
PALATIUM WORKSHOP: INVENTORIES AND COURTLY SPACES
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Catherine and Juana of Austria: Defining feminine royal spaces and contexts of display in Portugal and Spain

Background Materials & Materials for Discussion



Simon Benning and Antonio de Holanda

The Paço da Ribeira palace complex (circled in red) with a view of the Palace Square, the *Terreiro do Paço*, 1530-1535
British Library, London, Add. Ms. 12531, fol. 8

Principal Royal Residences in Lisbon:

From 1500 to 1580, Portuguese monarchs and their consorts resided in a collection of royal residences within the capital, Lisbon, and without. Itineraries and residencies in these palaces were determined either by the seasons (ie. hunting), or for reasons of emergencies or health (when cities, such as Lisbon, were affected by plague or earthquakes). Monarchs and their queens in Renaissance Portugal lead itinerant lives, often moving from place to place, for determinate (and indeterminate) periods of time.

Paço da Ribeira built by Manuel I, starting in 1504-1505, and designated the principal royal residence, until the 1755 earthquake. This palace was located adjacent the warehouses, the *Casas da Índia* and *da Guiné* (Africa), and because of this proximity was also named, the *Palacio da Índia* (India Palace). This residence bordered the Tagus river, the *ribeira*, or commercial hub of Lisbon, where the shipyards and international trade were centralized. Manuel I redesigned the entire area in 1501 to accommodate an expansive square, the *Terreiro do Paço*, for the administrative offices governing his overseas empire, and where he situated his new royal palace on the western side (circled in red). Near the waterfront plaza, were the lower streets of Lisbon (the *Baixa*), where commodities, precious stones, medicinal drugs, slaves and luxury goods from Africa, India, the Far East and Brazil, as well as Europe (Italy, Spain and Flanders) were sold on the *Rua Nova dos Mercadores*.



View of *Rua Nova dos Mercadores*, before 1580
Society of Antiquaries, London

This long thoroughfare constructed by Manuel I was the first paved street of Renaissance Lisbon. It was located close to the Paço da Ribeira, from where certain palaces windows allowed for views from above of this busy street. The black arrow (upper left) marks the rooftop(s) of the royal palace.

Through the re-urbanization of Lisbon, Manuel I sought to merge crown, government and commerce in the heart of his capital. Portuguese royal collectors enhanced their collections with the overseas trade generated in this area, which in turn affected the decoration, display and layout of palace interiors in Lisbon.

Santos (o Velho), built in the 15th century, was considered a suburban residence, located outside the city center. It remained in continual use from 1500 to 1580, lived in only sporadically by Manuel I, his son, John III, and the last Aviz monarch, Manuel's grandson, Sebastian. Flemish tapestries formed the core of Manuel I's collection, as a 1505 inventory of the Santos Palace confirms. Seventy-four, large-scale tapestry panels, comprising of various themes and cycles, were recorded in the king's collection. It is likely, that after Manuel's death in 1521, Santos became an annex or *dependence* of the Paço da Ribeira, used as secondary royal wardrobe. From new documentation, one can determine that the king's tapestries were probably housed in a separate wardrobe (or *guardaroba* or *guarda reposte*) in the Santos palace for lack of space in the Ribeira palace, where skilled black slaves, trained in needlework, cared for the maintenance of these expensive textiles (many woven in silk and gold). This tapestry wardrobe was at the disposal of royal owners to borrow from according to their needs, ceremonies, state functions or royal residences. Tapestries played a fundamental role at the Lisbon court as moveable property, displayed as visual propaganda in designated royal spaces (large halls or *salas*) on state occasions. The most significant cycle was the *Conquest of India*, 26 panels which hung in the expansive *sala* of the Paço da Ribeira palace. This cycle was a woven panorama celebrating the Portuguese discovery of India, glorifying Manuel I as the new Caesar of a global empire.

Palacio dos Estaus was built on the northern side of Rossio Square, away from the Ribeira waterfront, in 1449, in the central heart of Lisbon (boxed in red). A larger structure, which no longer exists, this palace served as a secondary residence from 1540 to 1571, and was used as a palatial annex to the Paço da Ribeira. This building housed members of the court who could not reside at the Paço da Ribeira, and was reserved as a residence for visiting monarchs and foreign ambassadors. The first Asian ambassador to ever visit Europe, Sri Ramaraska Pandita, a courtier from the Kingdom of Kotte (in Ceylon) probably lived here in 1542. From contemporary accounts, we know that a large representative hall (a *sala grande*) existed here (where Flemish tapestries were hung) and that gardens adjoined the main building (see image below). Also located here were the king's stables, which housed not only (and up to 100) small Iberian horses (*ginetas*) at one time, but also the king's Asian elephants imported from India and Ceylon. At least five elephants (and other imported wild animals) are recorded here in 1521. As were pachyderms after 1521, including the renowned elephant known as, Süleyman.



Alcaçova Palace was erected on the site of a Muslim fortress high above the city of Lisbon and inhabited by Portuguese monarchs from 1264 until 1505, when the *Paço da Ribeira* became the principal royal residence (**marked in red**). The building represented an eclectic accumulation of architectonic styles, built at different periods, and by 1569 this fortress-caste had fallen into disuse, in need of repairs. A gothic chapel, *Capela de São Miguel*, was located within this complex and, in 1571, the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Alexandrino, described the numerous Flemish tapestries which hung here, some with scenes from the Old Testament, and a panel with Virtue and Fortune. The interior was noted by Alexandrino as a complex arrangement of rooms, with a large reception hall divided by columns, the ceiling painted with grotesques and the walls lined with tapestries. The principal wing of the palace contained a dozen rooms with royal apartments, dining halls and guest quarters with a labyrinth of stairways, ladders, galleries and balconies.



Xabregas Palace was begun in 1556 by the royal architect, Jerónimo de Ruão, as a summer palace for John III, who wished to access this residence by boat, via the Tagus river. John III sought to build a pleasure retreat, far removed from the busy Ribeira waterfront and to escape the bouts of plague which afflicted Lisbon during his reign. Xabregas was described in 1584: “[being] at the extreme point of this city is an area enlarged by a magnificent royal palace which John III ordered built with much expense in order to serve the kings of Portugal as diversion from court and its traffic, and when most oppressed by public demands it [Xabregas] offers respite and peace.” However, after John III’s unexpected death in 1557, the completion of the palace was neglected.



Francisco de Holanda, Drawing of the palace of Xabregas

A fabrica que falece a cidade de Lisboa, 1571

This drawing by Holanda depicts a palace complex with gardens similar in concept to contemporary suburban villas in Italy, such as the Palazzo Pitti and the Boboli gardens in Florence.

As Holanda commented in his 1571 treatise *Da fabrica...*: “he [John III] began some palaces [in Xabregas], the best in all of Portugal which still have some imperfections or were neglected in their original design, and because of his death remain unfinished. I also remember the esteem that his Highness [John III] held for me and that he once put me in charge of such works of architecture and of the large projects planned with him [for Xabregas].”

Principal Royal Residences outside of Lisbon:

Almeirim was a hunting lodge first built in 1433 with later additions made until 1580. Located near Santarem, this palace became the favorite residence of John III and his consort, Catherine of Austria. The area was beloved because of the quantity of game in the surrounding forests. Principally used as a hunting box, the Lisbon court migrated here annually during the winter months, most often from December to May. "In the winter the kings of Portugal visited the beloved city of Santarem because of the quality of the game and other amusements which the fields of Almeirim offered during all seasons of the year: hunting, hawking and fishing which is abundant in that region and the location of all this makes it the most enjoyable and agreeable ever found." The rooms were known to be large, comfortable and some richly appointed. The reception hall was expansive enough to accommodate the king's court and entourage for balls and dances. There were possibly botanical gardens, interspersed with outdoor pavilions, some decorated it with martaban jars imported from Asia. The surrounding houses in the village of Almeirim, near the palace, were bought by the king and queen to accommodate household personnel who could not reside in the palace itself.

São Francisco Palace in Évora, located in the Alentejo region, near the Spanish border, was begun in the first half of the 15th century. The first royal library was built here and included a *studiolo*, or study room. During the reign of Manuel I, building renovations were undertaken with special attention given to the queen's quarters, the library, the apothecary (*botica*), the prince's quarters, offices for court officials and the "Ladies Gallery" (an outdoor terrace or walkway with open arches) which was lined with Flemish tapestries, some depicting *the Life of Vespasian* and others, the *Virtues and Vices*. The gardens were elaborately laid out with orange groves. <one was named the "Queen's Garden" (*jardim da Raynha*), outfitted with an outdoor chapel decorated with a painted retablo for which a cover made of painted cloth from Cambaia (India) was ordered in 1519. When Lisbon was heavily damaged by an earthquake in 1531, the royal court moved to this palace, residing here until 1538.



São Francisco Palace, Évora

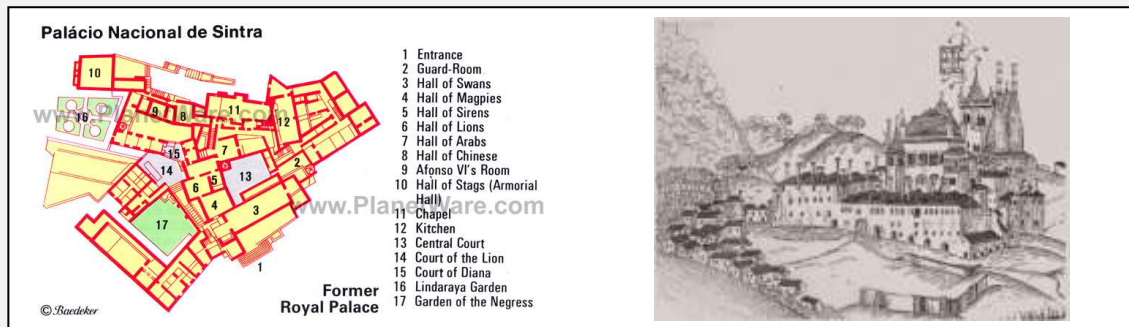
Later 19th century reconstruction of the former Renaissance palace (to the left and below), with the arched walkway: the *Galeria das Damas*.



Sintra Palace located ca. 30 km outside of Lisbon, was begun sometime around 1415. Sintra was a royal city which belonged to the patrimony and crown property of Portuguese queens. Therefore, rent monies, income and commodities, such as mineral water, wheat, wax and honey supplied to the queen's kitchens, were annually granted queen consorts. In the first half of the 15th century, the palace comprised of a ground floor divided into 26 rooms with a tower. The Moorish windows, the arabesque balustrades and the interior decoration with tiles (*azulejos*) date ca. 1500-1520, a reminder of the impact of Moorish architecture in Portugal. The central building dates from the reign of John I (1358-1433). Later additions made by Manuel I include the *Sala dos Cisnes* (Hall of the Swans) and the Hall of Blazons (*Sala dos Brasões*). Sintra is the only Renaissance palace to have survived.

Below left: Duarte de Armas, Palace of Sintra, *Livro das Fortalezas*, ca. 1509-1510

From the current floor plans of the palace of Sintra it is not possible to determine which sectors of the palace were reserved for the queen and her royal ladies, nor the distribution of rooms in the queen's quarters once located here.



Portuguese Queens and Princesses Royal in the 16th century: state of the question

Below a list of the royal queens and princesses who lived in Renaissance Portuguese palaces between 1500 and 1580. The difficulty in studying the rooms and quarters of these women in the 16th century is due to the fact that no royal residence, within Lisbon and without, has survived, with the exception of Sintra palace. The present context of rooms today at Sintra, however, do not allow for a proper reconstruction of the royal female quarters located there in the Renaissance. No floor plans of any of the royal palaces listed above exist today.

In order to reconstruct the queen's quarters in many of the former palaces outlined above, in particular the *Paço da Ribeira* in Lisbon, we must rely on surviving royal inventories, payment receipts, mandates and household account books. From these, one can glean somewhat how rooms were distributed horizontally and sideways, according to ceremonial and etiquette, and how rooms below stairs (moving vertically from up to down) were organized for the function and maintenance of the queen, her children, household and female court. Embedded within the context of these royal spaces were rooms designated for the wardrobe(s), personal libraries, treasuries and collections (personal property) of these queens and princesses.

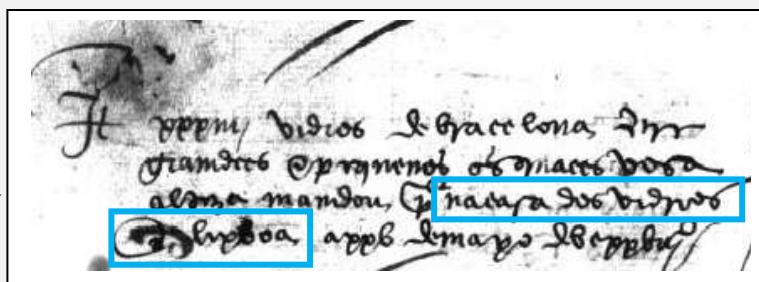
However, it is not clear whether these former palaces always contained the same number of rooms for royal females, as in the principal royal residence the *Paço da Ribeira*, and whether they all had the same functions. It appears that the Lisbon palace was the "headquarters" or home base for these queens and their personal properties. When these women moved to other locations, select objects, tapestries, plate and paintings moved with them. When the court traveled, the queen's personal property was stored in chests, coffers and caskets (transported by carts, carriages and mules) to be unpacked at a moment's notice for instant display and decoration.

One issue gleaned from the archival material, is that "independent annexes" existed in Lisbon, placed under the supervision of royal women. Flemish tapestries played a fundamental role in Catherine of Austria's collections, for instance, which were displayed in her quarters and public rooms, as in the large representational hall, the *sala da Raynha* in the Lisbon *Paço da Ribeira*. These weavings were usually kept folded in chests or rolled into special tapestry cases (*malatões*) located in the wardrobe chambers within Catherine's female precinct. However, for special ceremonies and state occasions, tapestries belonging to Catherine were loaned out to her male relatives. Sometimes, these "loans" were stored in the king's royal wardrobe, or *guardaroba*, (probably at Santos palace) perhaps for reasons of space, underscoring here, with a measure of caution, the interchangeability between personal and crown property, and raising questions regarding usage and flexibility between male and female royal spaces.

On the other hand, all crown property (tapestries, court portraits or state jewels) borrowed by Portuguese royal women always reverted back to the king's wardrobe and/or treasury when no longer needed or in use. It is known that important tapestries traveled with the Portuguese court and were hung in other palaces, not just remaining as permanent displays in the *Paço da Ribeira*.

Another issue: as early as 1528, Catherine of Austria supplied the *Casa dos Vidros* (a storage or warehouse for glass), situated possibly within the Lisbon royal palace complex, with glass the queen purchased in Barcelona, which was earmarked for use either at her table, or the king's table, or in the royal palace(s) in Lisbon, or outside the capital. This duty was evidently delegated to the queen for reasons not yet known, rather than leaving this job to the officer (*manteeiro*) in charge of the king's pantry. The functions and usages of this "glass house" and why its provisioning was placed under the jurisdiction of the queen needs to be further studied and clarified.

"Item xxxiiij vidros de Barcelona entre grandes e pequenos os quaes vosa alteza mandou por na casa dos vidros em lixboa a xxv de mayo de 1528."



Another inherent problem in studying female royal spaces in Portuguese palaces is the lack of surviving royal inventories. Of the queens and princesses listed below, only four women have sufficient documentation to

illuminate somewhat the character and nature of their wardrobes and collections, while the documentation for Catherine of Austria, forms a nucleus of the best preserved royal inventories and related documents.

Of Manuel I's three wives, only three inventories belonging to Maria of Castile and Leonor of Austria have survived. After her death in 1517, Maria's treasury of personal jewels, reliquaries and luxury goods from Portuguese Asia were for inexplicable reasons recorded in storage at the *Casa da Mina* (the Africa warehouse), near the Lisbon palace rather than in her wardrobe or treasury within the palace itself. Why this was so, remains unclear. This inventory published by Giuseppe Bertini and Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, eds., *Il guardaroba di una principessa del Rinascimento. L'inventario di Maria di Portogallo, sposa di Alessandro Farnese*, Rimini, 1999.

Two inventories of Leonor of Austria's jewels and plate recorded during the years she resided in Portugal (1518-1523) provide little insight into her rooms and her modes of display within the female quarters of the palaces (listed above) that she resided in. These inventories transcribed by A. Jordan Gschwend in: "*Ma meilleur Soeur: Leonor of Austria, Queen of Portugal and France (1498-1558)*," *Los inventarios de Carlos V y la familia imperial/The Inventories of Charles V and the Imperial Family*, dir. Fernando Checa, Madrid: Fernando Villaverde Ediciones; vol. 3, pp. 2545-2598.

The reconstruction of female royal spaces in Renaissance Portugal largely depends on the study and analysis of Catherine of Austria's corpus of 12 royal inventories (five over 300-350 folios in length), household accounts and payment receipts. From these we can roughly determine the distribution of rooms in the queen's quarters in the Lisbon royal palace discussed further below.

Isabella of Castile, daughter of the Catholic Kings of Spain, 1st wife of Manuel I (1470-1498)

Maria of Castile, daughter of the Catholic Kings of Spain, 2nd wife of Manuel I (1482-1517)

Leonor of Austria, daughter of Juana I of Castile and Philip the Fair, 3rd wife of Manuel I (1498-1558)

Catherine of Austria, daughter of Juana I of Castile and Philip the Fair, wife of John III (1507-1578)

Juana of Austria, daughter of Isabella of Portugal and Charles V, wife of Prince John of Portugal (1535-1573)

Juana is brought into consideration here as a "Portuguese" princess royal because she was groomed to become the future queen of Portugal. Juana was very influenced by the court life she witnessed in Portugal during the two years she lived there (1552-1554). She was impressed by secular and religious architecture in Portugal and adopted many architectonic ideas for herself when she definitively returned to Madrid in 1554 and created two female spaces for herself. One in the Descalzas Reales convent she founded in Madrid in 1557, and the other in the palatial rooms given her in the Philip II of Spain's chain of palaces in and outside of Madrid: Alcázar, El Pardo and Aranjuez.

Princess Maria of Portugal, daughter of Manuel I and Leonor of Austria, (1521-1577)

Princess Maria Manuela of Portugal, daughter of John III and Catherine of Austria (1527-1545)

Distribution of Rooms in the Queen's Quarters, Paço da Ribeira, Lisbon

Horizontal layout, moving from the most public to the most private: the Queen's hall (*Sala da Rainha*), *antecâmara*, *camara*, bed chamber, library (or studio) and private oratory. Royal children and favored ladies of Catherine's court were given sets of rooms in quarters adjacent hers, with easy access and communication.

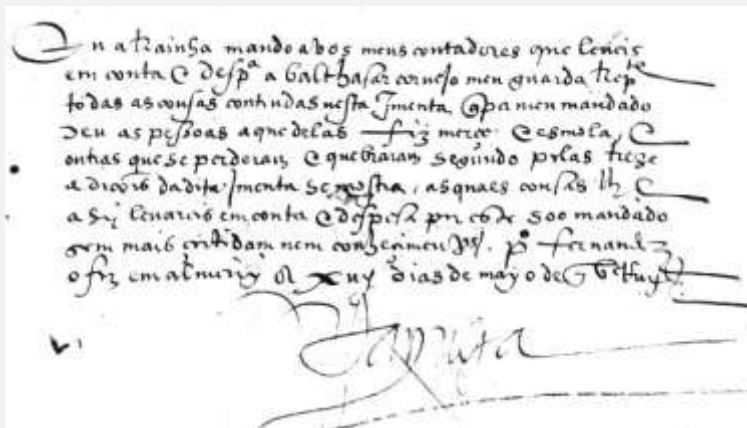
Within the queen's quarters, moving sideways and not horizontal, Catherine of Austria had a wardrobe, probably composed of a series of rooms of various sizes, and possibly her own treasury room to store jewels and special plate. In 1555, for instance, 530,842 *reais* alone was spent on furniture to outfit her *guardaroba*. Within these rooms, Catherine must have also partially displayed her *Kunstkammer* collection of luxury goods and exotica from Portuguese Asia. Some may have been set out on shelves and tables, while other objects were stored in chests and caskets.

On state occasions for court banquets held in the queen's *sala*, or that of the king in the Paço da Ribeira, the *sala grande*: plate, Chinese blue and white Ming porcelain, and other exotica belonging to Catherine of Austria were displayed on credenzas or buffets.

Terms for Specific Rooms

Guardaroba and *Guarda Reposte*: storage space(s) for textiles, leather hangings (*guadamecis*), pillows, Flemish tapestries, linens, blankets, pillows of all sizes, Turkish carpets, carpets from Xio (the island of Chios).

The *guarda reposte* was the neuralgic center of Catherine's quarters, where officers, craftsmen and slaves served in number of capacities in supervising the objects, furniture and textiles need for daily use, for special occasions, and for the maintenance of objects or things that were broken or lost, and replacing these with new ones.



“Eu a Rainha mando a vos contadores que leveis em conta e despesa a baltasar cornejo meu guarda Reposte todas as cousas conteudas nesta Imenta q per meu mandado deu as pessoas a que delas fiz merce e esmola e outras que se perdeu e quebraram segundo pelas treze adições da dita Imenta se mostra/as quaes cousas lhe asy levareis em conta e despesa per este soo mandado sem mais certidam nem conhecimentos/pero fernandez o fiz em almeriy a xiiij dias de mayo de 1544.”
Raynha

Rooms “belowstairs”

Botica (apothecary)

Kitchen and pantry

Stables