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**Vieira’s Utopian millenarianism and the transliteration of the idea of the fifth empire in the seventeenth-century English treatises of the Fifth Monarchy Men**

Messianism, prophecy, miraculous providentialism, elitism, nationalism are terms that are articulated and conjugated in order to strictly determine the semantic constellation of millenarianism as a concept. Of Judaic-Christian origin and nature, millenarianism means the revelation of a historic hope to see the launching of an era of justice, peace and happiness in this world, whether through the action of a religious faction, through the militancy of a social group, generally made up of the poor and disinherited, or through the participation of the people of an entire nation led by a saviour and charismatic, divine messenger. Formulated from the reading of old biblical texts, they are terms that have a pre-Christian origin. Although their former meaning is clearly identified with the idiosyncrasies of mentality and relatable to the historic vicissitudes of the Jewish people they were latterly transposed and easily adapted to the patterns of thought initiated with the advent of Christianity. In fact, the etymologic, original meaning of the word millennium – and its derivatives millenarian, millenarianism, millenarianist – came about in the wake of Jewish apocalyptic thought, and, as Norman Cohn informs us in his classic work *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, refers to the belief of some proto-Christians in the content of chapter XX, versicles 4-6 of the Revelation (COHN 1970: 31). In this biblical text, its alleged author, St. John, prophesises the second coming of Christ as the founder and ruler of a messianic kingdom on earth, a kingdom that would last for a thousand years to the Final Judgement and would have as its citizens all the resurrected Christians who had been martyred for their faith. Strictly speaking, the temporal and biblical concept of millennium must be understood as an intermediate and transitory historical state of relative ontological perfection (relative, as it is achieved only by the chosen or elected believers – the saints – and is not completely spiritualised, despite being directly governed by Christ). It is the precisely transitive quality of this millenarian kingdom, therefore, that creates two possible proselyte attitudes, defined by George Shepperson as
pre-millenarianist and post-millenarianist respectively. From an eminently religious point of view, the former attitude is founded on the belief that the transitory period of the millennium should be preceded by the Second Coming of Christ or by some other transcendent and liberating event – not necessarily with the intervention of mankind – that would radically improve the existing social conditions in force (the transcendent event – the Coming – precedes and launches the kingdom). The latter is founded on the conviction that the Second Coming of Christ or the consummation of liberation is the inevitable epilogue of a process already under way and begun through the will of those that believe in it (the Coming is prepared and happens as a result of human intervention). (SHEPPERSON 1970: 44-45).

What, in our opinion, is worthy of being emphasised in the perusing of the prophetic-apocalyptic texts, both of the Old and the New Testament, is the fact that their symbolic-allegoric language, comprising historical events, alluding to real people, launching diatribes against enemies of the faith, censuring moral conduct and doctrinal aberrations considered dissolute and heretical by their authors, replete with anguish and desperation at the coeval state of human affairs, coexists with a prophetic-Utopian language of future consolation for the chosen few – the martyred saints of Christian tradition, God’s people in Hebrew tradition – that preserved their hope in the divine plan of salvation and liberation, which, in their faith, will take place at the end of history.

The mechanics of this thought, which denounces the present evil and announces the future good, has stimulated all types of Utopian projects for the transformation and perfection of existing politico-social circumstances throughout the history of the western world. On the other hand, the themes of both the missionary vocation of the chosen nation and the belief in a messianic era are ideologically based on the cosmogonic conceptions and on the principle of a true divine revelation propagated by biblical texts, which have been appropriated by the millenarist exegists of western national cultures, namely Portuguese and English.

The prophetic-Utopian thesis of the fifth monarchy in seventeenth-century Portugal, inspired in biblical sources, had as one of its strongest defenders the Jesuit priest António Vieira (1608-1697). But he was not alone. The ideological, political and social situation in seventeenth-century Portugal was particularly propitious for the visionary appraisals on the transformation of both the old Iberian nation and the whole world. The prophetic-millenarianist positions that were diffused and propagated in
Portugal, especially between the 1630’s and the 1670’s - during the period from the ever-increasing expectation of the restoration of independence from the Spanish crown to the consolidation of national sovereignty - are characterised by the generalised irruption of the euphoric messianic-nationalist hope and by the ideological, revolutionary magnetism that induces Utopianism, i.e., by social manifestations and by discursive productions that were analogous to those that burst out at about the same time in England. Analogous, but not identical. The political and ideological circumstances of the two historical situations were obviously different. While in England a violent dispute between the legislative prerogatives of Parliament and the demand for absolutist rule on the part of King Charles I took place from 1629 onwards, in Portugal, from about the same date, and due to a nationalistic anti-Castilian sentiment, a process of deification of the attributes of the sovereign in the person of the Duke of Bragança, the future King João IV, was in full swing. While in England the exceptional ideological situation was synchronous with a civil war, in Portugal it was synchronous with a war of independence. While the civil war in England ended with the temporary suspension of institutional monarchy and the beginning of the republican interregnum, in Portugal the rebellion against a foreign occupier ended with the restoration of the monarchy and the beginning of a new dynasty. While in England large segments of the population rejected the personal dignity of the king as the representative of the nation and of the English people, the popular sentiment in Portugal gave great importance to the symbolic function of the "second body of the king", the imperishable body of royal dignity, incarnate in the person of King João IV, the guarantee of the continuity of Portuguese national sovereignty (CENTENO 1991: 295-318). While in England the king Charles Stuart was identified by the Puritan congregations as the Anti-Christ and the persecutor of "saints", in Portugal the powerful messianic current of "sebastianism", identified the Portuguese king, D. João de Bragança, with the messiah, with the emperor of the world, the head of the Fifth Empire. While in England the sect of the Fifth Monarchy Men aligned itself - notwithstanding its internal contradictions and secessions - with the dominant ideological vector of puritan Protestantism, in Portugal, the theses of the Fifth Empire, proclaimed by the "sebastianist" sect, came into conflict with the dogmas of the Catholic church and collided with its court of control, its fearful organ of persecution, the Tribunal of the Holy Office. Finally, while in England the proselytes of Daniel’s prophecy identified the messiah as Christ returned to earth, in Portugal they attributed this messianic function to Christ’s delegates on earth, the
Portuguese monarch and the pope (the Pope of the Roman Church, according to Vieira; the Evangelic Pope, in the version, of "joachimite" inspiration of the sebastianist D. João de Castro (1550-1623)).

The diffusion and the popularisation of the celebrated *Trovas* of Bandarra (1500?-1556?), a shoemaker and popular poet from the Portuguese northern village of Trancoso, who Father António Vieira recognised as being a veritable prophet with an oracular charisma similar to the biblical prophets, played a huge role in generalising and encouraging this messianic-Utopian sentiment in seventeenth-century Portugal. Vieira had no doubt that the miracles predicted by Bandarra would occur. Among these was the early coming of the fifth empire under the earthly messianic rule of a Portuguese king and on 1st January 1642, in the *Sermon of the Good Years*, the Jesuit preacher, without citing Bandarra but certainly having him in mind, for the first time promised Portugal the world empire and demonstrated that King João IV was the true Messiah (CANTEL, 1960, 98; BASSELAAR, 1987, 51; SARAIVA, 1992, 77). King João IV died in 1656, but Vieira did not lose his conviction. For fifty years he constantly preached, in public and in private, from the pulpit or in letters, his exegeses and expositions, always based on prophetic biblical texts and Bandarra’s *Trovas*, that successive kings, Afonso VI (1643-1683), Pedro II (1648-1706) and the latter’s eldest son, Prince João (1686-1686) would be the emperors of the world during their respective reigns (CANTEL, 1960, 108-132). The pathetic setbacks to these predictions (which were inspired by an enormous hope in the redeeming quality of the future dimension of time) in view of the sheer evidence of historical facts, the death of King João IV, the overthrow of Afonso VI and the premature death of Prince João, did not inhibit but rather stimulated Vieira’s fantastic dialectic and sophistic ability to reformulate his assertive judgements and rethink his predictions, adapting them to the new circumstances and to their historical determination. The psychological and hermeneutic mechanism he used was always the same, that of subordinating reality to idealism, the facts to dreams, the present to the future. And even when in Brazil in 1688, in the final years of his life, Vieira reiterated for the last time his prediction of a Portuguese king-messiah in the *Sermon of Thanksgiving for the Birth of Prince João, Firstborn of Their Serene Majesties who God may keep*, ignorant of the fact that the prince had died eighteen days after his birth, he neither blushed nor despaired nor retracted on hearing of the occurrence. He even sent a secret letter to the queen, expounding transcendent arguments to justify the apparent non-realisation of his
promise. He then wrote *In the words of an earnest and defiant preacher* [...] *an apologetic discourse* in order to console the unfortunate queen, informing her that he, a preacher of solemn truths, had not erred: God, who in fact had decreed that Prince João would rule the world, had taken his material life only to make him ruler of Heaven .... An indirect way of saying that the prince had not ceased to be an “anointed” neither had he lost his statute of emperor on earth (CANTAL, 1960, 185-186).

When Vieira preached his *Sermon of Thanksgiving* almost half a century had passed since he first broached the topic of a Portuguese king-messiah in his *Sermon of the Good Years* and, despite all the implacable reversals that history had dealt his promises, despite all his doctrinal setbacks, despite being aware of the general state of corruption in the Portuguese public administration, despite witnessing the general degradation of public conduct, despite the degeneration of the political, social and moral state of the nation, despite the abyssal drama that was unfolding between the vision of the world he dreamed of and the sordid and negative reality he was confronted with - a reality he faced as a stimulus for political action and evangelising preaching -, despite the cruel persecution the Holy Office subjected him to, despite all this, Vieira never gave up his messianic hope, a fundamental and indissociable vector of his prophetic-Utopian hope.

The scope of the prophecy is not that of thaumaturgy, however. A prophet can proclaim miracles, but can rarely perform them. The risk increase if the visionary, in the hallucinatory deviation from good sense or instituted truth, ventures into the scandal of heterodoxy, challenges the laws of reasoning, embarrasses common measures, makes pronouncements outside the framework of verifiable opinions, challenges mental habits and the ideological values consecrated and policed by the inquisitorial censorship.

This is what happened to Father António Vieira. He came under suspicion for practising heresy and supplied the Inquisition enough formal reasons to be arrested. And all because of a syllogism, of a letter to the widowed queen, of a miracle promised and not fulfilled, because of the prophetic authority he recognised to Bandarra and because he dared to defend positions of political and ideological tolerance towards the Jews. The syllogism was composed of the following premises: *Bandarra is a true prophet; Bandarra prophesised that King João the Fourth would do many things he has not yet done, and cannot do them until he is resurrected; King João the Fourth will be resurrected.* (CANTEL, 1960, 182-183). Vieira included this fantastic affirmation in the letter – known in the author’s bibliography as *Esperanças de Portugal, Quinto Império*
do Mundo, Primeira e segunda vida de El-rei D. João IV (Hopes of Portugal, the Fifth Monarchy of the World, first and second life of King João IV). Written in 1659, in the paradisiacal environment of the Amazons, he not only sent the original letter to the widowed queen in order to console her, as he told later to the judges of the Holy Office, but also sent a copy to her confessor, the Bishop of Japan, Father André Fernandes (whether to inform him personally or to have it divulged publicly, one cannot say). But the copy was reproduced and the General council of the Inquisition soon got to know of its scandalous content.

Returning compulsively to Portugal in 1661, unaware of the incriminatory web that was being woven around him, Vieira was “called to table” of the Inquisition for the first time on 21 June 1662. And until Christmas Eve 1667, when the sentence that condemned him to perpetual confinement to a house of the Society of Jesus and forbade him to preach was pronounced – (the sentence was quashed following the coup d’état carried out by King Pedro II) –, he was submitted to periodic and humiliating interrogations that culminated in his imprisonment. From the time Vieira was first summoned to appear in court, to which he promised to draft an apology to justify his theses, until his detention, the case against him at times seemed to break off its persecutory rage. But in fact his saga as a suspect thought to be propagating heretical positions assumed aspects of tragic irony. The inquisitors, beginning by taking the content of the letter Hopes of Portugal [...] First and second life of King João IV as the exclusive object of the formal examination, later widened their brief to the writings - eleven disorganised and incomplete bundles - that Vieira had got together for his justification and self-defence. These included, among other things, long fragments of a gigantic project of a work with the same sub-title of the letter: History of the Future – Hopes of Portugal. In the pursuit of a national hope, the clerical clairvoyant became enmeshed in the labyrinth of his arguments and the more he exercised his spiritual freedom and dilated his ideal vision, the more he found the material circle of his physical freedom restricted.

All the details and mishaps of this phase of Vieira’s life are narrated by Lúcio de Azevedo, who uses a particularly dramatic tone when he relates the 26 months, from 1 October 1665 to 23 December 1667, when the Jesuit priest was held in the prison of the Holy Office in Coimbra (AZEVEDO, 1992, 7-85). It was during this period that Vieira drafted his Defence before the Holy Office. He set it out in the form of two long Representations thematically interconnected, each one developed around the nucleus of
a thesis. They were: (i) Bandarra was a prophet inspired by God; (ii) in accordance with what Bandarra had predicted, the imminent establishment of the Fifth Monarchy under the auspices of Portugal and a Portuguese king was to be expected. These Representations are a sort of abridgment, written with the purpose of defending himself in court, of the titanic project that Vieira had begun to write in 1649 and to which he had given the fantastic title of History of the Future – the Hopes of Portugal and the Fifth Monarchy. Due to his intense and prolific diplomatic and missionary activity, Vieira only worked on the project intermittently. Extracts from the 1st and 2nd books, of the seven he planned for the History of the Future, together with a lot of other material of a similar content of the two Representations, i.e., of argumentative messianic-prophetic content, were filed in two portfolios, with approximately 800 sheets each, in the process that was brought against him by the Tribunal of the Holy Office. This other material is made up of justifications that Vieira had promised to hand in to the inquisitors following his first summons, i.e., an apology of the texts expounded in the letter in which he prophesised the resurrection of King João IV. This apology was recently published – with erudition and the patient labour of organising and editing the text – by the Brazilian researcher Adma Fadul Muhana under the title of Apologia das Coisas Profetizadas (Apology of Things Prophesised). A labyrinthine web of connections, repetitions, digressions, enlargements, intersections and overlapping of meaning can be traced between segments of the Apology, the content of the two Representations that are included in the Defence Before the Holy Office and various ‘Questions’ that Vieira planned to include in the seven ‘Books’ of his mega-project History of the Future. This web of meanings and these bundles of papers are maybe a rather singular case in the history of the Spirit of Utopia, its embodiment and its condemnation being brought together in one work. They are the testimony of a seventeenth century Jesuit who brilliantly uses his theological erudition to prove and dispute with the examiners of the Holy Office the thesis that all mankind would live a millennium of peace, social harmony and pure spiritual contemplation in an earthly dimension and in a very near future.

In the perspective of Vieira, for whom the epitome of knowledge and the supreme indicator of truth were almost exclusively confined to the codified sphere of the Holy Scriptures, the "benefit of time" not only incites the discovery of prophesised truths – truths that paradoxically cannot be understood except with the passing of time – but also unveils new facts. Not so much because they are new in themselves – seeing
that, as he tried to explain in the *Preliminary Book of History of the Future* (VIEIRA, 1983, 112), everything that is new is something unknown that becomes known, something that already existed in a potential state – but because they become known and seen. The new facts are "dis-covered" because they are "nearer" the future. The "benefit" that the passage of time brings with it, therefore, is to widen the possibilities written in the history of the past, to reveal the destiny of the world, to expound its providential laws compiled in the Bible by the "Lord of time" or hand them down to oracular voices (like the one of Bandarra), and that the authorised interpreters (the priests of the Church), exegetes (like Vieira himself) are better placed "to distinguish" because "they are nearer the future". Based on those assumptions, Vieira launches into a conceptual juggling act around the words "new" and "old", in order to emphasise the idea that the "new" his *History of the Future* proclaims is not original because it opposes the "old" ideas imparted either by Biblical History of the past or by its contemporaneous theology, but by cause or due to the recreation of the old truth that they encompass. Proclaiming the superior value of the "new" by means of its retroactive implication in relation to antiquity, and not because of the "newness" in itself, Vieira pertinently announces the theme of the articulation of the old with the new, the modern with tradition, when he ponders over the matter in his *History of the Future*:

*So that it may not sound that I am defending new things, as I must defend my history, replying to the objection to what is new in it, I say that in all its novelty, due to its great substance, I will say nothing new. Propriety is all future things being new, and, because of this, the last ones and those of the most distant future will be called very new; but even though my History is about new things, this will not make it new. It is a new history with nothing new, it is a perpetual newness with nothing new."* (VIEIRA, 1983, 112).

With this verbal-conceptual play, Vieira illustrates his method for proving his prophetic-messianic theses. It was to go the biblical past, to retrogress in the analysis of old tradition in order to bring up a new interpretation, clarified and revalidated by the "benefit" (by the passing) of time, of what necessarily must occur. In other words, Vieira based himself on the indisputable and necessary truth of the old and canonic prophetic word to cement the necessary truth of his new and non-canonic prophetic word, i.e., semantically revising the content of the old biblical prophecies, updating them and making them suitable for his new prediction for the future.
Time is therefore the best commentator of the prophecies, and, both in Brazil where he had worked as a missionary and in Portugal where he preached and disputed, the forties, fifties and sixties of the 17th century was the time for Vieira to compound all the theological arguments that his amazing and erudite imagination had drawn in the composition of his Catholic-exegete, messianic-"Lusocentric" treatise of the History of the Future. And this happened –I repeat - more or less at the same time Christian puritan priests in England published their prophetic, "Anglocentric" treatises in which they identified Albion as the chosen nation and the British Isles as the place for the launching of the fifth monarchy.

Historic revolutionary periods are particularly propitious for the launching of Utopian projects, and the socio-political situation in England from 1640 to 1650 was no exception. The permanent conflict between monarchy and Parliament reached a deadlock and gave rise to a ferocious, prolonged civil war with its inevitable roll of battles, sieges and massacres. The end of the war brought victory to the forces loyal to Parliament and the triumph of Puritanism, i.e ideological and political current dominant in that faction. King Charles I was taken prisoner, tried, condemned to death and beheaded. A parliamentary-republican regime which evolved into a military dictatorship, the Commonwealth, was established in 1649. In a century when political activity was synonymous with religious profession, many political-religious sects emerged and proliferated during the English republican interregnum, especially in the revolutionary phase in the 1740’s. Each one preached its own particular theological and teleological interpretation of the Bible, extolling its more or less theocratic, own ideal model of society. With greater or lesser emphasis, the revolutionary or reformist scope of these sects was founded on a common ideological vector, with strong social overtones, the biblical hope of the millennium, the promise of the coming of a future, thousand-year-long earthly kingdom directly ruled by Christ, i.e the reformulated Christian explanation of the apocalyptic visions of the Old Testament, a type of precise numerical quantification of the duration of the fifth monarchy foretold by the prophet Daniel (2, 31-45) that would bring human history to a conclusion in splendour and justice. Among these sects emphasis must be laid on the Fifth Monarchy Men. We mean, to be precise, a sectarian current of a religious and political nature that, according to the calculations made by Christopher Frouke, one of their leaders, had about 40,000 followers in 1659. Their social practice was essentially inspired by a devout, sincere
millenarianist hope permeated by a strong utopian vector: the imminent coming of a
glorious kingdom of earthly happiness ruled by Christ in England (CAPP, 1972, 81).

Although the prophetic-millenarianist ideas of the Fifth Monarchy Men's
doctrinaires had begun to be disseminated at the beginning of the civil war, it was in the
fifties, immediately following the execution of Charles I, that the political militancy of
the movement and the diffusion of its ideals exercised the greatest influence on English
society and politics. After the manner adopted in St. John's Revelation of identifying the
chosen ones who would rule with Christ, their members called themselves saints. But
after the manner adopted in Daniel's Apocalypse to define the earthly monarchy ruled
by God, they saw themselves as the legion, the vanguard of the chosen to bring about
the fall of the "fourth monarchy" – the last earthly and anti-divine empire of evil – and
create conditions for the implantation of the "fifth monarchy".

The fact that England had been the stage and the English people the leading
players in the first reform of the western Christian church, i.e., that England had become
the first great European Protestant state in the 17th century, were strong reasons for the
germination of the nationalistic and messianic "Anglocentric" thesis in the country at
the time. This thesis which attributed a transcendent role to the English nation to lead
the fight against the forces of evil, identified as Roman Catholicism, was adopted by the
poet Milton, and advocated by all English non-Catholic congregations – from the
official Anglican to the plethora of other creeds of a Calvinist-Protestant nature. In
short, they proclaimed that England was indisputably the messianic nation, the chosen
nation that should prepare for the battle of Armageddon.

It was so then that, in the reverberant logic of the revolutionary processes
subject to the enticing promise of future good, in the logic promoted by the literal and
the unilateral reading of the Holy Scriptures, the belief that the fall of the Stuart dynasty
opened the way for the monarchy of Christ became widespread in England in the
middle of the 17th century. In their eagerness to prepare for this inevitable epiphany of
glory and redemption, the followers of the Fifth Monarchy Men, however, were divided
regarding the political nature of the regime to be installed (whether monarchic or
republican) and the conditions in which Christ would come, remain and rule on earth
(whether in person or whether at the beginning, during or at the end of the millennium).
The theses varied between pre- and post millenarianist opinions, i.e., between those that
believed in the early coming of Christ as a condition to inaugurate the millennium and
those that argued for the need to create the primordial material conditions for the second
coming of Christ. And what better social model could be adopted than that provided by
the Bible itself, by the Old Testament, by the law of Moses, by the verses of the
Pentateuch, i.e. by the ideological and administrative principles that had ruled the social
and private lives of the Israelites, the people that were the trustees of God’s will in times
long past when the English nation and people still occupied a virtual place in the
providential plans of the final redemption of history?

Thousands of people not only believed but also struggled so that the English
Commonwealth would be transformed into a kind of replica of the biblical Canaan, a
image of God’s kingdom of Israel in England, stimulated as they were by the
teleological Utopia of existential plenitude. One of them was William Aspinwall (1630-
1662). Although he was moderate in the Fifth Monarchy doctrine, he opposed
revolutionary action and even defended the collaboration of the "saints" with the
governments of the "fourth monarchy". A former puritan deacon, he wrote several
treatises of a post-millenarian nature in which he extolled the setting up of a politico-
theocratic regime to be governed by Puritans inspired by the law of Christ.

Aspinwall published *A brief description of the Fifth Monarchy, or Kingdome
that shortly is to come into the World* in London in 1653. Divided (symbolically) into
five chapters, this small politico-administrative treatise tried to demonstrate and prove
(i) that the implantation of the fifth monarchy was imminent and would be set up in
England; (ii) that Christ would assume the messianic function of being its monarch; (iii)
that this monarchy would be hierarchically administered and organised, in accordance
with the biblical social order, by the chosen saints; (iv) that Christ would be its supreme
legislator; (v) that its necessary implantation would be accompanied by a state of grace
and of virtuous collective life. (ASPINWALL, 1653, 1-14)

But to return to Vieira and the historical situation in seventeenth-century
Portugal and the ideological environment that was propitious for the circulation of
prophetic-messianic positions like that of the heterodox Jesuit. When, in the ninth
chapter of the *Preliminary Book of History of the Future*, our historian of the future
declared his intention to critically examine non-canonical predictions in order to
elucidate and give more depth to his hopeful incursion into the mysteries of Portugal
and the world, he was certainly thinking of Bandarra’s lyrical verses, that is to say of
the writings of that other soothsayer inspired by the "light" of the irrepressible Holy
Ghost, the divine spirit that, according to Vieira, continued to express himself beyond
the scope of the holy Scriptures. As can be deduced from Vieira's synopsis of the
project of his *History of the Future*, among other truths for which Bandarra’s *Trovas* were used as material proof was the question as to which of the Portuguese monarchs would be *the first Emperor, and temporal instrument, of the said [V] empire* (Vieira, 1992, 33-40). Of the empire that, after all, was nothing more than the illustration of Vieira’s **principle of hope** and the embodiment of the **spirit of (his) Utopia**, to use the titular expressions of the philosophy of Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), the great twentieth century thinker of the phenomenon of Utopia. This is a particularly important **issue** for two reasons: (i) because it has to do with the complex problem of messianism – (and it must be reiterated that in the visionary Jesuit’s eschatological theology the Portuguese king, the future emperor of the world, is defined as a type of messiah-liberator, a representative of Christ’s temporal power on earth, while the representative of Christ’s spiritual power was the pope, the Sovereign Pontiff of the reformed Church, the Triumphant Church); (ii) because it recalls the ideological affinities of Vieira with the "Sebastianist" trend of thought – the adjective sebastianist here used in a loose, wide sense in order to refer to a messianic and millenarianist expectation and not to suggest that Vieira was associated to the sect of those that, also inspired by Bandarra, believed in the physical return of King Sebastião as the future emperor of a glorious and universal Christian society.

In the plan Vieira had outlined to write the "saint" book of the *History of the Future*, he proposed that its fourth book should be devoted to discuss the various requisites needed for the consummation of the 5th Empire. Those requisites essentially meant the "extirpation" of all heresy and idolatry and the conversion of gentiles and Jews to Christianity, the latter taking place after the appearance of the ten lost Jewish tribes – a biblical-theological condition for the sanctification of the world. As far as the content of his first two books is concerned, the Jesuit soothsayer envisaged dealing with the biblical principles and the nature of this new existential dimension, whereas in the third book he intended to deal with the "greatness and happiness of the said empire". The project was not finished and only a part of the material of the first two books, both included as appendices to the judicial proceeding brought against him by the Inquisition, was written with a certain systematic clarity and coherence. Apart from the complicated problems regarding historical dating of the texts that filed in the Inquisition’s folders, what seems to us to be worthy of note in the web of Vieira’s different writings that were unfinished and submitted to examination by the tribunal of the Holy Office is his obsession with the theme of prophecy, which means to say his
lasting, inviolate hope in the future, attracted by the gravitational pull of the spirit of Utopia.

Unfortunately, however, neither what has been published in *History of the Future*, nor the dissertation of the *Apologia*, nor the "Representations" of the *Defence before the Tribunal of the Holy Office*, nor – as far as is known – what Vieira wrote in his last prophetic work, *Clavis Prophetarum*, deal in detail or explicitly with the subject of the felicity of the said empire and none of them include the chapter on the substance or the organisation of the perfect society that Vieira idealised to be built on earth. His existential and social Utopia, his universal Utopia projected from a national centre, to be founded in the "province of Spain" in ‘Lisbon’ (*History of the Future – sixth book – second and third questions*) by a temporal representative of God, His Serene Highness, the King of Portugal (seventh book – fourth question), deserves no more than brief verbal annotations.

Unlike the treatises and pamphlets of the Fifth Monarchy Men, which basically intended to explain the administrative models expounded in the Old Testament and the functioning of a Utopian-universal –"christocentric" society, planned not by an individual protagonist or messianic king but by a messianic elite with its centre in England, Vieira resorted to the wisdom of the canonical prophets – Daniel, Ezekiel, John of Patmos, etc. (a topic mainly dealt with in the first and second chapters of the First Book of *History of the Future*) – and the non-canonical prophets such as the Portuguese soothsayer Bandarra (a topic mainly dealt with in the first part of his *Apologia*). And unlike his contemporary English millenarianists, Vieira intermittently devoted himself more to explaining the conditions, the means and the requisites necessary for the installation of the Fifth Empire than to planning the effects of its coming. He was more concerned in giving reasons for its historical inevitability than in specifying its institutional mechanisms and its politico-administrative order.

Although the millenarianism of the Portuguese Jesuit was somewhat hermeneutic, essentially derived from the reading of the Bible, as was that of the English puritans, he differed eschatologically from the latter – (so it seems to us) – regarding the conditions of the coming or the foundation of the kingdom of a thousand years of the (Portuguese) saints. Vieira awaited a final resolution of history that clearly envisaged a transcendent, providential intervention, in which the Pope and the Portuguese king and people would play a decisive and instrumental role in the launching of the thousand-year era prophesised in the Apocalypse. This is the reason
why he wove an immense web of arguments on the evidence of the coming of this golden era. The enunciation of these conditions was the result of his reflection on an event that he considered inevitable, pre-determined by God and announced in the Holy Scriptures and for which, he, as an exegete, was incumbent on providing valid arguments. Thus, his historico-eschatological thinking is pre-millenarianist – to use Shepperson’s typology – (the coming of Christ inaugurates his kingdom). This differs, therefore, from the post-millenarianist positions (the coming of Christ happens as a result of human intervention) of the English puritan doctrinaires of the same time, who believed that the second coming of Christ would take place after the English "saints" had organised the world in order to receive Him with dignity. It is perhaps this subtle difference between pre- and post-millenarianism that can help to explain why Vieira did not write much about the ideal future society. He may have believed that divine inspiration communicated directly to the human spirit would be enough for mankind to achieve a social formula in conformity with a more perfect, just and happy way of being. His prophetic vision may have been smothered by the intuition that whatever the programme for the future thousand years of grace – like those drawn up by his English millenarianist counterparts – it would limit the unfathomable possibilities of those that still lived under the influence of the anxieties and misfortunes of the fourth empire. According to the writings he left, one cannot infer that men, especially the Portuguese, should passively await the kingdom of Christ on earth. Vieira's thesis was that whatever the saints did they would do by providential necessity, law or divine grace, and so it would be irrelevant to freely prepare a coming that had been necessarily prepared since eternity.

In the view of seventeenth-century English millenarianism, which was rooted in puritan Protestantism, the English nation and its people were chosen and sanctified in that they had prepared the millennium. In the view of seventeenth-century Portuguese "sebastianists" and Vieira's millenarianism, which had Roman Catholicism as a backdrop, the Portuguese nation and its people were chosen in that they awaited the millennium to be sanctified.

As the fervent Catholic that he was, Vieira tried to adapt his Utopian millenarianism to the dogmas of the Roman church, an extremely difficult enterprise to achieve and sustain in a century that was strongly influenced by the reciprocal intolerance between different religious creeds and the particularly fierce persecution of the Jews. However, in Vieira’s Utopian millenarianism, all men would be saved, which
meant, in his vision, the universal conversion of gentiles and Jews to Christianity. To achieve this, the Jesuit priest thought that the future "Triumphant Church" would have to make concessions to the rites practised by the Hebraic people. Given the fact that the Jews were deeply tied to their traditional rituals, many of which were practised by the first Christians, there was no reason, according to him, why they should be stigmatised or considered heretics if they conformed to Christian theology. From a religious point of view, therefore, Vieira seemed to have envisaged the doctrine of the fifth empire as being one, its oneness, open to ritual diversity, not imposed but voluntarily recognised through the universal revelation of Christ. From an existential point of view it would be a state characterised by the pouring out of celestial glory, ruled by the physical laws of temporal life, a kind of recast ontological condition, an earthly prelude to eternal bliss, in which men, knowing at last complete peace for a thousand years, would live a healthy and exceptionally long life: they would carry out their normal activities in a fraternal, holy manner. In a note that Vieira left incomplete and which was recently published as an appendix to Apologia das Coisas Profetizadas, one can read an idea similar to one that had been written by William Aspinwall in his Brief description of the Fifth Monarchy: "The 1st temporal happiness of this fortunate kingdom will be that one without which no other can be called true happiness, and which in itself encompasses all or almost all those that can be enjoyed in this life, which is peace. There will be universal peace in the whole world, wars and armed conflict will cease in all nations and then the prophecies so often repeated by all the prophets, so variously expounded by interpreters and never really understood, will be fulfilled" (VIEIRA, 1994, 287). This peace would bring about such a revolution in habits and would be accompanied by such a change in the spirit of life that Isaiah’s prophecy that refers to the wolf living together with the lamb would be finally fulfilled on earth.

Due to the lack of textual testimonies, it is impossible to speculate much about the Utopian sociology of Vieira’s fifth empire. But the crucial question he asked at a certain point in his brief note on the cruelty of the preservation of life leads us to think that his prophetic Utopia was ontologically idealised as if implying a return to the mythical condition of the garden of Eden, when animal life would be perpetuated without creatures devouring each other, living in harmonious coexistence, sustained by leaves and fruit, following an innocuous vegetarian diet. In complete conformity with his hermeneutics and with his method of prospecting a new future, i.e., in harmony with the logic of his prophetic thinking, Vieira maintained that the future would reveal a
distant past and a very antiquated thing, a "novelty of something not new" – to paraphrase his own words. It was basing himself on the belief in the paradisiacal era of the origins (momento-alpha) that Vieira formulated his questions - which seem to translate an intimate, generous aspiration for the good of everyone – on the quality of the final moment (momento-omega): “If from the beginning of the world to the Flood [which was a period of 1650 years] <all> animals lived in peace together, and those that today <are called> wild and domesticated <did not have that difference> and at that time roamed the same fields peacefully and harmoniously, without stalking or eating each other: how long will it be before the world sees in its last moments what it saw in its first? and [how long will it be before the world sees] the renovation of the land and the air that we considered above and the temperament of the animals restored to its former condition so that, without miracle or essential changes in nature, the instinct and apprehension of fantasy led them to fruit and pasture as they are led to flesh today?” (VIEIRA, 1994, 292). These are questions that, after all, revive a very old Utopian-pastoral ideal, still alive in the spirit of some eastern religions: that innocent conduct that does not wish to cause harm does not necessarily mean stupidity or monotonous fixation to a state of mental underdevelopment, but can be the equivalent of the fruition of a state of grace, of an active and perceptible wisdom that dissolves or transcends the antagonism of good and evil, of reason and non-reason, of life and death, i.e., that goes beyond the hard dualities that have presided over the laws of history and the deficiencies of the present.

**Bibliography**

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