ONCE UPON A TIME: THE OLD BLANDY’S WINE LODGE — PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS STRATEGIES IN MADEIRA (1811–1855)

ERA UMA VEZ O OLD BLANDY’S WINE LODGE — INVESTIMENTOS IMOBILIÁRIOS E ESTRATÉGIAS EMPRESARIAIS NA MADEIRA (1811–1855)

10.29073/herança.v6i2.656

Receção: 07/07/2022 Aprovação: 24/12/2022 Publicação: 13/05/2023

António José Marques da Silva,
CITUR, ESTG—University of Madeira, Campus of Penteada, Funchal, Portugal, antonio.jmsilva@staff.uma.pt

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the strategies of property management developed by John Blandy, a British citizen who founded a family company bearing his name, prospering as a wine shipper and general trader. The analysis of different kinds of sources from Portuguese archives made it possible to understand how this businessman of the early 1800s took advantage of real estate opportunities in Funchal (Madeira Island) throughout his life. His legacy provided the material conditions to ensure the continuity of the firm in the long term, including its historical headquarters in Rua de São Francisco, known today as the Old Blandy's Wine Lodge.

Keywords: Corporate history, Property management, John Blandy, Madeira wine, Funchal

RESUMO

Este artigo revisita os investimentos imobiliários de John Blandy, fundador de uma empresa bicentenária que leva seu nome. Na 1.ª metade do século 19, este cidadão britânico prosperou como exportador de vinho Madeira e comerciante em geral. A análise de diferentes tipos de fontes de arquivos portugueses permitiu compreender como soube aproveitar as oportunidades no porto do Funchal. A estratégia que levou a cabo ao longo da sua vida permitiu assegurar a continuidade da sua firma até hoje, destacando-se a aquisição do conjunto de prédios na esquina da Rua de São Francisco, onde se veio a instalar a histórica sede, conhecida como Old Blandy's Wine Lodge.

Palavras-Chave: História do empreendedorismo, Investimentos imobiliários, John Blandy, Vinho Madeira, Funchal

1. INTRODUCTION

Madeira is a small, mid-Atlantic island. Today, this autonomous region of Portugal is economically insignificant, tourism being its main source of revenue. It is hard to believe that within a few decades of its discovery around 1419, it became the first laboratory for globalization as we now know it. Sugar, and later wine, turned Funchal, the capital of the young colony, into the hub of a large commercial network that soon extended around the whole planet. From the beginning, this port attracted merchants from different nationalities. Among them were many British, who began arriving in the 17th century, rapidly forming the most influential and solid expatriate community. They took advantage of their privileged relations with the colonial empire of their own nation to prosper as wine shippers and general traders, the two activities complementing each other. John Blandy was one of them. In 1811, he came to the island with his brother Thomas, founding a family company there. Madeira wine was now a commodity in great demand globally, from the 2nd half of the 18th century being sought after as a prestige item, reflecting a cosmopolitan taste. It would make the fortune of intermediaries, such as John, who acted as mediators between local owners of vineyards and the consumers scattered around the world.

The correspondence between members of the family gives us a good idea of Thomas's role abroad, close to customers and suppliers both. This paper proposes another insight into this successful partnership, focusing on how John
ensured from the “back office” the logistical conditions necessary to turn Funchal into the epicentre of the business model adopted. The purpose is to understand how his strategy of real estate investments set the course for the longevity of this family company, the only one owned by descendants of British shippers that continues to make Madeira wine today. After reviewing the facts from previous publications referring to the early days, the methodology adopted and the sources explored will be presented. The main results of the research, which contemplated the period between 1811 and 1855 (the year of John’s death), will be summarized next. Two periods will be distinguished in regard to property management. The early years, when the young businessman exclusively engaged in renting a changing set of storage spaces spread across the downtown, and the period after breaking up the partnership with his brother (1820). The strategy adopted by John after that, on his own and later with his son Charles Ridpath, resulted in the installation of the firm’s headquarters in the São Francisco quarter of Funchal, known today as the Old Blandy’s Wine Lodge. Finally, the importance of these facilities for the survival of the company after the oidium crisis in 1852 will be highlighted, along with its continuity up to the present, serving now as a tourist showroom of the Madeira Wine Company, which still ages wine in this bicentenary building. This case study reminds historians of the importance of considering not only the global but also the local scale to fully understand the phenomenon of corporate internationalization in the long run.

2. Literature Review

John Blandy (1873–1855) sojourned for the first time in Funchal in 1808, “on account of ill health”, as many foreigners did at this time (Silva, 1994; Câmara, 2002). He brought a letter of recommendation offering his accounting services, addressed to Newton, Gordon, Murdoch & Scott, one of the leading shippers of Madeira wine at this time (Hancock, 2009). The young man went back to his home country in 1810 and returned to the island the next year with his pregnant wife, Jenett Burden (1784–1828). His two brothers, Thomas (1790–1849) and Georges (1800–1877), travelled with the couple, to start a family business together. There are contradictory versions about what happened next. The most consensual (Carnero Lorenzo et al., 2010; Binney, 2011) argues that the same year, John took up residence in a house located in the Rua de São Francisco, No 8, acquiring the adjacent cellar (No 10) which houses the Blandy’s Wine Lodge today. The SIPA database mentions that it was only in 1836 that the municipality sold the facilities to him, which was previously occupied by Monteiros & de La Tuellièrie, a competing firm also engaged in the Madeira wine trade. The history of this company began in 1775 with the marriage of the French Consul, Nicolao José Joaquim Sabouis da LaTuellièrie, and the daughter of Pedro Jorge Monteiro, one of the...
most important wine shippers of Funchal\(^1\). The bonds would be reinforced in 1807 by the marriage\(^2\) of the consul’s son, named Nicolao de LaTuelliere after his father\(^3\), and the granddaughter of Pedro Jorge Monteiro, Ana Carlota Monteiro. Upon the death of her husband in 1820\(^4\), this lady would marry Luís de Ornelas e Vasconcelos\(^5\). According to the SIPA record, the firm’s wine store [located in the Beco Joaquim Sanches\(^7\)] in front of Rua de São Francisco already existed in 1778, the property being registered by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Funchal, subject to the payment of a foro. The database mentions that a facility of this kind was also located in the Beco Joaquim Sanches\(^8\), which was sold in 1822 by the sister of Ana Carlota Monteiro and her husband, Inácio Castelbranco Sampaio, to Manuel José de Oliveira\(^7\). It is not clear if it is the same building and if it had been previously owned by Nicolao de LaTuelliere, who already had his residence at Rua de São Francisco in 1817, where he died three years later\(^9\). Furthermore, in accordance with the SIPA record cited above, Luís de Ornelas e Vasconcelos had an office in this street in 1821\(^9\). His company would be “Monteiros & de La Tuellièrie”, referred to by the same source as the previous owner of “The Old Blandy’s Wine Lodge”, sold by the municipality of Funchal to the Blandy family in 1836. According to another version, based on a contract deposited in the regional archives\(^10\), John disposed of the wine store through a public auction in 1838. Others believe that it was Charles Ridpath Blandy (1812–1879), and not his father, who made the purchase in 1840\(^11\).

The uncertainty about the early history of the historical headquarters of the bicentenary company is due in part to the lack of information on the first years of its existence. Until now, the private correspondence exchanged between members of the family has been the main source of available information on this period\(^12\). A letter, dated 17 April 1811, brought by Thomas back to England, suggests that Madeira wine was already the backbone of their partnership, initially targeting London, but soon looking for opportunities in America and West Indies, which had been the most important markets of the island producers since the 17th century (Vieira, 2015). Further letters reveal that they often used the wine to pay for acquisitions of another kinds of goods (brandy, gin, cheese, butter, and tableware from Holland, cod from Newfoundland; potatoes, herring, lard, bacon, beef and cotton wear from England, tableware from China, etc.) to be sent back to Funchal. They also purchased flour and wheat from the English ports to sell in the West Indies, the general trading profitably complementing the wine shipping. From this point of view, the new company followed the same commercial strategy previously adopted by the English expatriates based in Madeira (Liddel, 2014; Binney, 2011).

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\(^{2}\) ABM,PFUN10,Casamentos,liv.62,251v.

\(^{3}\) ABM,PFUN08,Batismos,liv.105,10v. Some scholars occasionally confuse this individual, born in 1779, with the consul’s son, named Nicolao de LaTuelliere as lessor of the house (Newitt, 1999).

\(^{4}\) ABM,PFUN08,Batismos,liv.21,45v. Cf. Guerra, 1994.


\(^{6}\) ABM,Notariais,1161,96v–97v. However, the “Memorandum of Characters” sent by W. C. Beresford to Lord Castlereagh in 1807, mentions the nephew of M. Monteiro—Mons. de la Tuielliere—as French Consul (Newitt, 1999).

\(^{7}\) ABM,PFUN10,Óbitos,liv.21,45v. Cf. Guerra, 1994.


\(^{9}\) The Beco Joaquim Sanches is an alley located on the south side of the Rua da Carreira, giving access to the back of the Old Blandy’s Wine Lodge; this was not the case in the 19th century according to maps of Funchal from this period. It probably owes its name to Joaquim José Sanches de Baena Henriques (1770–?) a cavalry officer who fought in the Napoleonic wars. AHM, DIV/1/14, Cx. 235, doc. 22. Cf. Sousa, 1887. The main access to his property was by the Rua de São Francisco, this nobleman being referred to by some authors as a resident of this street in the 1790s (Loja, 1986). Cf. ABM,Notariais,1298,106v–108. This military man had a sister, Maria da Piedade de Baena Henriques, married to José Aleixo Falcão de Mello van Zeller (Felgueiras, 1940). The name of her husband is always given as the owner of Rua de São Francisco, No 2, in the 1810 register of domicila, and Nicolau de La Tuelliere as lessor of the house in 1818 and 1819. ANT,PFJRF,541,75; ANT,PFJRF,542,55; ANT,PFJRF,543,65; ANT,PFJRF,544,77v; ANT,PFJRF,545,43; ANT,PFJRF,546,43; ANT,PFJRF,547,43v.

\(^{10}\) The source of the SIPA database is probably (Guerra, 1994).

\(^{11}\) Again, the source of the SIPA database is probably (Guerra, 1994).

\(^{12}\) ABM,Notariais,2907,172v–173v.

Robert Blandy (1799–1850) now helped his brother John to run the operations from the island. Although the business was going well, a further letter, written by Anna (1792–1879) to Thomas in the spring of 1820, mentions the unilateral severing of the society by John. In 1822, the rejected partner was already established in the United States of America, later becoming a prominent member of the Newark community (Hessey, 2021). During the early years, the Blandy brothers built a global operation. Although the main commodity was wine, from the beginning, they tended to diversify their sources of income, a practice continued during the next two hundred years (Carnero Lorenzo et al., 2010). Despite the precious information revealed by all these letters, the data available does not provide an understanding of the strategy of real estate investments implemented by John after his arrival at Funchal, not does it solve the enigma of the foundation of the Lodge. The purpose of this paper is to fill this gap.

3. METHODOLOGY

Currently, the fourth industrial revolution is triggering important improvements in business practices. Innovations not only transform production, but also introduce substantial changes in the entire value chain, including the property management sector (BEOS, 2014). Success stories such as McDonald’s (Lashley et al., 2007), which reveal how real estate investments in Funchal, several kinds of documents deposited at the Regional Archives of Madeira (ABM) and the National Archives of Torre do Tombo (ANTT) were consulted:

1- Contracts and other kinds of private acts recorded by the notaries of the city deposited at the ABM1. This search identified transactions directly or indirectly involving not only John Blandy and his relatives, but also the Monteirens & de La Tuellièrie and their holders, too. The sale deeds of this period usually mention the surrounding properties, ordered by cardinal directions and the names of their owners, and sometimes even previous contracts related to the transaction registered. This kind of information was crucial in establishing the relationships between the eclectic set of documents consulted.

2- Décima records (Funchal series), from 1811 to 1855, deposited at the ANTT and the ABM2. The décima was a tax created in 1641 by the Portuguese crown, inspired on the ecclesiastical dízima (Braga, 2002–2003). Books, annually updated, registered the value paid for each property, classified

1 ABM, “Notariais” collection.
by parish, street and even door number, following the same order they are in the street. The name of the tenants and proprietors are also listed, detailing the residence where they live and other kinds of spaces rented. The search focusing on the freguesia of Sé between 1811 and 1819 was exhaustively carried out and extended to other parishes when judged relevant.

3- Lists of the estufas tax collected at Funchal, deposited at the ANTT. In the 1790s, a merchant of the city invented a revolutionary technique enabling an acceleration of the winemaking process, heating it artificially for a few months (Vasconcelos, 1835; Vieira, 1991; Vieira, 2003; Câmara, 2002). The estufa was the name given to the facilities dedicated to this operation, which even today is a unique particularity of Madeira wine. Soon, this very lucrative improvement was taxed by the Portuguese government, annually registering the value paid by owners or tenants of the estufas, located by streets.

4- Archives of the Funchal delegation of the Fazenda Nacional (National Treasury) deposited at the ABM. By the Decree dated 28 May 1834, the monastic communities were extinguished, and their respective properties were incorporated into what was called Padrões da Fazenda Nacional, which managed all this patrimony. A significant part was sold at public auction over the next few years, with other real estate disposed of by the Portuguese government (Silveira, 1980).

The research strategy adopted can be described as an attempt to link the eclectic information related to Blandy’s and to Monteiros & de La Tuellière, gathered from these different collections, not only establishing chronological but also spatial relationships between them. The purpose of cross-referencing these different kinds of data is to evaluate the veracity of the different narratives about the origin of the Blandy’s Lodge as well as to better understand the role of corporate property management in fostering the success of the business strategy of this commercial house in the early stage. The following presents a summary of the main results of this approach. Properties acquired by John for residential purposes were also considered to evaluate the veracity of the São Francisco facilities being used simultaneously as the office, warehouse and home of the founder during the early times.

4. FINDINGS

The search in the collections presented above substantially adds to the knowledge of John Blandy’s property management practices during the first decades of the company’s existence. In the first place, it reveals a major shift in strategy around 1821, after he had already severed his partnership with Thomas. After renting facilities in different downtown areas (mostly the Funchal parish of Sé), the founder began buying adjacent properties in the São Francisco quarter, progressively constituting the plot where the “Old” Wine Lodge stands today.

4.1. The “RENTING” PERIOD (1811–1821)

The 1811 book, referring to the décima collected at the parish of Sé, is unfortunately lost. However, the year after John’s arrival, we find an entry mentioning “John Blandy” as the tenant of the house of one floor and a “loge”...
located in Rua da Igrejinha, No 6. He also rented the "loge" of house No 2. The word "loge" or "loja" is used in this period to refer to one-storey constructions or the ground floor of buildings, as a rule, used for housing commercial establishments. Both contracts were renewed in 1813, 1814 and 1816, the 1815 book being lost. While "João Blandy" is still indicated as "inquilino" in 1813, after that, it is "João e Thomas Blandy", suggesting that the firm, and not John personally, undertook both rents. According to the property description repeated every year, house No 2 seems to be one of the 18th-century merchant homes, typical of Funchal, with a "loge" at the level of the street and the living parts upstairs (Lyall, 1827; Hancock, 2009). The residential space of the building may have been eventually occupied by Robert and/or Georges, who are not mentioned as renters in any book of the décima series, or alternatively by offices of the company. John and his wife were probably installed almost immediately after their arrival in a house of one floor and "loge", with a garden, located in Rua dos Aranhas, No 36, in the parish of S. Pedro close the walls of the city. The contract, signed on February 13, 1811, by John Blandy only, was valid for three years. Robert Wallas, a Scottish shipper, and later owner of the Torrêão flour mill (Mayson, 2015), was listed as a witness. On the 8th of May 1813, this businessman let John take his position as lessor of the Quinta Deão in the Santa Luzia parish, for the next 9 years. The original contract signed by this merchant a year before, leaves no doubt that this is the villa, located in the Santa Luzia parish, in the surroundings of Funchal, later owned by the British consul and merchant, Georges Stoddart. It was one of the first erected by shippers, reflecting the architectural taste of the British (Matos, 2016). The villa was still not finished in July 1812. The proprietor, Henrique Correa de Vilhena Henriques, another well-known wine trader, was obliged to build some missing elements, freeing the renter to do other works on his own.

In July 1816, John rented the house in Rua da Capitão, No 8/9, previously occupied by its owner Manuel José de Oliveira. This building, closer to the waterfront, had two floors, a store (downstairs?) and a tower ("torre"), at the time a feature exclusive to the richest houses, providing a lookout for the arrivals of boats, an

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1 Rua da Igrejinha is the ancient name of the Rua da Carreira section near Rua das Pretas. Exposição Virtual Ruas do Funchal (Museu de Fotografia da Madeira — Atelier Vicente’s, Funchal, 2016), 12.
2 ANTT, PJRFF, 541.70v.
3 Cf. "LOGE e LOGEA" in (Constâncio, 1838). This variant of the Portuguese "loja" seems to appear in the 19th century. Indeed, the dictionaries of Bluteau and Moraes da Silva only contemplated "loja". Cf. "Loja" in (Bluteau, 1716) and (Silva, 1789). "Loge" brings the English word "lodge" to mind. Noel Cossart (1984) argues that it was used exclusively in the past by the British to refer to the wine cellars of Porto, and only more recently to those in Madeira, also.
4 ANTT, PJRFF, 542.51v; ANTT, PJRFF, 543.61v–62; ANTT, PJRFF, 544.72.
5 In the 1814 book, we also find a reference to the top floor of a house rented by a certain "Miss Blandy" (a sister of John?), located at Rua das Pretas, No 21; ANTT, PJRFF, 543.62v. This street converged with the Rua da Igrejinha from the S. Pedro church according the 1804 Oudinot map of Funchal.
6 Later, Georges Blandy would leave Madeira for Brazil to look for fortune on his own (Binney, 2011).
7 ANTT, PJRFF, 538.14.
8 ABM, Notariais, 2263.132v–134.
9 However, there is no mention of the Beco dos Aranhas, No 36 still being rented in the 1812 register of décima. ANTT, PJRFF, 539.13.
10 Further contracts suggest a close relationship between John Blandy and Robert Wallas, one of them also involving his associate Thomas Hudson. ABM, Notariais, 1141.104–105v; ABM, Notariais, 1159.117–118v. In his testament, John mentions Robert as being his friend. ABM, AD FUN, 9,2v–4.
11 ABM, Notariais, 2119.8v–9v. In the 1812 and 1813 décima registers, Robert Wallas already occupied a house at Travessa da Sé, No 4, in the Sé parish. ANTT, PJRFF, 541.49v; ANTT, PJRFF, 542.37v. The latter is rented in name of his company Thomas Hudson & Wallas in 1814. Cf. ANTT, PJRFF, 543.47v; ANTT, PJRFF, 544.70v; ANTT, PJRFF, 545.39.
12 ABM, Notariais, 2699.50v–52.
13 The contract proves that the construction of the Quinta Deão started before 1812 and was not built in the next decade as some scholars believe. Cf. Matos, 2016.
14 Some scholars argue that the Quinta Deão was built by the British consul and wine shipper, Henry Veitch. Cf. Matos, 2016.
15 John Blandy could have lived only one year at the Quinta Deão. Indeed, Henrique Correa de Vilhena Henriques sold a "quinta" to John Keir in 1814, on August 8th, inherited from the deacon (Deão) António Correia de Bettencourt and Jorge Correia Athouguia Netto. There is no mention in the contract of a lessor. ABM, Notariais, 1142.75–77v.
16 ANTT, PJRFF, 544.67v.
17 At this time, the Rua da Capitão referred to the section of Rua das Murças between the Largo da Sé and Avenida Zarco. Rui Santos, "Ruras da cidade do Funchal (continuação)", Jornal da Madeira 18831 (7/03/1993), 2. This property was rented in the name of John & Thomas Blandy.
extra certainly of great value to a shipper (Purdy, 1861). “João Blandy” and “João e Thomas Blandy” would be referred to alternatively as tenants of this property until 1819. In 1816, the firm also occupied a store (“granelf”) in Rua do Cotife, No 2, close to Rua do Capitão. The same year, John rented another one in Rua das Pretas No 16, close to the company’s facilities in Rua da Igrejinha, the contract not being renewed a year later. He also leased a “loge” at No 11 of Rua dos Pintos, a street starting at the other end of Rua da Igrejinha, later renewing the contract for only one more year. In 1817, “João Blandy” occupied a store of two floors and a “loge” located at Largo do Chafariz, No 13. This is the first time that he chose a space in the area surrounding the S. Francisco Convent. In 1818, the firm rented another “loge” at Rua das Pretas, No 3, and three years later, John subleased a warehouse (“granelf”) of one floor located at No 27 of Rua do Sabão, another street converging with Rua do Cotife. And last, but not least, in 1819, the company occupied the largest space ever, a warehouse of 4 floors with a ground-floor store, on the other side of the Ribeira de Santa Luzia, at Rua das Medinas, No 1. At this time, nothing hinted that the São Francisco quarter would host the headquarters of the firm for the next decade and beyond.

### 4.2. The “BUYING” PERIOD (1821–1839)

According to Marcus Binney, John formally ended the partnership with his brother Thomas around the spring 1820. One year later, the entrepreneur, as the sole purchaser, bought the storehouse at Rua do Cotife, No 2, rented by their company since 1816 from its lessor, João Anglin. According the décima register, the space was no longer occupied by the firm in 1855, when John died, being rented at that time to Manuel José da Silveira. The building would finally be sold in 1878 by his son, Charles Ridpath Blandy. In 1825, John made another important investment, this time in the Santa Luzia parish, where he probably lived.
with his family in 1813. On the 4th of June, he bought a villa, still in construction, owned by another wine merchant, João Brício Accioly. The location of this property, in front of the “Caminho do Monte” and the fact it was served by the “levada de Santa Luzia” suggests it was the Quinta de Santa Luzia, which is still owned today by the Blandy family. Downtown, in the same period, John began investing in the São Francisco quarter of Funchal. As explained above, John & Thomas Blandy had already rented a warehouse located at Largo do Chafariz, No 13 since 1817. The contract was renewed until 1829, the facilities being occupied by J. H. March & Co afterwards. However, beginning in 1824, John adopted a long-term strategy that consisted of acquiring adjacent properties always in his own name, progressively forming a single plot, joining the Largo do Chafariz from the south to the east side of Rua de São Francisco, the very space where the “Old” Blandy’s Wine Lodge stands today. The cross-referencing of different kinds of documents helped establish the timeline of the process of the acquisitions:

1. 1824, April 5: “João” Blandy bought a property from the Capitão José Furtado de Mendonça Tello da Câmara and his wife, inherited from Francisco de José de Macedo and his consort. It is described as a house (1 floor?) and 3 “lojas” (one vacant in 1819, another leased to a carpenter and the last to José Paes [d’Amaral]). In 1821, the Capitão had sold him a shed or one-storey house belonging to his property, which was located on the west side of the “beco” in front of the “chafariz”. One year later, José Furtado also rented to this governor’s servant, a piece of land with a size of 578 “palmos”, belonging to the same property. The house, probably reshaped, is referred to as being the home of António Paes in 1824, where his widow still lived in 1839, when John was repaid the money he had loaned to her in 1834. On 5 April 1824, “João” Blandy also bought a warehouse from António de Jesus, again in the “Beco do Teatro”, that previously belonged to José Furtado. This appears to be one of the “loges” identified by the décima books as part of the Largo do Chafariz, No 8. 2.

2. 1827, 14 November: the firm Scott, Loughnan & Penfolds sold John Blandy the ground house they bought from Bernardino José da Silva in 1802. The décima register mentions this “armazém” owned by this competitor company, located...
at Rua de São Francisco, No 3.  

3- 1829, 16 July: João Blandy bought the one-story house and "lojas" from João António da Costa, bounding on the north and east with properties he already owned. According the décima register, "João António" was the owner of the property at Rua de São Francisco, No 4/5.

4- 1838, 21 May: the Fábrica da Sé releases João Blandy from paying the foro owed to the Fiscal diocese for a building in front of the São Francisco church, disposed of earlier in a public auction of the Fazenda Real. According to this document, the buyer took possession on the 9th of May. That was the only contract related to a plot currently occupied by the Old Blandy's Wine Lodge known until today. The author found several other documents related to this acquisition, including a notarial act dated 9th May attesting that on that precise day, "João Blandy" took possession of the house that corresponds to No 1 of the Praça da Constituição, the new name of the Largo do Chafariz. This property, measuring 1240 palmos, was sold to him within the framework of a public auction by the Fazenda Nacional, previously belonging to Raimundo Ferreira de Aaguiar.

The name of this individual appeared in the 1818 and 1819 books of the décima registration as the owner of Largo do Chafariz, No 7 (a one-storey house with "loge").

5- 1839, July 5: Deed of possession given to "João" Blandy of a building located in Rua de São Francisco, composed of houses and an adjoining warehouse, that belonged earlier to Nicolau Maria Passalaqua. The décima books from 1812 to 1819 refer to this nobleman as the owner of a 2-storey house and "loge(s)?" (No 6) and a one-storey warehouse and "loge" (No 7). Despite being executed by the Fazenda Nacional in 1826 or 1827, it was only in 1839 that John had the opportunity to acquire the property at a public auction.

6- 1839, October 23: "João" Blandy bought the "Theatro do Bom Gosto" from the Morgado João da Câmara Carvalhal Esmeraldo, the 1st Count of Carvalhal, taking possession a week later. The plot was bounded on the north by the property of the heirs of Pedro Jorge Monteiro and on the west by a property which belonged to the buyer (Largo do Chafariz, No 8, acquired by John in 1824). The contract mentions the Count's grandmother, Isabel Maria da Câmara Leme, as the previous owner. The name of this lady is referred to as the holder of No 9 (house with two floors (or only one?) and two "loges"), No 10 and No 11 (both "grandes loge" also described as "granel e loge") in the décima register from 1812 to 1814. In 1816, the three plots belonged then to "João de Carvalhal", specifying that the "casa" of No 9 was being used as a "theatro".
In 1855, when John died, the décima records listed the tax paid by his heirs for a set of adjacent properties located in Rua de São Francisco/Praça da Constituição, the new name of the “Largo do Chafariz”. In the last months of his life, he also owed the tax on the rent of the top floor of Praça da Constituição, No 22. This building was located in other parts of the square, and its precise location and year of acquisition cannot be determined today. In regard to the Lodge, the first photographs of this area captured between 1865 and the 1880s already show most of the buildings that belong to the Blandy’s adega today. The pre-existing constructions had consequently been drastically reshaped or even fully built after 1839.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the real estate investments of the founder of the Blandy’s company is difficult to reconcile with previous narratives about this figure, the early days of his firm and the origins of the historical headquarters. The décima register from 1812 to 1819 never mentions any living space rented or owned by John in Rua de São Francisco, nor in Largo do Chafariz, the current location of the “Old” Wine Lodge.

On the contrary, the historical data presented above suggests that he probably first occupied a house with a garden in Rua dos Aranhais, which he rented in the beginning of 1811. Soon afterwards, he moved to Quinta Deão, a villa outside the city walls in the Santa Luzia parish, not far from the Quinta de Santa Luzia, another property that he probably bought in 1825, which still belongs to the family. From this point of view, the young man shared the lifestyle of this class of entrepreneurs, who “all have mansions in the city, but they commonly live with their families in the country houses in the neighbourhood of it” as stated by Alfred Lyall two years later. At the end of his life, however, John probably occasionally stayed at the headquarters of the firm, spending time outside the walls of the city whenever he could, as mentioned in a personal letter he wrote in the 1840s (Binney, 2011).

According to the set of new facts presented above, John did not own, nor rent, any of the properties which form the plot where the “Old” Wine Lodge stands today until 1824. In fact, the process of acquisitions was only completed in 1839, with his son Charles Ridpath (1812–1879) as an associate of the firm “João Blandy & Filho”. The timing of the successive acquisitions by the family was only completed after John’s death, when his son Charles took over the business.

closed by a door in 1843, there being no exit at the other end as already reported in 1824). ABM, Jornais, O Imparcial, 06/01/1843, 122.2; ANTT, PRJFF, 676, 99v. This alley is not represented in the oldest map of Funchal (c. 1870), appearing for the first time in the Captain Skinner map of Funchal (1775) as the Beco Joaquim Sanches. Cf. Planta I, VII in (Aragão, 1987). Thus, the popular belief of this being one of the most ancient streets of Funchal is unfounded. Cf. SIPA database, record No 00006984. The alley is currently the main entry of the Old Blandy’s Wine Lodge, being closed by a monumental door.

1. ABM, CMF, 69, 412v–413.
2. ABM, CMF, 69, 418v–419.
3. ABM, VIC, Cx. 4, 13; ABM, VIC, Cx. 25.5; ABM, VIC, Cx. 101.24.
4. The south wing of the Lodge, front of the Avenida Arriaga, was almost totally rebuilt in the early 1940s. ABM, CMFUN, B-A.2, 42, 146; ABM, CMFUN, B-A.2, 44, 193v.
5. The only storage facilities located in this area, rented by John from 1817, do not belong to the set of properties where the Old Blandy’s Wine Lodge stands today, as mentioned above.
7. A notarial act from 1839 mentioned John Blandy as an inhabitant of the Santa Luzia parish. ABM, Notariais, 3237, 6v–69v. That was where he died according to the opening act of his testament. ABM, ADFUN, 9, 2v–4. His grandson John Burden still resided in the Santa Luzia parish in 1875. ABM, Notariais, 1214, 33–35v. However, an annulled contract registered in October 1840 refers to John, this time, as an inhabitant of Rua de São Francisco. Just a few days later the definitive contract indicates that his son Charles Ridpath lives in Rua da Carreira. ABM, Notariais, 1205, 56–57. Two notarial acts, dated March and April 1837, also involved “João [John] Blandy & Son”. ABM, Notariais, 2924, 68v–69, 77v. The same happens in 1840 and 1847 contracts. ABM, Notariais, 1223, 1–2; ABM, Notariais, 1240, 6v–7, 37–38. In 1852, the firm is then called “João Blandy e Filhos”, suggesting the inclusion of another(s) son(s) as an associate of the company. ABM, Notariais, 1252, 107–108v, 109–110v, 110v–111v; ABM, Notariais, 1253, 16v–19v. One of the 1852 acts mentions Charles Ridpath not only as an associate, but also as director of the company. ABM, Notariais, 1252, 112–112v. The name of the firm was already “Blandy irmãos e c.” in a notarial act signed by John Burden Blandy, the grandson of the founder, in 1875. ABM, Notariais, 1214, 33v–35v. In the last years of his life, John founded another company named “Os Exclusivos”, this time without his elder son. The existence of this firm is documented by an 1848 contract, the founder engaging to

5. In the last months of his life, he also owed the tax on the rent of the top floor of Praça da Constituição, No 22. This building was located in other parts of the square, and its precise location and year of acquisition cannot be determined today. In regard to the Lodge, the first photographs of this area captured between 1865 and the 1880s already show most of the buildings that belong to the Blandy’s adega today. The pre-existing constructions had consequently been drastically reshaped or even fully built after 1839.

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purchases certainly depended mostly on opportunities, rare in a period when most properties were still inalienable, in the hands of a few morgados (Sousa, 2020). Any attempt at real estate management was, from this point of view, subject to auto-organization, which encompasses the Madeira wine business in general from the 17th century to the early 19th century (Hancock, 2003).

The hypothesis that the “Old” Wine Lodge already existed previously as a whole, being occupied by another shipping company, Monteirós & LaTuellère, does not stand up under the analysis of the documents consulted. Neither does the hypothesis of its having been sold by the Funchal municipality to the Blandy family in 1836. From 1812 to 1819, the décima books effectively register a warehouse of one floor with a “loge” and cooperage (“tanoaria”) at “Beco do Sanches, No 1”1. This building, leased to the “Monteiros & Co”, was then owned by António José Monteiro, son of Pedro Jorge Monteiro2 and father of Ana Carlota Monteiro3. It is probably the same plot bought by Pedro Jorge Monteiro in 1806, located on the east side of Beco Joaquim Sanches, occupied at that time by a single-storey house. At least in one point, the SIPA database is right: in 1822, Maria Monteiro and her husband, Inácio Castelbranco Sampaio, sold to Manuel José de Oliveira their fraction of this property, inherited from António José Monteiro. The shared property was now occupied by two warehouses4. However, Luis Ornellas Vasconcelos continued to own his part, as did Elvira Monteiro, another daughter of António José Monteiro. In fact, on 23 March 1839, Manuel José Oliveira and the two heirs rented the facilities to John H. March & Co.5, a competitor of the Blandy’s. It is this plot that it is referred to as a property of Pedro Jorge Monteiro’s heirs, bounded on the north the Teatro do Bom Gosto (Largo do Chafariz, No 9), in the deed of purchase made by the 1st Count of Carvalhal to John Blandy in 1839, on October 236. So, despite what the SIPA database claims, the facilities previously occupied by Monteirós & LaTuellère could not have been sold to John Blandy by the municipality of Funchal, three years earlier. In fact, the Lodge was not acquired, as a whole, by John at all. It is, on the contrary, the result of a long-term strategy of property management, depending mostly on the set of random buying opportunities undertaken during the 1st half of the 19th century, despite a clear intention of concentrating the whole operation there.

In the early days of the “João e Thomas Blandy”, John rented facilities in different locations, most of them close to the waterfront, the set of facilities leased by him changing constantly. The reason for such inconstancy is hard to deduce only from the documentation consulted. However, in his analysis of the family correspondence, Marcus Binney (2011) mentions a relevant fact: the company often used wine at the beginning to pay for other goods bought by Thomas in European ports to be sold, not only in Madeira, but also in America. The asynchronous cadence of commodity arrivals and departures at the port, with sometimes long waiting periods between the moment of acquisition and expedition soon made the storage management the backbone of the business.

Producing Madeira wine itself also required more and more room each passing year. Beginning with the American Revolution, shippers began to age the wine before boarding (Hancock, 1998). Prior to this time, they often shipped it just a few days after it was

1 ANTJ,PFUN10,Batismo,liv.31,70v.  
2 ANTJ,PFUN10,Batismo,liv.31,70v.  
3 ANTJ,PFUN10,Batismo,liv.31,70v.  
4 ANTJ,PFUN10,Batismo,liv.31,70v.  
5 ANTJ,PFUN10,Batismo,liv.31,70v.  
6 The rent contract between John H. March & Co. and the heirs of Pedro Jorge Monteiro, concluded on March 23, 1839, referred explicitly to the Teatro do Bom Gosto as the building facing the new “armazém” constructed by this company according to the arrangement agreed previously with the owners. ABM,Notariais.3215,105–107v.

“Memorandum of Characters” in 1807 and not, as Newitt (1999) argued before, João António Monteiro, who was a teacher at the University of Coimbra. Cf. Guerra, 1994.
delivered by producers from the country vineyards, by land or by sea. Now, merchants also looked for buildings to install the stoves needed to accelerate the process to respond to a growing demand and reduce the storage costs at the same time. However, John seems to have adopted this innovation later than his competitors. Indeed, the tax records relative to this kind of facility mention his name only once in 1825, when he rented an “estufa” located in Rua de Santa Maria, owned by Christovão Esmeraldo, for just three months\(^1\). The search in the Notariais collections of the ABM, only identified one 3-year lease contract for two “estufas” by “João Blandy e Filho” in 1840. These facilities stood facing the sea, close to the bridge known as Ponte de S. Lázaro, just 300 metres from the São Francisco quarter\(^2\). From 1852 onwards, the firm administrated another stove, again located in the São Lázaro area\(^3\). The confirmation of the delay in adopting the new technique requires further research in the Blandy’s archives. To be sure, the company would have needed more space than their competitors to age the Madeira wine naturally, similar to the current canteiro method, instead of heating it. It produces a superior quality, the best wines being those kept higher for a while, up close to the roof. The 4-storey warehouse rented in 1819, at Rua das Medinas, No 1, could possibly have already had this purpose. The remodelling of the preexisting set of buildings at the Rua de São Francisco/Avenida Arriaga corner, after 1839, could also have been motivated, at least in part, by the increasing need for higher storage for a long period of time. After 1852, “John Blandy e Filhos” also administrated a lime factory and owned a small stove near the “estufa” of São Lázaro and had exclusive access to the calcareous rock from a quarry located in Porto Santo\(^4\). Now the firm was able to produce the raw material needed to start the building project of its new headquarters, only a few hundred metres from the São Francisco quarter.

6. Conclusions

The interest of historians in the Madeira wine trade has increased significantly in recent decades, boosted by the societal need to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of globalization that has shaped today’s world. The role of transatlantic correspondence for the rise of a planetary market for this commodity had been highlighted earlier by scholars. Based on the case study of the Blandy’s company, this paper reveals the “back office” side of the business strategies that made it possible to create extended networks across the oceans in the early 1800s. Three years before John’s death, the firm he created faced its most devastating crisis, caused by the oidium plague from America, which provoked a quick decline, already facing the decrease in exports a decade before (Câmara, 2002; Vieira, 2003). The prosperous elite of Madeira wine shippers was now the victim of the globalization they helped intensify. The facilities in Rua de São Francisco had an essential role in the survival of the Blandy’s company in the rainy days. Henry Vizetelly, who visited the adega in the 1880s, described it as a “veritable vineous museum”. According to this author, Charles Ridpath Blandy aged there around 5,000 pipes of the best vintages harvested before the 1852 disaster, guaranteeing the continuity of the family business (Vizetelly, 1880). The cellar, located close to the seacoast, still has exceptional conditions to mature wine by the canteiro method. Even after the installation of a brand new, high-tech winery, at Caniçal, the Lodge continues to be the place where the premium vintages of the Madeira Wine Company are aged. The development of the tourism industry during the late 20th century considerably increased the real estate value in the historical centre of Funchal. It would be unthinkable for a winemaker today to create facilities of this size from scratch in this area, turning the Old Blandy’s Wine Lodge priceless. The numerous holidaymakers who visit this charming place represent an additional opportunity for sales, and at the same time turning them into ambassadors of the product in their own

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\(^1\) ANTT, JPRFF, 441, 73.
\(^2\) ABM, Notariais, 1223, 1–28–9.
\(^3\) ABM, Notariais, 1252, 110v–111v.
\(^4\) ABM, Notariais, 1252, 109v–112v; ABM, Notariais, 1253, 16v–19v.
countries. From this point of view, the descendants of John Blandy owe to their ancestor the vision of gradually assembling a large plot close to the waterfront. This case study should call the historians’ attention to less obvious aspects of corporate strategies of internationalization, such as property management and real estate investments. It also invites them to amplify the scale of analysis from global to local.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is very grateful to: Helena Araújo for indicating documents related to Monteiro & Co, old photographs, and for the precious suggestions of readings; to Joana da Silva for indicating the document: ABM, Notariais, 2907,172v–173v; to the CITUR—Centre for Tourism Research, Development and Innovation (Pole Madeira) for funding the fees, the proofreading and review of this paper (funded by national funds through FCT—Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation, within the project reference UIDB/04470/2020).

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**Figures**

**Figure 1** - Localization of properties in downtown Funchal, rented by John Blandy (1811–1821) on a map based on the 1804 Oudinot survey of the city.

1. Rua das Pretas, nº 3 (1818)
2. Rua das Pretas, nº 16 (1816)
3. Rua das Pretas, nº 21 (1814; rented by miss Blandy)
4. Rua da Igrejinha, nº 6 (1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816)
5. Rua da Igrejinha, nº 2 (1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816)
6. Rua das Medinas, nº 1 (1819)
7. Rua do Pinto, nº 11 (1816, 1817)
8. Rua da Sábia, nº 27 (sub-located: 1821)
9. Rua dos Aranhos, nº 36 (1811)
10. Largo do Chafariz, nº 13 (1817, 1818, 1819, ...) (1829)
11. Rua do Capitão, nº 8-9 (1816, 1817, 1818, 1819)
12. Rua do Côncio, nº 12 (1816, 1817, 1818, 1819; acquired in 1821)

**Source:** Developed by the author.

**Figure 2** - Schematic plan of the plots acquired by John Blandy (1824–1839) in the São Francisco quarter, based on the analysis of archival sources.

**Source:** Developed by the author.
PROCEDIMENTOS ÉTICOS


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