



Heraldry and entailment identity in pre-modern Portugal¹

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Abstract: Like the nobilities and aristocracies of pre-modern Europe, many Portuguese noble families used heraldry to build, consolidate, transmit, and perpetuate identity traits that, internally and externally, defined a sense of belonging to a group. Among the different solutions adopted to regulate the use and transmission of arms and the rest of the family's symbolic heritage were entails. Entails were legal institutions that framed kinship and organized heritage transmission. They were also creators of identity, here defined as "entailment identity". The aim of this article is to evaluate the relationship between heraldry and entailment identity from a holistic and contextual perspective. It aims to present the role played by heraldry within the scope of entailment, contextualizing the interpretation of heraldic manifestations within a broader identity logic. The concept of entailment identity is briefly presented in the first section of the article. The second section demonstrates the functioning of the relationship between heraldry and entailment identity based on a case study, the entail founded in 1621 by a secretary of state of king Filipe II, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão.

Keywords: heraldry, entailment identity, entails, noble families, Portugal

ENG Identidad vincular en el Portugal premoderno

Resumen: Al igual que las noblezas y las aristocracias de la Europa premoderna, muchas familias nobles portuguesas utilizaron la heráldica para construir, consolidar, transmitir y perpetuar rasgos de identidad que, interna y externamente, definían el sentimiento de pertenencia a un grupo. Entre las soluciones adoptadas para regular el uso y la transmisión de las armas y del patrimonio simbólico familiar se encontraban los vínculos. Los vínculos eran instituciones jurídicas que enmarcaban el parentesco y organizaban la transmisión de patrimonio. También eran creadores de identidad, aquí definida como "identidad vincular". El objetivo de este artículo es evaluar la relación entre heráldica e identidad vincular desde una perspectiva holística y contextual. Se trata de presentar el papel desempeñado por la heráldica en el ámbito de la vinculación, contextualizando la interpretación de las manifestaciones heráldicas en una lógica identitaria más amplia. El concepto de identidad vincular se presenta brevemente en la primera sección del artículo. La segunda sección demuestra el funcionamiento concreto de la relación entre heráldica y identidad vincular a partir de un estudio de caso, el vínculo instituido en 1621 por un secretario de estado de Filipe II, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão.

Palabras clave: heráldica, identidad vincular, vínculos, nobleza, Portugal

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1. Introduction

Like the nobility and aristocracy of pre-modern Europe, many Portuguese noble families used heraldry to build, consolidate, transmit, and perpetuate identity traits that, internally and externally, individually and collectively, defined a sense of belonging to a group. These families adopted different solutions to regulate the use and transmission of arms and the rest of the family's symbolic heritage, including entails (*vínculos*).

In line with what took place in several other kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, entails gradually gained momentum in late-medieval Portugal among the nobility, becoming fully consolidated in the mid-16th century². Entails (*morgadios*, chapels) can be broadly described as

a legal institution that framed kinship structures and organized heritage transmission, mainly by benefitting the eldest male son and by preventing lineage voids and breaks. Entails were created to ensure power continuity, to grant social, political and legal autonomy to families, to allow control of wealth (both material and symbolic), to create social boundaries, to resist trends of central power strengthening. In Iberian kingdoms, they were also very important to organize colonial appropriation of land³.

Entails were therefore corporate bodies, developed within corporate and legally plural societies. With the foundation of an entail, its founder immobilized a material patrimony and established the order of its transmission, usually associating with it certain pious charges for the salvation of their soul. The entail could also include a set of rules and codes of conduct for the heirs responsible for administering the patrimony, imposing strict family discipline. Among these codes was the regulation of the use and transmission of intangible and symbolic heritage, including the family name and its respective arms: through the foundation of an entail, the founder could force the heirs to use certain family names and arms in perpetuity, “until the end of the world”.

Several authors have already drawn attention to the symbolic dimension of entails, which, in Dedieu's words, reveals the profound nature of these institutions, far beyond the transmission of assets of economic value⁴. It is precisely this

dimension that explains why many foundations have survived even when they no longer had any financial value, as Melero Muñoz points out⁵. And it has also contributed to the longevity of the entailment system over the course of around five centuries until the definitive extinction of entails in Portugal in 1863. In fact, the imposition of family names and arms is one of the most illustrative demonstrations of the extent of the founders' power in the construction of the ideal heir, their affirmation as institutors, and their ability, as such, to shape the Son in the image of the Father.

Entails have thus contributed to the construction, consolidation, transmission, and perpetuation of a supra-individual corporate identity that I designate as “entailment identity”. While historiography has focused on the compulsory use of family names and arms as the main manifestation of entailment identity, the process of building identity through entails is multidimensional. And, as it will be demonstrated over the following pages, heraldry plays a part in these multiple dimensions among the noble groups who used arms.

This analysis stems from a broader research project on entailment identity within the framework of the VINCULUM project. Broadly speaking, the aim of this project is to conceptualize and explain entails in pre-modern societies in Southern Europe around the central components of the agency of the entailment corporate body, kinship, power and identity⁶. One of its main outputs is a database of Portuguese entails dating from the 14th to the 17th centuries, which currently includes documentation produced by around 7000 *vínculos*⁷.

During my research into entailment identity, I examined around 600 written records produced by approximately 500 entails, with the aim of identifying the ways in which the founders used entails to build, consolidate, transmit, and perpetuate identity. Among the documents that make up the sample, the most relevant typology are the so-called entail foundation documents, i.e. the written records that formalize the foundation of a *morgadio* or chapel, usually in the form of wills or foundation deeds. These documents constituted legal proof of the founders' will and, therefore, the internal law of the entails, which had to be followed in perpetuity by the administrators and all involved parties. As Maria de Lurdes Rosa writes, they were the “constitution” of the structure being created⁸.

Despite their central role in the study of entails, this documental typology has limitations that, in turn, condition knowledge of the historical phenomenon under analysis. Historians who have examined pre-modern wills have already highlighted these limitations, which, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the case, apply to most foundation documents. Their “strong notary

² Maria de Lurdes Rosa, *O morgadio em Portugal, séculos XIV-XV. Modelos e formas de comportamento linhagístico* (Lisbon: Estampa, 1995); Maria de Lurdes Rosa, *As Almas Herdeiras. Fundação de Capelas Fúnebres e Afirmação da Alma como Sujeito de Direito (Portugal 1400-1521)* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2012); Maria de Lurdes Rosa, “Preventing Household Failure: Figures of Authority in Familial Corporate Bodies”, *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques*, no. 22 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.4000/acrh.11096>.

³ “What were entails”, VINCULUM project, accessed April 12th, 2024, <https://www.vinculum.fcsh.unl.pt/>.

⁴ Jean-Pierre Dedieu, “Famílias, mayorazgos, redes de poder: Extremadura, siglos XV-XVIII”, in *Historia y perspectivas de investigación: estudios en memoria del profesor Angel Rodríguez Sánchez*, coord. Miguel Rodríguez Cancho and Ángel Rodríguez Sánchez (Spain: Editora Regional de Extremadura, 2002), 111.

⁵ Isabel Melero Muñoz, *Linaje, vinculación de bienes y conflictividad en las élites nobiliarias de la España moderna. Los conflictos en torno a la sucesión del mayorazgo (XVII-XVIII)* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2021), 658.

⁶ More information about the VINCULUM project at <https://www.vinculum.fcsh.unl.pt/about/>.

⁷ The VINCULUM project database is available at <https://www.vinculum-database.fcsh.unl.pt/>.

⁸ Rosa, “Preventing Household Failure”, § 5.

component⁹” makes it often difficult to distinguish the voices of the notaries from those of the founders. Some clauses reflect the wishes, devotions, and convictions of the founders, but many others appear stereotyped due to the frequent use of pre-existing forms¹⁰. Clive Burgess has also underlined what they called “testamentary silence”, i.e. the various pious acts or funeral arrangements that were not mentioned in the wills. As a result, wills do not necessarily (or at all) reveal the “true extent of pious investment” of the testators, nor the entirety of their wishes and instructions¹¹. The same applies to the third and final limiting aspect of the historiographical use of wills and foundation deeds, namely the fact that these documents express intentions and not the actual fulfillment of those intentions¹². The founders’ determinations didn’t always come to fruition, as evidenced by the many judicial processes that involved heirs and family members over the centuries. Hence the importance of complementing the study of entailment with other written records that make up the archives produced by entails and attest to practices beyond intentions; and of considering an integral part of these archives the constellation of unwritten traces such as, for example, the coats-of-arms affixed to graves or manor houses. Conceived in this way, the entails’ archives are a privileged (but still underused) source for the study of heraldry, as some authors have already shown¹³.

The aim of this article is to evaluate the relationship between heraldry and entailment identity from a holistic and contextual perspective; in other words, it intends to present the role played by heraldry in the context of entailment during the 14th and 17th centuries, contextualizing the interpretation of heraldic manifestations within a broader identity logic. More than a technical description of these manifestations, I am interested in understanding not only the symbolic connotations and the functions assigned to heraldry, but also how it is articulated and gains meaning in relation to other components of the process of identity construction through entails.

The concept of entailment identity is briefly presented in the first section of the article. The second section demonstrates the functioning of the relationship between heraldry and entailment identity based on one of the most comprehensive case studies in the sample, the *morgadio* instituted in 1621 by a secretary of state of king Filipe II (of Portugal), Luís de Figueiredo Falcão.

2. What is entailment identity?

Although it must be recognized that the use of the concept of identity can be problematic – not least due to the multiplicity of definitions that have been used across the social sciences and humanities over the last decades – I believe that it is useful for characterizing the historical realities under analysis. By “entailment identity” I understand the processes through which certain identity traits were built, consolidated, transmitted, and perpetuated through entails. These traits helped define a sense of belonging to a group, both internally and externally, individually and collectively. In southern pre-modern societies, which were organized in corporate bodies and characterized by the existence of plural sources of legal authority, entailment identity was corporate, collective, and supra-individual, meaning that the interests of the corporate body – the family – were placed above those of the individuals.

The construction, consolidation, transmission, and perpetuation of entailment identity manifested itself in five central dimensions, relatively stable throughout the chronological period under analysis: the preservation of the name’s memory through the imposition of the obligatory use of a family name or family name and arms; the construction of the perfect heir, achieved by excluding successors who didn’t correspond to a certain physical, mental and moral image from the entail’s administration; the management of the dead, evident in careful and detailed funeral, liturgical, pious, and devotional instructions for the well-being of the souls of the

⁹ Herminia Vilar, “Rituais da morte em testamentos dos séculos XIV e XV”, in *O reino dos mortos na Idade Média peninsular*, dir. José Mattoso (Lisbon: Edições João Sá da Costa, 1995), 165-166.

¹⁰ Maria de Lurdes Rosa, “Imagem física, saúde mental e representação familiar: a exclusão de deficientes à sucessão de morgadio (instituições, legislação, literatura jurídica)”, in *Arqueologia do Estado. I Jornadas sobre formas de organização e exercício dos poderes da Europa do Sul, séculos XIII-XVIII* (Lisbon: História e Crítica, 1988), vol. 2, 1065; Jean-Claude Marandet, *Le souci de l’au-delà : La pratique testamentaire dans la région toulousaine (1300-1450)* (Perpignan: Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 1998), Introduction, § 9, 10.4000/books.pupvd.33134; Peter Heat, “Urban piety in the later Middle Ages: the evidence of Hull will”, in *The Church. Politics and patronage in the fifteenth century*, ed. R.B. Dobson (Gloucester/New York: A. Sutton / St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 212; J. D. Alsop, “Religious preambles in Early Modern English wills as formulae”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol 40, no. 1 (Jan 1989), 9-27; Louis Stouff, “Les Provençaux et la mort dans les testaments (XIII^e-XV^e. siècle)”, in *La mort et l’au-delà en France méridionale (XII^e-XV^e. siècle)* (Toulouse, Privat, 1998), 201; Maria de Lurdes Rosa, “Da fundação da Diocese a 1505”, in *História da Diocese de Viseu*, dir. José Pedro Paiva (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2016), vol. 1, 553.

¹¹ Clive Burgess, “‘By quick and by dead’: wills and pious provisions in late medieval Bristol”, *The English Historical Review*, no. CCCCXV (Oct 1987), 840 and 855-856; Clive Burgess, “‘Longing to be prayed for’: death and commemoration in an English parish”, in *The place of the dead. Death and remembrance in late medieval and early modern Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Marshall P. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 60.

¹² Marie-Hélène Rousseau, *Saving the Souls of Medieval London Perpetual Chantries at St Paul’s Cathedral, c.1200-1548* (Farnham: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 8; Heat, “Urban piety”, 213.

¹³ Miguel Metelo de Seixas, “A heráldica e os arquivos de família: formas de conservação e gestão da memória”, in *Arquivos de família, séculos XII-XX: que presente, que futuro?*, coord. Maria de Lurdes Rosa (Lisbon: IEM/CHAM/Caminhos Romanos, 2012), 449-462; Miguel Metelo de Seixas and João Bernardo Galvão-Telles, “‘E tragam as armas dos Costas direitas em todos os lugares, e peças’. O património

armoriado de D. Álvaro da Costa e de sua descendência: uma estratégia de comunicação?”, in *D. Álvaro da Costa e a sua descendência, séculos XV-XVII: poder, arte e devoção*, coord. Maria de Lurdes Rosa (Lisbon: IEM/CHAM/Caminhos Romanos, 2013), 319-342; Maria de Lurdes Rosa, “Elementos para o estudo dos usos da heráldica a partir da produção documental familiar (Portugal, séculos XIV-XVI)”, in *Estudos de heráldica medieval*, coord. Miguel Metelo de Seixas and Maria de Lurdes Rosa (Lisbon: IEM-Caminhos Romanos, 2012), 333-353.

deceased; community integration, through various actions contributing to the social and political influence of the founders and their family group, while benefiting local communities; and, finally, the power of the archive, understood as a social and political tool, which motivated various informational and archival practices. The general features of each of these dimensions will be described in the next section.

Before moving on, however, it's important to note that similar processes of identity construction have been identified in family groups that didn't resort to entails; in other words, families could preserve the memory of their name, regulate the characteristics and behavior of heirs, manage the dead, impose themselves socially and politically in the community, and produce and manage archives without resorting to entails. However, when aggregated within the legal framework of an entail, these processes take on three characteristics. The first comes from the legal force of the founder's wishes, combined with the legal force of the will of the deceased. A very diverse set of actions and behaviors by the entail administrators depended not on individual agency or potential intra-family agreements, but on a legal imperative imposed by the founder and regulated in the entail foundation document. The second characteristic is that entailment identity was built under threat, *ad metum*. The overwhelming majority of entailment clauses include a certain determination imposed by the founder, followed by the punishment that awaited the heir who failed to fulfill that determination. The punishments could include the curse of the founder, temporary deprivation of the entail's income or, ultimately, complete loss of the administration. The consequences of these punishments weren't only economic, political, or social. They also had a profound moral and identity impact, associated with the role as representative of the ancestors expected of the administrators. Finally, the identity built through entails was fixed, at least in terms of intentions, on a horizon of perpetuity. Although these intentions didn't always come to fruition – either not at all, or at least not in the desired way –, in the mind of the founders this identity was intended to be perpetual and immutable. Therefore, it was projected into the future, legally implicating persons who had not yet been born.

In some entails, heraldry plays a part in each of these dimensions, as it will be demonstrated in the case study presented below, one of the most complete in the sample when it comes to the uses of heraldry in the context of entailment.

3. The entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão (1621)

Among the hundreds of entails that attest to the use of heraldry by Portuguese pre-modern noble families, the *morgadio* instituted by Luís de Figueiredo Falcão in 1621 stands out. This foundation is particularly illustrative of the transversal role played by heraldry in the multiple dimensions of entailment identity: it includes the obligatory use of family names and the respective

arms; it illustrates the careful construction of the image of the heir who would bear these names and arms; it demonstrates the role played by heraldry in the burial spaces where perpetual masses were to be celebrated for the souls of the founder and his "family of the dead"; it reveals the community dimension of the entails associated with the foundation of a religious institution marked with the founder's heraldic symbols; it attests to the importance attributed to informational and archival practices, including the production of a copy of the foundation document illuminated with the arms of mandatory use and accompanied by a certificate from the King of Arms; and finally, it emphasises the importance of combining the written records with the rest of the informational production of the entails, since the former are silent in relation to various heraldic representations known through material traces.

Luís de Figueiredo Falcão was born in Pinhel (Guarda) in the middle of the 16th century, the son of Heitor de Sela Falcão and Joana Figueiredo. He was a royal servant, holding various positions in the Crown's bureaucracy throughout his life. He began his journey up the social ladder in the household of D. Catarina of Austria, wife of king João III, serving as a chamberlain until 1575. From that year until the queen's death, he enjoyed the position of pensioner and was later elevated to the status of noble squire in the household of king Filipe I (of Portugal). His services continued to be rewarded, firstly with the office of steward of the *Palácio da Madeira*¹⁴. In 1586, he was already identified as noble knight of the house of the king in a royal letter of grace for the office of clerk of the Houses of India and Mina¹⁵. About six years later, he received the offices of Secretary of State from king Filipe II, joining him whenever he was outside Portugal¹⁶, and of secretary of the *Junta da Fazenda de Portugal*, at which point he rose to the rank of nobleman of the royal house. After returning to Portugal, he took on the role of clerk of the Treasury, which he held until shortly before his death. Despite this exemplary career, the name of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão prevailed in historiography mainly as the author of a book containing the income, expenses and profits earned from the Portuguese territories and India, as well as other related matters, which is today one of the most relevant sources for the study of late 16th century economic history¹⁷.

¹⁴ Félix Labrador Arroyo, "La Casa Real Portuguesa de Felipe II y Felipe III: la articulación del reino a través de la integración de las elites de poder (1580-1621)" (PhD thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2006), vol. II, 859.

¹⁵ Grace warrant given to Luís de Figueiredo Falcão by king Filipe I, Madrid, 4th June, 1586, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Chancelaria régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe I, liv. 15, f. 281v. On Luís de Figueiredo Falcão's role as clerk of the Houses of India and Mina see Bruno A. Martinho, "Beyond Exotica. The consumption of non-European things through the case of Juan de Borja (1569-1626)" (PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2018), 108-111.

¹⁶ Grace warrant given to Luís de Figueiredo Falcão by king Filipe II, Valladolid, 22nd August, 1602, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Chancelaria régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe II, liv. 7, f. 274v.

¹⁷ Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, *Livro em que se contém toda a fazenda e real património dos reinos de Portugal, Índia, ilhas*

Another of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão's remarkable works was the foundation of the Monastery of São Luís or Santa Clara de Pinhel in 1596, designed to house a community of Poor Clares. This is where the founder is buried, as well as his only son, António Heitor de Figueiredo, born of his marriage to Maria de Quinhones. After his wife's death, the former secretary established a *morgadio* in favor of his son António on October 22nd, 1621. Like in the case of several other founders who ascended socially mainly through the service of the royal household, the *morgadio* was established only after his social and economic position was consolidated. The foundation was therefore a tool to crystallize recently obtained socioeconomic privileges that could henceforth be transmitted to the next generations. Luís de Figueiredo Falcão seems to have written his will a few days after establishing the entail, although I was unable to locate this document. However, the entail foundation deed is preserved today in a copy made in the books of the chancellery of king Filipe III (of Portugal), inserted in the royal letter of confirmation of the institution, and allows us to glimpse another facet of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão aside from that of official and author – that of founder¹⁸. It is precisely this document that will be examined below, focusing on how heraldry intersects with the different dimensions of entailment identity.

3.1. Preserving the memory of the founder's name

Like several other similar entail foundation deeds, the one written on behalf of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão opens with a brief reflection on the usefulness of founding an entail. Following a formulaic introduction, the benefits that the entail offered to the service of God and the King are mentioned, as well as the desire to preserve the memory of the founder's name and contribute to the enrichment of the noble houses¹⁹.

To this end, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão entailed several assets and imposed several conditions. The very first was the mandatory and perpetual use of his two family names, Figueiredo on the maternal side, and Falcão, on the paternal side. The heirs, guardians of the memory of his name, should also bear the arms of both family names (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

adjacentes de sua coroa e outras muitas particularidades, no place, 1617, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Manuscritos vindos do Ministério da Instrução Pública, liv. 49. The secretary was also responsible for coordinating a second work made up of detailed descriptions, maps and plans of the coast, castles, and fortresses of various Portuguese and overseas territories: *Descrição e plantas da costa, dos castelos e fortalezas, desde o reino do Algarve até Cascais, da ilha Terceira, da praça de Mazagão, da ilha de Santa Helena, da fortaleza da Ponta do Palmar na entrada do rio de Goa, da cidade de Argel e de Larache, no place, [1617]*, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Casa de Cadaval, no. 29.

¹⁸ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, ff. 83-83v.

¹⁹ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, ff. 83-83v.



Figure 1. Illumination of the Figueiredo arms in GODINHO, António, *Livro da nobreza e da perfeição das armas dos reis cristãos e nobres linhagens dos reinos e senhorios de Portugal*, Lisbon, Portugal, f. 34v, 16th century.

Source: Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo. <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4162407>.



Figure 2: Illumination of the Falcão arms in GODINHO, António, *Livro da nobreza e da perfeição das armas dos reis cristãos e nobres linhagens dos reinos e senhorios de Portugal*, Lisbon, Portugal, fl. 14v, 16th century.

Source: Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo. <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4162407>.

Without neglecting the specificities that distinguish family names and arms, in the context of entailment arms are inseparable from family names. In fact, the requirements for the use of a family name don't always imply the obligatory use of arms (usually because the founders didn't have arms, although there are exceptions), but the use of arms always implies the use of the corresponding family name. They are therefore two interconnected manifestations of the same objective. Like Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, most founders chose to perpetuate their own family name and their respective arms. In these examples, there is a clear "thirst for fame", as Irigoyen calls it²⁰, or "yearning for remembrance", as Herreros Moya prefers to describe it²¹. Other founders evoked the symbolic elements of their ancestors, claiming that it was their duty to perpetuate the memory of those from whom they descended and/or from whom they had received the inheritance they were entailing. In both cases, if biological perpetuation was impossible, the preservation of family names and arms ensured the "symbolic or fictitious perpetuation of memory"²². This avoided what Anne-Valérie Solignat calls the nobility's greatest fear, located at the heart of nobiliary identity: being forgotten²³. That is why, in all situations where the use of a family name or family name and arms is obligatory, these clauses are considered substantial, in the sense that they form part of the substance of the entail. For this reason, they are always associated with the threat of loss of administration in the event of non-compliance. After all, not using the family names and arms would mean damaging the memory of the ancestors, an act that justified the maximum punishment available to the founders. However, the practical application of these clauses could be problematic, and the founders were aware of this; as a rule, they showed some flexibility and pragmatism, particularly in cases where using the family names and arms could prevent the accumulation of other entails with identical clauses.

The practice of including mandatory family name clauses was, however, infrequent, accounting for less than 10% of the entails surveyed in the VINCULUM project database. The practice of including mandatory family name and arms clauses was even less frequent. Therefore, this type of entails constituted a minority and cannot be considered characteristic of entails in the Portuguese territories. This forces us to nuance the relevance of these symbolic elements in the overall characterization of the entailment system and in the process of building and perpetuating identity through entails, limiting it to a restricted group of founders: the upper strata of the nobility made up of titled nobles, high-ranking royal

officials, and members of the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

As with most clauses mandating the use of family names and arms, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão added another instruction about the order in which the names should be used and the placement of the arms: the family name Figueiredo should be used in the first and main place, immediately after the birth name, and the arms of that family name should appear in the "first place" of the shield. Luís de Figueiredo Falcão didn't specify what he meant by the "first place" of the shield. However, reading other institution documents with similar clauses allows us to determine that the founders were generally referring to a quartered shield whose most prominent place was the top right quarter.

The founder left no indication as to where the Falcão family name and arms should appear. In fact, it was unusual to determine the mandatory use of two family names and their respective arms, and most founders who had two or more family names generally chose to perpetuate only one of them. Luís de Figueiredo Falcão was likewise silent on the use of the family names and arms. Like the secretary, most founders only stipulated that administrators should be called by or named after a certain family name and bear the corresponding arms. Some, however, were more specific, revealing expectations as to the material ways in which these symbolic elements should be used: for example, they requested that family names be used on all signs and signatures and that arms be carried on shields, banners, seals, or signets, all of which seen as places of power, representation, and identity.

Although apparently straightforward, the clauses requiring the use of family names and arms could be problematic in two situations: when women succeeded in the administration of the entails, since it was expected that their children would take their father's family name and arms as their main ones, and not those of the entail; and when the same administrator accumulated more than one entail with the same obligation to use the family name in the first and main place, and arms in the most prominent quarter of the shield. If it was impossible to satisfy this obligation simultaneously, the entails became, at least in theory, incompatible, as they implicitly prevented the accumulation with other similar *morgadios*. Many founders effectively wanted to prevent the same administrator from accumulating other entails with the obligatory use of family names and arms to guarantee that the individuality of their foundations — and their memories — wouldn't be diluted by merging them with symbolic elements from other groups. Other founders were more flexible, such as Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, who allowed administrators to accumulate multiple entails by using his family names and arms in a secondary place. A balance was therefore sought between preserving symbolic and identity elements and increasing wealth, which demonstrates the dual role of entails, already pointed out by Enrique de Soria Mesa, in protecting and increasing family wealth²⁴.

²⁰ Antonio Irigoyen López, "Notas sobre las fundaciones de vínculos y mayorazgos del alto clero de Murcia en los siglos XVI y XVII", *Carthaginensia*, no. 31 (2015), 273.

²¹ Gonzalo J. Herreros Moya, "Así en la tierra como en el cielo. Aproximación al estudio de las capellanías en la Edad Moderna: entre la trascendencia y la política familiar. El caso de Córdoba", *Historia y Genealogía*, no. 2 (2012), 119.

²² Melero Muñoz, *Linaje, vinculación de bienes*, 668.

²³ Anne-Valérie Solignat, "Les fondations pieuses de la noblesse auvergnate à la Renaissance. Entre exaltation du pouvoir seigneurial et charge financière pour les vivants", *Histoire & Mesure*, no. XXVII-1 (2012), 134, <https://doi.org/10.4000/histoiremesure.4389>.

²⁴ Enrique Soria Mesa, *La nobleza en la España moderna: cambio y continuidad* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2007), 120 and 234-237.

3.2. Building the perfect heir

Those who bore the names Figueiredo and Falcão and carried the respective arms should also have other characteristics considered essential by the founder. The performance of the role of representative of the founder through the use of symbolic elements had to be translated into a set of physical, mental, moral, and behavioral attributes that were defined in detail in the foundation document. In other words, bearing the family name and arms presupposed certain qualities which, in the mind of the founder, made the administrator worthy and capable of that representative role. The presence of this type of requirement upon the heir in the foundation documents is based on the central idea, characteristic of patrilineal lineages, that power and nobility were passed down from father to son through blood. The noble ethos in force during the *Ancien Régime*, which made nobility not only a social status but also a quality, corresponded to certain physical and moral characteristics that founders sought to preserve²⁵. However, it's important to stress that this dimension was never merely representational or symbolic, i.e. it wasn't relevant just because it corresponded to that nobiliary ideal. On the contrary, the heir's physical and mental capacity and behavior had important legal, economic, political, social, and religious repercussions. An heir who was physically or mentally incapable or who behaved in a morally reprehensible way could jeopardize the very purpose of the entail. That is why many founders chose to associate the entailed assets with strict family discipline, which is an integral part of the corporate model of organization of pre-modern noble family groups. Thus, the founder's power as the "architect of the family's government"²⁶ also encompassed the regulation of the body and actions of the heirs, who carried on the blood of the institutor.

As in most Portuguese entails, the administrator of the Figueiredo Falcão entail would preferably be male (without excluding the possibility of female succession) and a child of legitimate marriage (without excluding the possibility of succession by natural or bastard lines). None of the heirs could be of Moorish, Jewish or mulatto "race", in line with the concerns about the cleanliness of blood that characterized various institutions in the Iberian kingdoms, especially from the 16th century onwards²⁷. In the same sense, the administrators of the entail were forbidden from marrying people from any of those ethnic-religious groups. If administrators went against the founder's orders, they would lose the administration of the entail, which would pass to the

next successor. Control over the marriage of heirs by founders was common in this type of entails. Many founders also imposed the need for prior consent to matrimonial alliances by the father or figure who, in his absence, exercised the power of the *pater familias*, even after the Council of Trent which, in theory, forbade forced marriages. Luís de Figueiredo Falcão didn't demand paternal consent, but asked that successors "marry noble people of good lineage, and better still, with *fidalgos*"²⁸.

Other unworthy behaviors by the bearer of the Figueiredo Falcão name and arms could also lead to the loss of administration. These included crimes of heresy, crimes against God and the King, sodomy, or any other that, like the above, involved confiscation of the criminal's property. This exclusion clause appears frequently in foundation documents, especially from the 16th century onwards. It denotes, on the one hand, a concern for the moral character of the heir. In fact, the desired successors should be good Christians, loyal to God and to their King or Lord, just as the founder had been. On the other hand, the crimes listed jeopardized the very health of the entail, since they could lead to seizure of the entailed assets. That's why Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, like several other founders, resorted to a peculiar legal artifice which involved excluding any would-be criminal from the administration one hour before committing the crime, as if "they were dead"²⁹. In this way, when the crime occurred, the assets of the entail couldn't be confiscated because the offender technically no longer administered them.

But the founder wasn't only concerned with the moral character of the heir; he also left instructions regarding their physical and mental capacities. He excluded from the succession of the entail "persons without wits, mentally deficient, mute or prodigal, to whom a curator should be given by law, or who have any fault or impediment for which they cannot marry or procreate"³⁰. This type of exclusion, which has been identified in several other foundations, illustrates three distinct concerns. Firstly, it was necessary to ensure that the administrator had the required skills to manage the entail. Secondly, it was important to exclude those whose physical or mental impediments made procreation and, therefore, the biological continuity of the family, impossible. Finally, the ideals of beauty and perfection in force at the time also contributed to the construction of the heir, being particularly relevant in shaping the representatives of noble family groups³¹. The "defective" heir who was excluded had to be supported and fed by his replacement, ensuring that they wouldn't live in poverty and avoiding the social scandal of having a family member falling beneath their quality.

²⁵ Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, "O 'Ethos' nobiliárquico no final do Antigo Regime: poder simbólico, império e imaginário social", *Forum*, no. 02 (2005), 4-20.

²⁶ Juan Hernández Franco, "Reflexiones sobre la figura del padre en la Edad Moderna", in *Historia y sociabilidad: homenaje a la profesora María del Carmen Melendreras Gimeno*, coord. Juan Bautista Vilar Ramírez et al. (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2007), 229; Bartolomé Clavero, "Beati dictum: derecho de linaje, economía de familia y cultura de orden", *Anuario de Historia del derecho español*, no. LXIII-LXIV (1993-94), 7-148.

²⁷ Fernanda Olival, "Rigor e interesses: os estatutos de limpeza de sangue em Portugal", *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas*, no. 4 (2004), 152.

²⁸ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, f. 89.

²⁹ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, f. 89.

³⁰ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, ff. 88-88v.

³¹ Rosa, "Imagem física", 1060 and 1073-1074.



Figure 3: Church of São Luís de Pinhel, Pinhel, Portugal.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

3.3. Managing the dead

The behavior of the heirs wasn't only regulated during their lifetime. Luís de Figueiredo Falcão also left instructions regarding the successors' attitudes towards death, namely by ordering the administrators to be buried in a specific space, the chancel of the Monastery of São Luís de Pinhel (Fig. 3).

As we have seen, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão had founded this Monastery under the invocation of the Saint of his name and probably of his devotion, in 1596, following a trend that has been identified in several other cases. In fact, the profile of many founders, particularly those who belonged or ascended to the upper strata of the nobility, included the sponsorship of religious and assistance institutions, motivated by the desire to transform material goods into charitable, pious, and spiritual benefits³².

The status of founder of a religious institution also offered Luís de Figueiredo Falcão several exclusive prerogatives. One such was patronage, which was transferable to the heirs and had to be exercised by the successive entail administrators³³. Simultaneous execution of the functions of entail administrator and patron of the Monastery, transmitted together, consolidated the ties between the founder's descendants and the religious institution³⁴. Many founders asked their heirs not to neglect these ties and to protect the religious communities. They also asked them to keep alive the devotion that presided over the founding of the institution, a devotion that, in many cases, characterized the family group and was part of its identity.



Figure 4. Grave of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão in the Church of São Luís, Pinhel, Portugal.

Source: Miguel Metelo de Seixas³⁵.

³² Rosa, *As Almas Herdeiras*, 669-689.

³³ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, f. 85.

³⁴ Francisco Manuel Carmona Carmona, "Parámetros nobiliarios y política de prestigio en el Convento Madre de Dios de Baena (Córdoba)", *Hispania Sacra*, no. 71:143 (2019), 191-208.

³⁵ The epitaph reads: "Here lies Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, nobleman of the House of Our Lord the King, who was secretary to



Figure 5. Grave of António Heitor de Figueiredo Falcão and Heitor de Sela Falcão in the Church of São Luís de Pinhel, Pinhel, Portugal.

Source: Miguel Metelo de Seixas.

One of the patron's prerogatives was the reservation of a privileged burial space, the chancel, which, as a rule, functioned as the exclusive burial place of the founder and the administrators, barred even to other members of the family group. It was in this space that Luís de Figueiredo Falcão ordered the construction of a tomb to house his bones and those of his wife, although the latter's remains don't seem to have been transferred to the Monastery. This is also where the bodies of the first two entail administrators rest, in accordance with the founder's orders.

The founder's tomb has survived to this day, allowing us to observe the written and visual messages that Luís de Figueiredo Falcão chose to leave for posterity in his chapel; the former through the epitaph and the latter through the heraldic carvings above the tomb (Fig. 4). In fact, just as the family name and the arms are inseparable in the clauses forcing administrators to use these symbolic elements, the association between name and heraldry extends materially into the funeral space.

On the epitaph, the founder chose to inscribe in stone, like several other noble founders, his full name, his social status as a nobleman, the most important position he had held (Secretary of State), his paternal and maternal affiliations, and the fact that he had founded the Monastery "at his own expense without anyone's help". He then added an unusual note stating that he "left his own and did not take anyone else's", perhaps in reference to the accusations against him for allegedly stealing pepper from the House of India when he was the clerk of that institution³⁶. The epitaph ends with the year of his death and by asking anyone

reading the sign to pray a Hail Mary for the founder's soul. The coat of arms above the tomb displays an impaled escutcheon, the dexter field parted per fess with the arms of Falcão and on a bend three fleurs-de-lys³⁷; the sinister the arms of Figueiredo. The shield is surmounted by a barred helmet facing dexter at three-quarters, bearing a heavy torse and the crest of Figueiredo: two lion gambes saltireways, each supporting a fig tree leaf³⁸.

In accordance with the founder's orders, in the chancel also lay the remains of his son, António Heitor de Figueiredo Falcão, the first administrator, and that of his nephew Heitor de Sela Falcão, the second and last administrator that belonged to the founder's family (Fig. 5).

The presence of heraldic symbols in the funeral chapels, which could be seen not only in the coat of arms above the tombs, but also in other objects such as liturgical implements donated by the founders or books of hours, is part of a process that Laurent Hablot called the "appropriation and heraldization of sacred space"³⁹. In this sense, heraldry fulfilled multiple functions in those spaces. Firstly, it identified the deceased, as a complement to the epitaph. It then demonstrated the power and nobility of the dead, as well as their local influence. In the words of Miguel Metelo de Seixas and João Bernardo Galvão-Telles, heraldry was also an "instrument of action

King Felipe the Third, son of Heitor de Sela Falcão and Joana de Figueiredo. This was the house where Luís de Figueiredo founded this monastery at his own expense without anyone's help. He left his own and did not take anyone else's. He asks for a Hail Mary for his soul. He died in 1631" (approximated translation).

³⁶ Martinho, "Beyond Exotica", 110-111.

³⁷ According to Miguel Metelo de Seixas, the three fleurs-de-lys correspond, in the Portuguese armorial, to the arms of Guarda and Berenguer, family names which, however, have no correspondence in the known genealogy of the ascending and descending family of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão.

³⁸ The description of the coat of arms is by Miguel Metelo de Seixas and its translation by Miguel Ayres de Campos Tovar.

³⁹ Laurent Hablot, "L'héraldisation du sacré aux XII^e -XIII^e siècles. Une mise en scène de la religiosité chevaleresque?", in *Actes du colloque Chevalerie et christianisme aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, dir. Martin Aurell (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011), 211-233.

on society”⁴⁰ and, in this sense, it had a community dimension, as we will see below. It is also noted that heraldic manifestations on graves also served as a reference point used by some founders to inform the heirs about which arms were of compulsory use.

It was thus in the space adorned with the arms of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão that, as stated in the foundation document, perpetual masses were to be celebrated for the salvation of the souls of the dead. The Secretary wasn’t only concerned with the salvation of his own soul, but also asked that perpetual suffrages be celebrated for the souls of his wife and the administrators of the entail, his “family of the dead”. In many cases, this “family of the dead” could include a wide network of souls: in addition to kinship, ties of friendship, neighborliness, or patronage motivated a sense of obligation, of debt, in relation to suffrage. As Maria de Lurdes Rosa has shown, *post-mortem* continuation of the relationships that organized the founder’s life socially, politically, and affectively helped to consolidate a sense of identity that went beyond the biological extinction of the bodies⁴¹. Without going into any more detail, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão only stipulates that a mass should be said every year, forever⁴². It’s possible that the founder left more specific instructions in his will, as several founders did. In fact, it was customary for those who instituted entails to determine with precision and detail the type of masses that should be celebrated, their distribution over the days of the week and religious festivals according to personal devotions, or the objects that would be used in the ceremonies (sometimes marked with heraldic carvings), among other aspects related to the architectural and material aspects of the chapels, the founders’ “houses of the soul”⁴³. As one of the dimensions of the customization and personalization of salvation by the laity, it was also associated with a remarkable liturgical and doctrinal culture and literacy on the part of many founders, reflecting their own devotional identities⁴⁴.

3.4. Being a *morgado* in the community

The well-being of the souls of the dead depended not only on the action of the heirs, but on a wider community of the living, which illustrates one of the components of the community dimension of entails. Similarly, preservation of the founder’s memory also depended on this community, which included not only the family members and their network of relationships, but a broad group of people linked by their belonging to a certain territorial circumscription. As Hernández Franco wrote, the family makes little sense apart from the community, which provides it with material and moral resources⁴⁵. The process of building,

consolidating, transmitting, and perpetuating identity took place within the community and the very functioning of the entailment system depended largely on its community integration.

The daily masses celebrated for the soul of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão and his family of the dead contributed, like so many others left by the founders of entails, to the enrichment and liturgical embellishment of local celebrations. The construction of chapels, structural and architectural improvements, donations of religious implements, relics, and works of art, the financing of ecclesiastics and laypeople to assist in the ceremonies, among other aspects, bear witness to various facets of the way entails benefited the community.

It is true that the presence of the nobility in sacred spaces, in addition to devotional purposes and the salvation of the soul, also served to promote and represent the power and social status of the founders and their family group. The church also served as an “advertising space” for noble families, who used it to assert themselves within the local community⁴⁶. However, the image of the privatization and selfish internalization of religion by the laity has been challenged by various authors, who have shown that the salvation of the souls of the dead depended precisely on the community of the living. The text of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão’s epitaph illustrates this relationship of dependence, when he asked for a prayer for his soul from anyone who read the sign.

In line with these principles, the community of Pinhel was not forgotten by Luís de Figueiredo Falcão. The simple fact that a prominent royal official, who traveled and resided in various territories of the Iberian kingdoms throughout his career, chose his hometown to found a religious institution, bury his remains and leave the perpetual pious charges is significant. In fact, it is noted that the founders of entails often prefer their lands of origin, where, in several cases, the family’s farmsteads, manors, or noble houses marked with coats of arms were located. This connection to ancestral territories and buildings held an identity charge, which, through the entails, was ideally projected to the end of the world, as illustrated by the clauses that forced heirs to reside there. In the case of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, the ties with Pinhel become even more evident in the determinations he left in the event of his lineage becoming extinct. In this situation, he wanted the entail administration to be assigned to the Monastery of São Luís, with certain conditions. These included the obligation to use the income from the entail to pay for six chaplains, who, among other duties, would teach Latin and music to anyone who wanted to learn⁴⁷.

⁴⁰ Metelo de Seixas and Galvão-Telles, “E tragam as armas”, 313.

⁴¹ Rosa, *As Almas Herdeiras*, 397-417.

⁴² Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, f. 85v.

⁴³ Rosa, *As Almas Herdeiras*, 669-689.

⁴⁴ Maria de Lurdes Rosa, “Espiritualidade(s) na corte (Portugal, c. 1450-c.1520): que leituras, que sentidos?”, *Anuário de História de la Iglesia*, vol. 26 (2017), 229; Rosa, *As Almas Herdeiras*, 436-470.

⁴⁵ Juan Hernández Franco and Raimundo A. Rodríguez Pérez, “Estrategias, prácticas y actores: avances en los estudios

sobre linajes castellanos, a partir de la sociohistoria”, *Magallánica. Revista de Historia Moderna*, vol. 2 (2015), 17.

⁴⁶ Tamara González López, “La defensa de la imagen de la hidalguía en los espacios sacros en la diócesis de Lugo (s.XVI-XIX)”, in *Monarquías en conflicto. Linajes y noblezas en la articulación de la Monarquía Hispánica*, coord. J. I. Fortea Pérez et al. (Madrid: Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, 2018), 969-978.

⁴⁷ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, ff. 90v-91.



Figure 6. Stone of arms over the side door of the Church of São Luís de Pinhel, Pinhel, Portugal.

Source: Miguel Metelo de Seixas.

The communal memory of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão also persisted in the urban landscape through the very physical imposition of the Monastery in the town. The identity of the founding family was visually marked on what is now the side door of the church by a second heraldic carving placed outside (Fig. 6). This carving shows an escutcheon parted quarterly: 1st Figueiredo, differentiated by a fleur-de-lys in chief, 2nd and 3rd Proença⁴⁸; 4th Falcão. The escutcheon rests on a voluted cartouche surmounted by a barred helmet facing dexter at three quarters with mantle and torse; atop the latter is seen an alternative form of the crest of Figueiredo: a vested arm couped at the elbow supporting a fig tree branch, accompanied by a large ostrich feather⁴⁹. It isn't clear if this coat of arms was placed there by order of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão or after his death. It is therefore difficult to assess the context behind the heraldic differences in relation to the coat of arms placed above the tomb. However, these differences carry meaning and may

illustrate different forms or strategies of identity expression through heraldry in association with Luís de Figueiredo Falcão's two foundations, the entail and the Monastery. Despite the variation in relation to the tomb, the family name Figueiredo remained prominent, in accordance with the founder's wishes.

Near the Monastery is what is currently known as the Mena Falcões/Metello de Seixas Manor House, associated with the descendants of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão's sister, Leonor de Proença Figueiredo Falcão. It's possible that the houses that gave rise to the manor belonged to the founder, although they aren't mentioned in the foundation document. In this manor house there is a third heraldic carving, which seems to date from after the secretary's death, with "shields of the Falcões (1st quarter), the Herédias (2nd quarter), the Menas (3rd quarter) and the Figueiredos (4th quarter) and the Falcões crest"⁵⁰ (Fig. 7). As Miguel Metelo de Seixas writes, "more than for identification purposes, the coat of arms served to transform the [manor] building into the symbolic seat of the lineage"⁵¹. A supra-individual and trans-generational headquarters, where family identity was represented and displayed, both internally and externally⁵².

3.5. The power of the archive

The Monastery of São Luís also played another crucial role in Luís de Figueiredo Falcão's entail, that of guardian of the entail's most important documents. Founders often tasked institutions outside the family, linked to the church, the crown, or city's councils, with the custody of documentation. They did so not only to ensure the preservation of the information, but also to reinforce those institutions' power in the surveillance and, if necessary, punishment of the administrators. By being in possession of the entail's documents, these institutions were better equipped to enforce the founder's wishes, ensuring his memory was not forgotten.

The information produced by the entails was varied. Entails were information and archival producing entities, with the legal, informational, and archival epicenter being the foundation document⁵³. The power of the archive emanates from the power of the founder himself, embodied materially and symbolically in the founding written record. Awareness of this power and the importance of preserving information, largely motivated by the administrative and bureaucratic practices of the institutions of power with which the entail was connected, led many founders to impose certain informational and archival procedures, not only on the administrators, but also on external entities. After all, the perfect heir was also the one who

⁵⁰ Nápoles and Nápoles, *Solares*, 80.

⁵¹ Seixas, "A heráldica e os arquivos de família", 457.

⁵² Antonio Urquizar Herrera, "Masserizia y Mayorazgo. La recepción andaluza de las ideas italianas sobre la casa del noble y su adecuación social", in *El modelo italiano en las artes plásticas de la Península Ibérica durante el Renacimiento*, ed. María José Redondo Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2004), 197 and 200.

⁵³ Maria de Lurdes Rosa, "Ouvertures et fermetures des archives de famille, XIVe-XXIe. Siècles", in *Les conflits d'archives: France, Espagne, Méditerranée*, ed. S. Péquiot and Y. Potin (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2022), <https://books.openedition.org/pur/162580>.

⁴⁸ According to Miguel Metelo de Seixas, the arms of this family name are a cut shield with a two-headed eagle and five fleurs-de-lys, elements which, on this coat of arms, are found in the 2nd and 3rd quarters respectively; alternatively, the two-headed eagle could represent the Proença family name in abbreviated form and the five fleurs-de-lys could refer to the arms of Mena, both families being represented in the genealogy of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão.

⁴⁹ The description of the coat of arms is by Miguel Metelo de Seixas, and its translation by Miguel Ayres de Campos Tovar.



Figure 7. Stone of arms in the manor house of the Mena Falcões/Metello de Seixas, Pinhel, Portugal.

Source: Miguel Metelo de Seixas

administered the entail through writing and carefully guarded the papers. The temporal duration of these archives was another manifestation of their power. If the entail had been designed to last until the end of the world, its archives should also last as long. They are, in this sense, and at a conceptual level, perpetual archives, conceived in terms of perpetuity. In this way, the power of archives was also based on their role as vehicles for transmitting memory, family history, knowledge, codes of conduct, behavior, and culture. They were part of a specific way of perceiving reality, filtered through genealogy and links to ancestors⁵⁴. They were therefore repositories of identity. This identity charge didn't emanate only from the written records. Adopting an anthropological view of the archive, it extends beyond writing and encompasses all the material and immaterial elements that, by being consciously passed down from generation to generation, have contributed to the construction and assimilation of an entailment identity, like heraldic representations⁵⁵.

As clerk of the *Casa da Índia e Mina*, Secretary of State and clerk of the Treasury, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão understood the importance of producing and preserving written information. This informational and archival awareness and literacy is fully reflected in the foundation document. Like several other founders who showed concern for preserving the memory of the name, Luís de Figueiredo Falcão took steps to ensure that this preservation was likewise done in writing.

The first was to order the making of a *tombo* or inventory of the *morgadio*, which should contain all the assets that belonged to the entail, including those originally entailed by the founder and all those that were added over time⁵⁶. Inventories aided control of the entail through writing, ensuring that entailed assets were never sold, exchanged, or alienated, guaranteeing that pious charges weren't forgotten, and facilitating the management of the patrimony. The second informational and archival measure taken by Luís de Figueiredo Falcão was to order that the *tombo* be copied into the registry books of the Monastery of São Luís. The foundation document and the will he intended to make were also to be transcribed along with the *tombo*. The founder's third and final informational and archival measure was to request a copy of the foundation document. Luís de Figueiredo didn't state it, but this other copy must have been intended to be kept by successive administrators of the entail. It was precisely in this copy that the founder ordered the arms of the family names Figueiredo and Falcão to be placed, illuminated at the beginning of the record, and accompanied by the certificate of the King of Arms and a declaration of the obligatory use of the family names and respective arms⁵⁷. Heraldry was present in many of the documents that structured "the life of the family body", including those produced

⁵⁴ Rosa, *O Morgadio*, 20.

⁵⁵ Maria de Lurdes Rosa, "Reconstructing the production, documentation and conservation of pre-modern organizational information. Theoretical perspectives and proposed research path", *Boletim do Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra*, no. XXX (2017), 557-561.

⁵⁶ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, f. 86.

⁵⁷ See other examples of illuminated entail institution documents in Maria Teresa Chicote Pompanin and Ángel Fuentes Ortiz, "Illuminating aristocracy: decorated documents of mayorazgo in medieval Castile", in *Medieval Europe in motion 3. The Circulation of Jurists, Legal Manuscripts and Artistic, Cultural and Legal Practices in Medieval Europe (13th-15th centuries)*, ed. Maria Alessandra Bilotta (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2021), 261-274.

by entails⁵⁸. In the words of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, the illustration of the arms would serve to “at all times make known which ones they are⁵⁹” and, in this sense, should be understood as a visual complement to the mandatory family name and arms clause. I haven’t been able to locate any of these records and are unsure if they are still preserved. However, similar documents from other foundations have survived, which allow us to see the presence of heraldry in the entails’ archives. An illustrative example can be found in some of the *tombos* which, by order of the founders, were sent to the *Torre do Tombo* (then the Crown Archive, currently the National Archive), where they are still preserved⁶⁰.

4. Conclusions

The different heraldic manifestations associated with entails form a symbolic complex that can only be fully understood when read together and in association with the different dimensions of entailment identity. The desire to preserve and perpetuate the memory of the founders’ names led, in some cases, to the mandatory use of family names and arms by administrators, extending this memory beyond biological extinction into perpetuity. Heraldry was thus a tool for preserving both memory and identity. Those who bore the family name and arms had to be physically, mentally, and morally capable and worthy of representing their ancestors. Those who were not, were excluded by the founder’s will. In this way, heraldry visually translated certain identity traits of the bearer of the arms, formally and legally defined in the foundation documents. In the context of seeking to save the soul of the founder and the family of the dead, heraldic carvings adorned tombs and funeral chapels, places where pious duties were to be celebrated in perpetuity and which also functioned as spaces of identity. The honor, nobility, and power that bearing arms had conferred in life extended beyond death, anchored in the durability of the material. In this way, heraldry also nobilitated souls and linked past, present, and future generations in the cycle of identity perpetuity in which entails were inserted. The message that the arms communicated was not intended to be read only by the family group; it was also echoed to and within the community. Entails were, in themselves, community phenomena, and heraldry, as a vehicle for social communication, contributed to the visual affirmation of the identity of individuals as founders. Finally, heraldry was part of the entails’ archives, and, therefore, should be interpreted as informational production of these institutions. Such production could take various forms, from written records, some of which were illuminated with arms, to the above-mentioned stone heraldic carvings. As a whole, the archive, made up of information that was intentionally chosen to be perpetually preserved, reflected and built not only written but also visual identity.

The multiple heraldic manifestations linked to Luís de Figueiredo Falcão’s entail – including the clause forcing the use of the family names and arms, combined with the other clauses relating to the construction of the heir; the heraldic carving above the tomb, combined with the coat of arms on the side door of the Monastery; the illustration on the copy of the foundation document which, in a circular movement, refers to the clause of mandatory use of the family names and arms – illustrate the depth of the relationship between heraldry and entailment identity within a specific set of foundations. They also illustrate the potential of the entails’ archives for the study of heraldry in pre-modern southern Europe, including both written records and plastic representations. Lastly, they invite approaches that combine the description and interpretation of symbols with the study of the social, cultural, legal, and institutional contexts that regulated the use, transmission, and perpetuation of that symbolic heritage.

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⁵⁸ Rosa, “Elementos para o estudo”, 334.

⁵⁹ Foundation deed of the entail of Luís de Figueiredo Falcão, Lisbon, 29th November, 1621, ANTT, Chancelaria Régia, Chancelaria de D. Filipe III, Doações, liv. 5, f. 84v.

⁶⁰ See the “Morgados e Capelas” collection, namely the “Instituição de morgados e capelas” series, at the Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo.

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