

Abstract

At the Museu Nacional Machado de Castro in Coimbra, several tiles that in the past served to teach mathematics and astronomy are on display. We know today that they were created to support science education in Jesuit colleges of Coimbra. About two dozen mathematical tiles survived to this day, but they have been more than three hundred. They all reproduce figures of *The Elements of Euclid*, in the version of Andrea Tacquet, precisely the version that was used in Jesuit schools. There are also four tiles of astronomy, which have been part of a panel which would represent celestial constellations, comets and representations of the solar system.

In 2010, during archaeological excavations near the former College of Jesus, two pieces of tiles that clearly belong to the collection of these teaching tiles were found, so with great certainty, we may conclude that they were on display at a Jesuit college at Coimbra, certainly after 1654 (date of publication of *The Elements of Euclid*, Tacquet edition) and before the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal in 1759.