



ALL SAINTS  
ROYAL HOSPITAL:  
LISBON AND PUBLIC HEALTH



SANTA CASA  
Misericórdia de Lisboa

omnium  
sanctorum

# specifications

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[All Saints Royal Hospital: the City and Public Health]

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# 5

PRESERVING  
HEALTH  
IN LISBON



## AMONG OLD THINGS AND NON-EUROPEAN PRODUCTS: THE ROYAL HOSPITAL'S MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE 16TH CENTURY

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“...aquí não há pobres no hospital porque como são recebidos os doentes são ricos porque lhe[s] fazem como a ricos em seu comer e cura quanto é possível fazer-se...” [...] There are no poor here in the hospital; because of how they are received, patients are rich, as they are treated as the rich in their food and treatment as much as possible...]

Pedro de Lemos<sup>1</sup>

This was the rhetoric style used by one of All Saints Hospital's first *provedor* [purveyor] to characterize treatment of its patients. However, this was not far from the intentions of the founding kings: provide the poor - those who could not call a physician or surgeon to their home - with a space of healing marked by the abundance of food, the quality and hygiene of its facilities, the availability of medical treatment, and the spiritual comfort of holy mass and sacraments.

The hospital was a royal project since its inception. We mention just a few common statements regarding its

history: its construction was started by King D. João II, who died in 1495 before the hospital walls had been erected. His successor, D. Manuel I, would continue its construction, and the hospital became operational around 1501-1502, always with administrators appointed directly by the king, until 1530 when João III (1521-1557) entrusted the hospital to the priests of St. John Evangelist, under whose management it would remain until 1564. In that year the new king, D. Sebastião, transferred the administration of the hospital to the *Misericórdia* of Lisbon, motivating the elaboration of an inventory of all the hospital's assets, both consumables and goods that can might be considered as fixed capital: bed linen, furniture, kitchen, and garden utensils, etc. (Pinto, 2011)<sup>2</sup>.

We must start by stressing the building's primordial materiality: its monumentality. The hospital occupied a surface of considerable size, which a 1696 survey described as having a main façade of about 109 meters leading to the square, 69.5 meters on the south

<sup>1</sup> ANTT, Corpo Cronológico, parte I, mc. 8, doc. 24 - "Apontamentos que fez Pedro de Lemos sobre o Hospital Real de Todos os Santos", Lisbon, 21 July 1509.

<sup>2</sup> We thank Pedro Pinto for providing the All Saints Hospital's 1564 inventory (Pinto, 2011) in text form.

side, 86 in the rear, and 133.9 meters adjoining the S. Domingos convent (Leite, 1993, p. 7).

Not all the area was built upon, as there were four cloisters, each with its own well, and a garden in the back with tanks to wash clothes. The building was filled with people, patients and service staff, its number growing during the early modern period. The hospital's architectural and human scale was perhaps comparable with the neighbouring *Paço da Ribeira*, the main palace of the royal court (Senos, 2002): courtiers in the palace, the poor in the hospital - if we exclude its senior administration officers, who were recruited among the *pessoas principais* [principal persons], to adopt the expression of Francisco de Monzón (1544, f. 190v).

Before King D. João II planned its construction, Italy and also Flanders were already providing examples of large structures to treat the sick, with their specific architecture, inspired by the palaces of the urban elite, but distinct due to their function of assisting the bodies and souls of the poor. The Milan hospital (Filarete, 1460-1464) and the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence (Brunelleschi, 1419-1427, opened in 1445) were at the vanguard of hospital architecture of the time, and All Saints Hospital did not lag far behind. Spanish examples, such as Santa Cruz de Toledo, Granada, Seville, Santiago de Compostela, among others, would be constructed later (Moreira, 1993, p. 24). These hospitals were entirely new constructions, with a unified plan: they were erudite buildings, sometimes created by artists consecrated by posterity. They had coherent construction programs, without the addition of new modules, which characterized so many medieval hospitals, giving them the disorganized aspect of a set of disparate volumes, merging different scales, phases of construction and functional purposes. They were very different from the medieval, vernacular, accretionary buildings, expanded to suit changing needs. The Caldas hospital, the second largest in the kingdom after All Saints, although from the modern era, offers a good example, with its blend of volumes (Matias, *c.* 1915). Like the great and most famous preceding hospitals - mostly Italian - political purposes presided over the architectural coherence of the hospital in Lisbon. From its inception, it was a royal hospital, and as such mentioned in all the

chronicles of the kings of Portugal and other texts. One design, one power, or at least that wish, because harmonious buildings dignify

the political community. Construction began in 1492, and the hospital was at the centre of King D. João II's concerns, as he recommended its conclusion to his successor in his last will. On 15 May, when the first stone was laid, the king was present and threw many gold coins onto its foundations (Resende, 1973, p. 209). Nevertheless, its construction was slow, and Flemish pilgrim Jan Taccoen van Zillebeke noted during his stay in Lisbon in 1514: "There is a magnificent hospital and [people] are working hard in its construction" (Fonseca, Stols *et* Manhaeghe, 2014, p. 128). The hospital would be praised over the following two centuries, as it occupied a prominent place in the textual and visual descriptions of the city.

There was an experimental character to the hospital, for it served as the headquarters for the reform of chapels, hospitals, shelters, and monasteries (Rosa, 1998). In addition, it treated syphilis since its inception; the practice of curing this disease, hitherto unknown in Europe, would give rise to one of the first medical treatises on the "French disease", written by the physicist Ruy Díaz de Isla, largely based upon his experience of many years working in the hospital (Arrizabalaga, 2013).

The Portuguese kings, mostly D. Manuel I (who reigned from 1495 to 1521), regarded their royal hospital as the first in the kingdom. In addition to issuing laws in its favour, the building was considered a city emblem from the beginning, and kings provided a vast heritage to support its expenses, by constantly donating resources to the hospital. It received a diverse array of gifts, from old objects from the royal palace, to other brand new items. The hospital equipment included African and Asian textiles, although the most frequently used fabrics in the hospital were of European provenance (flax, velvet, fabrics from Rouen, Brabant, Ostende etc.). Food provisions also included products from the Portuguese overseas expansion, of which the most important is undoubtedly sugar from Madeira, followed by Asian spices. The hospital started to receive the former very early, because it constituted one of the basic elements in the treatment of the sick (Rodrigues *et* Sá, 2015).

### Sugar and spices

Sugar became one of the main resources allocated to the hospital, which was responsible for its distribution

to numerous *Misericórdias*, convents, monasteries, and other hospitals (Salgado, 1986). At the height of the royal donations, the hospital received 700 *arrobas* (about 10.5 tons), mostly intended for annual distribution (ANTT, Corpo Cronológico, Parte II, mç. 61, n.º 93)<sup>3</sup>. The hospital also reserved substantial quantities for its own consumption: in 1518, it received 50 *arrobas*, while the other institutions generally received less than five. The second largest hospital in the kingdom, *hospital das Caldas*, received fifteen *arrobas* (ANTT, Registos de Leis e Regimentos de D. Manuel I, fs. 70-75v.)<sup>4</sup>. However, after 1520, the *Casa da Mina* was entrusted with distributing sugar to other institutions (ANTT, Registos de Leis e Regimentos de D. Manuel I, fs. 171-174)<sup>5</sup>. Sugar remained an essential product to the hospital's functioning, as documented in the 1564 inventory, which refers to 92 sugar loaves, but also to more delicate varieties such as powdered or rose sugar.

King D. Manuel was equally generous with regard to spices: in 1511, he assigned ten *arráteis* of storax to the hospital, an aromatic resin from Sumatra, probably used to eliminate foul smells (ANTT, Corpo Cronológico, Parte I, mç. 12, n.º 48)<sup>6</sup>. The aforementioned list of institutions benefiting from sugar donations, dated 1518, also contained spices that All Saints Hospital was to distribute to other hospitals, convents and monasteries: pepper, chilli powder, cloves, cinnamon and ginger.

### The slaves

In a city where foreigners could not avoid noticing the many Africans who populated Lisbon, the presence of slaves in the hospital is not surprising (Stols, Fonseca, Manhaege, 2014). The second largest hospital in the kingdom, founded in Caldas by the king's sister, the dowager queen Leonor (1458-1525), also owned

enslaved persons (Sá, 2011, p. 112)<sup>7</sup>. The All Saints Hospital statutes of 1504 mentions four male and two female slaves among the hospital servants, assigned to the cleaning of secular spaces. They swept the wards, emptied the chamber pots of the staff, and cleaned the toilets of the sick [*necessárias*] (Salgado *et* Salgado, 1996, p. 484). King Manuel I issued a license that granted the hospital one slave from every caravel from Guinea, probably intended for sale (ANTT, Gavetas, Gav. 2, mç. 2, n.º 62)<sup>8</sup>. However, sixty years later, the 1564 inventory mentioned only two slaves in the hospital's possession: a pregnant black woman, who said she was from Cape Verde, and her son, a boy named Gaspar (Pinto, 2011, p. 262).

### Acquisitions from the Muslims

Understanding the hospital's imports from the Muslim world is difficult, since the Arabic terms used in the sources may correspond to products made in Portugal. However, the 1564 inventory refers to 200 *aljaravias* - long tunics with wide sleeves - as coming from *Casa da Mina*. They were reported as *treçadas* [meaning either moth-eaten or torn up] and used as shrouds. Another eighteen *aljaravias* were being dyed red, which means they had multiple uses.

The same inventory also refers to *alquicés*. According to Bluteau's dictionary, this was a "filele branco com que se cobriam os mouros" [white cotton fabric that the Moors use to cover themselves with] (vol. I, p. 282), although other authors define them as "capa ou cobrejão de lã branca ou manta de viagem" [white wool cover or travel blanket] (Costa, 2004, p. 139). Inside the hospital, we find them as bed curtains, usually coloured red. By all indications, the African textiles in the hospital were not always used according to their original function.

<sup>3</sup> Cópia do padrão de 700 arrobas de açúcar, de que o rei fez mercê ao Hospital de Todos-os-Santos de Lisboa [Copy of the royal donation of 700 *arrobas* of sugar to All Saints Royal Hospital], Lisbon, 18 October 1515.

<sup>4</sup> "Regimento que D. Manuel I deu ao bispo de Safim, provedor do Hospital de Todos os Santos, na cidade de Lisboa, sobre as ordinárias de açúcar que daria a certos mosteiros, misericórdias, hospitais e casas piás do reino" [Rules King D. Manuel I gave the Bishop of Safim, the director of All Saints Hospital, concerning permanent donations of sugar to certain monasteries, hospitals and pious houses in the kingdom]. Lisbon, 12 August 1518.

<sup>5</sup> "Regimento que o rei D. Manuel I deu aos oficiais e tesoureiros da Casa da Mina sobre as ordinárias de açúcar que deviam ser pagas a certos conventos, misericórdias, hospitais e recolhimentos" [Rules King D. Manuel I gave officials and treasurers of *Casa da Mina* concerning the amount of sugar that should be paid to certain convents, houses of mercy, hospitals and shelters]. Lisbon, 24 April 1520.

<sup>6</sup> ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, Parte I, mç. 12, n.º 48 - "Alvará de D. Manuel I por que mandou dar para o Hospital Real de Todos-os-Santos, 10 arráteis de beijoim" [Document by King D. Manuel I providing All Saints Royal Hospital with ten *arráteis* of benzoin]. Lisbon, 28 December 1511.

<sup>7</sup> Lisbeth Rodrigues states that in 1532, when the administration was transferred to the priests of Saint John Evangelist, there were 15 slaves in this hospital (Rodrigues, 2013, p. 333).

<sup>8</sup> "Alvará (traslado) que o rei D. Manuel I fez ao Hospital Real de Todos-os-Santos da entrega de um escravo por cada caravela que viesse da Guiné" [Copy of document by King D. Manuel I providing one slave from each caravel coming from Guinea], 24 October 1520. The initial license is dated from Lisbon, 17 September 1515.

## Used textiles and furniture

The 1564 inventory mentions luxury textiles from the best European production areas, Arras and Tournai, mainly door curtains, but also furniture, such as high-backed chairs. Strange products in a hospital, unless we are aware that they are sometimes described as worn out and very old. Further documentation explains where they came from. King Manuel I and, to a lesser extent, his son King João III had the habit of sending the hospital old items, no longer of use in the royal palace. One document mentions: “...todos os alambéis rotos [...] que já não sejam para servir e colchas de Holanda e cobertores de grã e arquellas e esparáveis e reposteiros de Londres branco e vermelho e outros de lã e alcatifas de toda sorte e bancais de verdura e bancais de figuras de Arras e coxins de Arras de figuras e lençóis de Holanda e travesseiros de Holanda e almofadinhas de cabeça e toalhas de Holanda [...] e cadeiras guarnecidas de veludo e almofreixes e todas as coisas destas aqui declaradas que forem rotas e tais de que nós já não [nos] podemos servir...”, [... all the torn cloths... no longer good for serving, and bedspreads from Holland and red blankets and covers, and white and red London curtains, and others in wool, and carpets of all kinds, and tapestries of Arras decorated with figurative, and vegetal decoration and cushions of Arras with figurative decoration, and sheets from Holland, and bolsters from Holland, and small head pillows, and towels from Holland... and velvet-lined chairs and travel cases, and all such things as mentioned that are worn out and thus we cannot use...] (ANTT, Corpo Cronológico, parte I, mç. 6, doc. 74)<sup>9</sup>.

Following this royal order, the hospital's *almoxarife* [administrator], Fernão Gomes, acknowledged the reception of some objects, remarking that some of them were too old and damaged to be of use (ANTT, Corpo Cronológico, parte II, mç. 14, doc. 142)<sup>10</sup>.

There are other instructions from the king or his officers, as well as hospital receipts of similar nature, focusing on napery, confirming that the king ordered that old and worn clothes be delivered to the hospital (ANTT, Corpo Cronológico, parte II, mç. 35, doc. 22; mç. 52, doc. 194)<sup>11</sup>. In his last will, King D. Manuel I (1495-1521) donated all of his shirts and bed linen to the hospital, including some *mouriscos* [Moorish] specimens<sup>12</sup>.

The 1564 inventory refers eighteen *grã* blankets given by Queen D. Maria (1482-1517). *Grã* implied a very valued red pigment, which may correspond to the famous cochineal from Spanish America, although this particular document did not mention its origin<sup>13</sup>. By 1564 Queen D. Mary had died almost 50 years earlier, and her will contained no legacy to the hospital, therefore she must have donated the blankets while alive. However, the memory of the donation persisted among those who elaborated the inventory.

The royal family's gifts in movable objects constitute a small part of the resources the kings of Portugal, especially D. Manuel I, allocated to the hospital, which included rural and urban real estates, interest rates and tax revenues. Notwithstanding, in the moral economy of the time, it was relevant that a sick person in the hospital might wear a shirt that was part of the king's wardrobe or be told their bed was warmed by a blanket donated by a Queen. Thus, the hospital kept to a logic of incorporation, whereby a subaltern person inscribed in his own body the dependency due to a master (Jones *et* Stallybrass, 2000, pp. 1-33).

## Eastern textiles

The first reference to Oriental textiles within the hospital is the 1564 inventory, which documents the presence of fabrics of Asian origin in its *capela* [chapel], which

<sup>9</sup> ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, parte I, mç. 6, doc. 74 - “Alvará do Rei para Lourenço Godinho, guarda reposte, entregar ao recebedor do hospital de Todos-os-Santos de Lisboa, certos panos e outros trastes usados” [Royal document instructing Lourenço Godinho, storage guard, to deliver certain cloths and other used items to All Saints Hospital]. Almeirim, 31 January 1508. According to Bluteau, *esparável* is a cloth or wooden cover to protect from the sun and rain (vol. 3, p. 259).

<sup>10</sup> “Conhecimento por que consta que Fernão Gomes, almoxarife do Hospital de Todos os Santos, recebeu de Lourenço Godinho uma mesa grande marchetada e outros trastes velhos” [Receipt indicating that Fernão Gomes, All Saints Hospital administrator, received from Lourenço Godinho a large decorated table and other old items], Lisbon, 9 June 1508.

<sup>11</sup> “Mandado de Vasco Anes Corte Real, vedor da Casa Real e do conselho do rei, por que ordena a Rui Figueira, manceiro do dito senhor, que entregue ao almoxarife do Hospital de Todos-os-Santos de Lisboa toda a roupa velha e desnecessária que houver na dita mantearia” [Order by Vasco Anes Corte Real, the Royal House's intendant and member of the king's council, instructing Rui Figueira, responsible for the royal clothing, to deliver all old and unnecessary clothing to the administrator of All Saints Hospital]. Lisbon, 25 October 1512; and “Mandado de Vasco Eanes Corte Real para o manceiro Rui Figueira entregar toda a roupa velha, pertencente à mantearia, ao almoxarife do Hospital Real de Todos os Santos da cidade de Lisboa” [Order by Vasco Anes Corte Real instructing Rui Figueira to deliver all old clothing, among the royal clothing, to the administrator of All Saints Royal Hospital], Lisbon, 4 November 1514.

<sup>12</sup> In “As gavetas da Torre do Tombo: edição digital”. Vol. 6: (GAV. 16-17), entry 3794, p. 117 -169, this reference on p. 114 (<http://purl.pt/26848>). On D. Manuel I's wardrobe, see Freire, 1904, pp. 381-417.

<sup>13</sup> About the colour red and cochineal, see Greenfield, 2008.

constituted one of the city's main Manueline churches (Pereira, 1993). Some of the silk, taffeta, and satin that formed part of the chaplains' liturgical clothing were probably of Eastern origin, although they were not referred to as such, and might have been imported from Italy. In contrast, numerous objects referred to as being made of *pano da Índia* [cloth from India], though not liturgical garments, had sacred use: sliding curtains designed to cover altarpieces, antependia, *alparavazes* (valences), the black cloth "que serve na adoração da cruz" [used in the worship of the cross], white cloth towels used "ao dar o santíssimo sacramento" [when ministering the Eucharist], or a punkah (a fan in palm from India) "com suas bandas de tafetá azul e anil" [with leaves of blue and indigo taffeta] (Pinto, 2011, pp. 250; 247). To a lesser extent, there were also Indian cloths for secular use in the wards (towels, curtains, etc.). Members of the aristocracy also donated movable

property to the hospital, and in some of these gifts, non-European objects assumed particular relevance. The most significant donation of this type found so far dates from October 1570, when the viceroy and former *provedor* of the hospital, D. Luís of Ataíde (1516-1581), count of Atouguia, donated a considerable amount of ready-made clothing for the wards, ordered from India (on this viceroy, who ruled India in two different mandates, 1568-1571 and 1578-1581, see Nuno Vila-Santa, 2014). There were not only sheets and hoods made of "cloth of India", a somewhat vague designation, but also the famous *bertangil*, a cotton fabric from Gujarat. Some of these *bertangis* were painted and used on bedspreads and *corrediças* (the sliding curtains that separated the beds of the patients within the wards). The following table offers an idea of the magnitude of this commission:

**Table 1: Indian clothes donated by Viceroy D. Luís de Ataíde in 1570**

	Ward for the injured	Fevers ward	Syphilitics ward	Non-discriminated wards
Sheets	70	144	132	
Shirts	170	180	250	
Pillows and bolsters	70	144	132	
<i>Bertangil</i> bedspreads and painted covers				50
Red <i>bertangil</i> curtains				200
Total pieces	310	468	514	250

Source: ANTT, Hospital de São José, *Livro de Receita e Despesa do Hospital*, 1570-1571, Livro 571, fs. 46 onwards.

This was a very substantial donation, including 1,542 ready-made items from the Estado da Índia. The viceroy probably shipped the order in 1570, from Goa, when he was serving his first term as viceroy, having returned to the kingdom two years later.

The importance of this donation lies in the fact that it demonstrates the use of cotton cloth in the hospital, especially regarding *bertangil*. Cotton had several advantages over silk and wool: unlike them, it was washable, cheaper, and better at fixating coloured dyes.

However, it was not very reusable (Riello, 2013, pp. 112; 115). Moreover, the hospital's clothing, because of repeated use and wear, was regularly renewed, its officials registering the discarded and new pieces in the account books. Beverly Lemire attributed a pioneering role to the Portuguese maritime trade in the diffusion of Asian textiles in Europe during the 16th century, especially cotton and silk (2009, p. 211). This is confirmed by the Lisbon hospital, since cotton became a fabric of common daily use in its wards, also lending colour to bed curtains and bedspreads.

## Conclusions

The material culture of All Saints Hospital reflects what was already known about the repeated reuse of objects, even when old and worn out, as was the case with the textiles and other movables donated by order of the king from the royal palace. These gifts not only transferred old furniture to the hospital, but also napery (coloured tablecloths, door curtains, etc.). On a more personal level, these donations followed a logic of incorporation, as in the case of King D. Manuel I, who left his bedclothes and shirts to the hospital in his last will. As far as donations are concerned, the hospital thus appears as an extension of the court, an institution designed to look after the most destitute subjects, a testament to the king's paternal benevolence.

The use of non-European substances and products occurred on a day-to-day basis. Sugar from Madeira featured prominently in hospital cures, as did spices. North African products such as *aljaravias* - used as shrouds - or blankets also marked a presence in the hospital among the everyday equipment, and Asian textiles, initially called *panos da Índia* [cloth of India], were used in altar covers, frontals and sliding curtains. Later, in the 1570s, Asian cotton textiles appeared in the form of *bertangis* through a donation from a former *provedor* of the *Misericórdia* of Lisbon, later a viceroy. The early presence of cotton fabrics in the Lisbon hospital is worthy of notice since this fabric would expand globally.

The hospital also participated in the revival of slavery within Europe. Enslaved men and women performed the dirtiest tasks inside the hospital, such as sweeping, emptying chamber pots or cleaning latrines. A further example of the trivialization of African slavery that had been occurring in the city of Lisbon since the mid-15th century.

The hospital's material culture was thus a mirror of its time, reflecting the advent of a monarchy stronger than that of the medieval period, and benefiting from its proximity to the royal court, of which it was a counterpoint. Furthermore, it documents the consumption on a daily basis of non-European products, imported from Africa and Asia, thereby extended to its inmates, either sick patients or staff members.

**Plate (fragment)**  
Majolica. Produced in Montelupo  
1525-1575. Reform of pavement of NE Cloister  
Max. width 4.2 cm; Rim Ø 30 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1999-2001 excavation  
CML-CAL (PF00/N2/[893])  
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**Bowl (fragment)**  
Porcelain. Chinese pottery  
16th century. From medieval well  
in the rear of All Saints Royal Hospital  
Max. height 3 cm; max. width 9 cm; bottom Ø 21 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1999-2001 excavation  
CML-CAL (PF00/2684-75)  
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**Bowl (fragment)**  
Porcelain. Produced in Jingdezhen (China)  
1583-1620. All Saints Royal Hospital landfill  
Max. height 3.4 cm; max. width 14 cm; bottom Ø 6.5 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1999-2001 excavation  
CML-CAL (PF00/U7/[300])  
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**Statuette**  
Porcelain. Unknown pottery (China)  
17th century. All Saints Royal Hospital landfill  
Width of base 5 cm; max. height c. 5 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1999-2001 excavation  
CML-CAL (PF00/U7/[29])  
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### Plate

Enamelled ceramic. Sevillian pottery  
c. 1550. SE well of NE Cloister  
Height 4.3 cm; rim Ø 18 cm; bottom Ø 4.8 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1999-2001 excavation  
CML-CAL (PE.00/8003-1)  
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**Bowl**  
Enamelled ceramic. Sevillian pottery  
16th century. Work in rear of All Saints Royal Hospital  
Height 5.4 cm; rim Ø 14 cm; bottom Ø 5.2 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1999-2001 excavation  
CML-CAL  
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