguese, in turn, highlights Vieira's role as supervisor of the translation of his own works. Thus the relatively small number of Italian sermons open a valuable window into Vieira's work.

Of the twenty-one "sermons" preached in Rome and included in the Portuguese *editio princeps*, one (in volume XV, edited after Vieira's death) was not a sermon at all. *As lágrimas de Heráclito*, delivered at the second meeting of the Royal Academy under the auspices of Queen Christina of Sweden, was one side of a debate in which Vieira was chosen to argue in favor of the rationality of the weeping of Heraclitus while an Italian Jesuit expounded on the greater reasonableness of the laughter of Democritus. Here we see Vieira's enormous rhetorical skill in a more classical setting. For although he was given the more difficult proposition to argue, and that in a language he claimed not yet to have mastered, he clearly outshone his rival. Sonia Salomão's bilingual edition of *As lágrimas de Heráclito* includes an excellent introduction in which she highlights Vieira's classical training and the admiration he elicited in Roman literary circles. By including the text of Girolamo Cattaneo's defense of the laughter of Democritus, once again in bilingual form, she allows readers today to judge for themselves the extent of Vieira's rhetorical skill. The juxtaposition of Vieira's Italian and a translator's early eighteenth-century Portuguese version clearly demonstrate Vieira's command of the classics and mastery of the Italian language.

Salomão has, appropriately, edited the sermons preached in Italian separately from *As lágrimas de Heráclito*. Her edition of Italian sermons collects the seven extant sermons in the language in which they were preached, preceded by an introduction in Portuguese setting them within a historical context. Those interested in comparing the

Portuguese and Italian versions of the sermons preached in Rome must, however, rely on the *editio princeps* alongside Salomão's *Sermões italianos*. Although ten sermons originally preached in Italian are included in Portuguese translation in the *editio princeps*, only seven have been found printed in the original language in pamphlet form and have now been reprinted by Salomão: the *Sermone delle Stimmate di S. Francesco*; the *Sermone del Beato Stanislao*; and *Le Cinque Pietre della Fionda di David*, a series of five short sermons preached on each of the five Tuesdays of Lent in 1674 to Christina of Sweden. These sermons were translated into Spanish and Portuguese in versions Vieira criticized for being too literal and thus not giving enough attention to how words were expressed (in sound and rhythm as well as in subtle shades of meaning) differently in different languages. Ultimately Vieira agreed to an "official" Portuguese version that he oversaw and reworked: these translations were included in the later volumes of the *editio princeps*. With multiple versions in multiple languages, the Italian sermons allow one to examine how, for Vieira, the written language conveyed more than the simple content of sermons; he cared deeply about the aesthetics of language. His Italian sermons found enthusiastic audiences in Rome as he continued to champion the Catholic Church under attack by Protestants and Muslims. The *Sermone del Beato Stanislao*, for example, once again takes up the theme of the importance of Christian military forces in pushing back the advances of the Turks as Europeans were once again concerned by the aggression of Sultan Osman II, who seemed poised to overrun Poland on his way toward Western Europe.

For historians, the broader context of Vieira's sojourn in Rome is also particularly interesting, as is the fact that he preached not only in Italian but in Portuguese as well. Vieira had been sent to Rome in order to expedite sainthood for Inácio de Azevedo and 39 other Jesuit missionaries who had been murdered by Calvinist corsairs while making their way to Brazil in 1570. As canonization of these "Forty Martyrs of Brazil" languished in Rome, the Portuguese hoped that Vieira might speed the process to its desired end (this did not happen: the forty martyrs became saints only in 1854). Yet Vieira accomplish a good deal while in Rome. His official mission served as pretext for a more personal one: he hoped to convince the Pope to lift the ban imposed by the Portuguese Inquisition on his preaching and writing. Not only was the ban lifted, the Pope exempted Vieira from the jurisdiction of any national Inquisition, leaving him only under the authority of the Roman Inquisition.

On several occasions Vieira was called upon to preach to the Portuguese community in Rome at the church of St. Anthony of the Portuguese on that saint's feast day. On these occasions he again demonstrated his own identification with the subjects of his sermons, often linking his personal travails to those of St. Anthony of Padua who, Vieira reiterated frequently, although born in Lisbon was not recognized for his greatness until he had left his country and found acclaim elsewhere. For Vieira, this paralleled his own experience that the Portuguese were more inclined to recognize his talents after they had been praised by others.

Vieira's Roman sojourn also strengthened his position as a leading soldier in the battle against Protestant reformers. His popularity with Christina of Sweden, who had abdicated her throne in order to convert to Catholicism, projected him into the highest circles of Catholic Rome. Under the orders of the João Paulo Oliva, General of the Society of Jesus, Vieira began preaching in Italian, thus making his talent more visible to the Church hierarchy. It is possible that Oliva, Vieira's staunch supporter, hoped that Vieira would replace him as preacher to the Pope. Although Christina requested that he become her confessor, Vieira preferred to leave Rome in 1675 for Portugal. Some have speculated that he hoped, following his enthusiastic reception in Rome, that Pedro II would entrust him with important diplomatic missions. When these did not materialize,

he returned to Brazil in 1681 where he remained until his death in 1697. There he pushed ahead with the large task of editing his sermons and preparing them for publication. He dedicated a significant part of his final years in Brazil to preparing his legacy. At the same time, he remained convinced that his greatest work was to be found in unveiling Biblical prophecies. While the monographs reviewed in this essay focus on the sermons, Vieira believed that the prophetic word, linking faith and politics, was the most powerful of all.

Three hundred years after his death, his words continue to draw audiences. In January of 1997, the Departamento de Literaturas Românticas da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa sponsored a conference on the work of António Vieira; the proceedings have been published in *Vieira escritor*. Short, and sometimes preliminary, the twenty-one papers in that volume give evidence to particular areas of continued scholarly interest in Vieira's writings. As might be expected, a central theme remains his use of language and his published sermons as literature. There is, however, also a growing concern with developing a better sense of the audiences to which Vieira preached. Frits Smulders, for example, in his paper on "Tradições manuscritas na obra de António Vieira," calls for the inclusion of the extant *apógrafos* in critical editions of the sermons. Some of these manuscripts, he believes, are transcriptions of sermons as they were preached. Thus, they may provide a better sense of the oral delivery and of how Vieira's preaching was received by specific audiences. Adma Muhana, in "Quando não se escreve o que se fala," asserts that when the audience was the Inquisition, Vieira tried to make use of the greater power of oratory, adding to the spoken word gestures, inflections, gazes, even certain kinds of clothing, and thus transmitting multiple meanings to the same word. The Inquisition, on the other hand, insisting on the written word alone, strove to limit words to one sole meaning.

While in the past scholars have used Vieira's letters and political histories to provide context for the sermons, there is growing interest in situating the sermons within the artistic milieu of the baroque, comparing them with visual arts such as paintings and other forms of baroque literary production such as funeral orations. Papers by Vítor Serrão ("A parenética e a linguagem da pintura no tempo do Padre António Vieira") and by Fernando António Baptista Pereira ("Do *Discurso Sobre a Morte* no Portugal de Seiscentos às pompas fúnebres das exéquias do Padre António Vieira") point the way to further studies of interactions between visual arts and literature in seventeenth-century Portugal.

Yet it is the prophetic writings that seem most to intrigue scholars today. Ten of the twenty-one papers in *Vieira escritor* return to this theme that Vieira himself privileged as the key element in his life's work. Portuguese scholars are now translating the Latin manuscript of *Clavis Prophetarum* in preparation for the publication of a critical edition. Others place Vieira's work on prophecy into a broad European context, such as Silvano Peloso in "*Ut libri prophetici melius intelligantur, omnium temporum historia complectenda est: o Quinto Império de António Vieira e o debate europeu nos séculos XVI e XVII,*" and Luísa Trias Folch's "O milenarismo no século XVII: Gonzalo Tenorio e António Vieira."

Clearly, the kingdom of long lasting peace heralded by Vieira has not come. War and violence continue to haunt a world torn by religious hatred and national pride. There is no Portuguese Christian king to preside with the Pope over a Christian millennium.

Although his skill as a prophet has not yet been demonstrated, few question Antônio Vieira's immense literary talent. The artists of the baroque, not least among them Father Antônio Vieira, have left evidence of energy and extravagance that move audiences even today.

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Vieira, Antônio. *Clavis Prophetarum. Chave dos Profetas. Livro III*. Edição crítica, fixação do texto, tradução, notas e glossário de Arnaldo do Espírito Santo. Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional, 2000.

Em 1994, uma equipe que incluía historiadores, latinistas, gramáticos e estudiosos da obra do padre Antônio Vieira, reunida no Congresso Gênese e Memória em São Paulo, ocorrido na Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo, formalizou um projeto de edição da *Clavis Prophetarum*, aquela última obra de Vieira que, à sua morte, ficara incompleta, tendo-a ele ditado ao seu secretário, o padre Bonucci, nos últimos meses de vida, quando se encontrava quase totalmente cego e surdo. Além de professores e pós-graduandos da Faculdade, dessa equipe fazia parte Margarida Vieira Mendes, que, em suas frequentes visitas ao Brasil, participou das discussões que, por fim, levaram ao esfacelamento da equipe inicial. Com empenho, resolveu levar adiante o projeto em Portugal, imprimindo-lhe, naturalmente, outras características. Dedicou-se a adquirir material para realizar uma edição crítica, desejava de sanar um dos tantos *non-senses* da bibliografia portuguesa, que há três séculos mantinha uma obra de tal autor inédita em arquivos. Infelizmente, no fim do ano de 1996, descobriu-se acometida por doença que, em menos de dois meses, veio a matá-la.

O tradutor convidado por Margarida Vieira Mendes para levar a cabo a imensa tarefa de traduzir do latim a *opera magna* de Vieira, Arnaldo do Espírito Santo, herdou a bibliografia por ela coletada e, naturalmente, imprimiu outras características ao projeto. O resultado é esta edição, que contempla a tradução do Livro III da *Clavis Prophetarum*, ao qual se deverá seguir outro ou outros volumes, relativos aos Livros I e II. É o que se deduz da nota introdutória: "É minha intenção que, com as devidas autorizações, o material pertinente venha a ser incluído na *introdução geral ao primeiro volume* desta edição" (p.XXI, grifos meus); e também na p.XX: "De todas estas questões se fará desenvolvida apresentação na *introdução geral* a incluir no primeiro volume desta edição".

O problema é que, tendo recebido um espólio não inteiramente organizado e, talvez, não suficientemente refletido por quem o recolhera, Arnaldo do Espírito Santo vestiu a pele do leão e, com dificuldades, lançou-se à tarefa de editá-lo, mesmo sendo patente sua falta de intimidade com as questões levantadas pela obra vieiriana. Destaquei um aspecto apenas para comprovar tal afirmativa, sem que com isso deixe de reconhecer o esforço e a oportunidade que teve em ser o último responsável pela tradução e edição de tão importante escrito.

O que merece ser discutido aqui é o papel deste Livro III no interior da *Clavis*, ideada por Vieira para ter quatro livros, não sendo porém esta a ocasião para discorrer sobre a tão intrincada e complexa questão da estrutura possível da *Clavis Prophetarum* nas diversas ocasiões em que Vieira a mencionou. Isso procurei fazê-lo em minha dissertação de mestrado, intitulada *Os recursos retóricos na obra especulativa de*

Antônio Vieira, e defendida em 1989 na mesma Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo. Mas o editor, Arnaldo do Espírito Santo, justifica ter iniciado por esse Livro III a publicação da *Clavis Prophetarum* a conselho de Margarida Vieira Mendes, que, "tanto quanto se lembra", teria alegado para isso dois motivos (p.XIX): por o Livro III "falar mais diretamente da *Pregação Universal do Reino de Cristo*, tema de reflexão de extrema actualidade no momento em que se aproximam as comemorações dos dois mil anos de Cristianismo" e porque "nele se concentram todos os problemas de edição e fixação do texto" (grifos do original). Ora, basta folhear a obra de Margarida Vieira Mendes, com seu cuidado em evitar anacronismos na interpretação dos textos vieiranos, para saber que jamais alegaria, como causa extrínseca, "comemorações de dois mil anos de Cristianismo" para iniciar uma edição da *Clavis Prophetarum* por este terceiro e último Livro. Em seus estudos sobre Vieira—na sua tese de doutoramento *A oratória barroca de Vieira*, mas também em escritos menores como "Vieira no Cabo de Não: os descobrimentos no Livro Antepimeiro da História do Futuro" ou "Comportamento profético e comportamento retórico em Vieira" e outros—a estudiosa importou-se sempre em esclarecer os fatores pertinentes à Igreja no século XVII, com sua teologia contra-reformada, dissociando-os daqueles pertencentes à instituição na modernidade, de modo a compreender, etiológica e historicamente, a atuação de Vieira no seio da cultura e da sociedade seiscentista. Quanto ao segundo motivo lembrado pelo tradutor, qual seja, o concentrar "problemas de edição e fixação do texto", claro está que esses não são apanágio do Livro III—como sabem todos os que já tiveram algum exemplar da *Clavis* em mãos—, mas razão geral para que a obra, como um todo e em suas partes, permanecesse até então inédita.

Se lermos o último artigo escrito por Margarida Vieira Mendes, "*Chave dos profetas: a edição em curso*" (em M. V. Mendes, M. L. G. Pires e J. C. Miranda, *Vieira Escritor*, Lisboa: Cosmos, 1997, p.31-39), apresentado no Congresso Internacional Vieira Escritor, que organizou em Lisboa por ocasião do terceiro centenário da morte de Vieira, encontraremos ali as principais razões pelas quais julgou que uma edição da *Clavis* deveria principiar pelo tratado "Da pregação universal do Evangelho prévia ao último estado da Igreja", o qual corresponde, apenas, aos capítulos 3 a 9 do Livro III. Fundamentalmente, a razão era porque esse tratado—e não todos os nove capítulos do Livro III agora publicados, repito—constituía, para a pesquisadora, "uma parte orgânica da obra", da qual dependia, em termos lógicos, a discussão encetada nos dois primeiros Livros, relativa ao reino de Cristo na Terra e à consumação do terceiro estado da Igreja, ou Igreja triunfante (p.35). Nisso, adotava o título que o padre Bonucci dera para esse terceiro Livro: "Disposições prévias para a consumação do Reino de Cristo" (grifo meu). Mas esta opção pelo encadeamento lógico e não seqüencial visava ainda a impedir que um discurso incompleto e fragmentado como o da *Clavis* fosse publicado como obra inteira—à semelhança da *História do futuro* editada por Lúcio de Azevedo e da *Apologia das coisas profetizadas*, por mim editada (p.33). Margarida Vieira Mendes desejava preservar o caráter inconcluso de um escrito elaborado em tempos saltados, uns capítulos depois de outros que ocupariam Livros ulteriores. Só a lógica, e não um *continuum* narrativo, poderia impedir a indesejada ilusão de unidade numa obra sobre a qual o autor não pôde imprimir a última demão.

Ainda por esta razão, esse tratado do Livro III deveria ocupar um lugar cimeiro na *Clavis Prophetarum*: sendo voz comum dos estudiosos que fora escrita inteiramente na Bahia, onde o padre Vieira se recolheu a partir de 1681 até sua morte em 1697, Margarida encontrou menções nos livros I e II que demonstravam terem sido redigidos em Roma (p.32), onde Vieira morou entre 1669 e 1675, depois de ter sido suspensa a pena inquisitorial que pesou sobre ele até junho de 1668, proibindo-o de se afastar do Reino sem autorização do Santo Ofício. Pela indicações textuais internas, a estudiosa