

A plan of the Capela Real, Lisbon, in 1649

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Possibly the only surviving plan of a section of the Capela Real which once formed part of the complex of buildings constituting the Paço da Ribeira, dating from the time of Manuel I, is preserved in the Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon.¹ This plan was drawn up in 1649 soon after João IV ascended the restored Portuguese throne, and would appear to be the direct outcome of a royal wish to redecorate (and possibly redesign) at least part of the chapel interior. Aside from the description of ceremonies and procedures to be observed in the Capela Real as outlined in João IV's *Regimento dos Offícios da Casa Real*,² we have hitherto only ever been able to form a vague notion of the positioning of members of the royal family, members of the court and clergy, and the musicians in attendance of liturgical Offices in the chapel.³

This plan, or *Perfil*, is drawn on an oblong sheet measuring 330 x c.475 mm which was later folded in half, and bound into a volume of papers (many of them letters) pertaining largely to

1 Biblioteca da Ajuda, 51-IX-3, f. 304. D. Manuel was responsible for constructing the new palace in c. 1500, transferring the establishment from the Paço da Alcaçova in Lisbon where it had existed since the late 13th century. The chapel was dedicated to St. Thomas the Apostle. The 18th-century document *Memoria sobre A antiga Origem Da Capella Real Dos Senhores de Portugal* (Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, Cod. 10982) indicates that a number of alterations were made to the original building between the 16th and the 18th century. See also Adriana LATINO, *Francisco Garro, mestre da capela real de Lisboa, c.1590/1623: o livro de antífonas, missas e motetes publicado em Lisboa em 1609*, unpublished dissertation, Universidade de Coimbra, 1992, pp. 28-30, where a synthesis of information in original documents researched by F. Marques de Sousa Viterbo is available.

2 The *Regimento dos Offícios da Casa Real delRey D. João o IV* is reproduced in António Caetano de SOUSA, *Provas da historia genealogica da Casa Real portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1739-40; see modern edition by M. Lopes de ALMEIDA and C. PEGADO, vol. IV/2, Coimbra, 1950, pp. 389-412.

3 The ground plans of the royal chapel following its elevation of status to Patriarcal (1716) dating from about 1755, the time of the earthquake which devastated central Lisbon, record the complete transformation of the interior which took place in the 1740s. See M.-T. MANDROUX-FRANÇA, 'La Patriarcale du Roi Jean V de Portugal' *Colóquio Artes* 83 (1989), pp. 35-43.

the royal household during the time of D. João first as Duke of Braganza and then as King of Portugal.⁴ The document is entitled as follows:

*Perfil de hum dos lados da Igreja e Capella Real de s[ua] M(a)g(esta)de
a qual se ordena Guarneçer de veludo preto e tellas / amarelas com seus
paineis e emblemas e mais ornatos como neste perfil semostra, Lxa Anno
1649./ M. João [Nunes Anoces?]*

On the verso of the sheet is the inscription 'Traça da cappella Real'. The plan is drawn in ink (now brown), with washes in dark brown, burnt umber, red, and cream or light yellow. It presents a diagrammatic view of one of the lateral sides of the chapel nave, and is complete with a number of annotations written in ink. The scale of the plan measured in *palmos* is given at the foot of the sheet.

On the left-hand side of the drawing (the back of the chapel), the area is divided into three levels, or storeys, representing (from top to bottom) the tribune for the ladies of court (*Trebuna das Damas*), the King's tribune (*Trebuna de s(ua) M(a)g(esta)de*), and, beneath this, the area reserved for the musicians (*Choro dos Muzicos*). To the right of this set of tribunes, the wall comprises four rounded arches on the ground level above which, on the same level as the higher *Trebuna das Damas*, the wall area consists of a series of oval cartouches centred by a larger round cartouche frame. While the space inside the central cartouche is left empty on the drawing, the two oval ones to the left and right are designated 'Emblems and letters' (*Emblemas e letreiros*). These cartouches alternate with vertical rectangular frames. With the exception of the arch on the far right, which has been blocked off because of the position of the high altar (*Arco fechado onde fica o altar môr*), the other three are left open (*Arco aberto*). Between the first and second, and between the third and fourth arches, is a set of skull and crossbones. According to the title or inscription, this drawing would appear to consist of a plan for decorating or covering the lateral walls entirely with large areas of black velvet ('veludo preto') and bands of

⁴ A number of the documents and letters bound into this volume is concerned with musical and liturgical matters both at the Ducal Chapel in Vila Viçosa and at the Lisbon Royal Chapel.

yellow ('tellas amarelas'). These colours are shown with appropriately coloured washes; in addition, there are certain prescribed areas, such as the outer surfaces of the arches themselves (which may have been left as uncovered stone work), painted in burnt umber. With the exception of the tribunes and the areas under the open arches, all light areas on this drawing are coloured in light yellow or cream.

We are therefore given for the first time an exact location for the chapel musicians, though it is not entirely clear at this stage whether this area, the *Choro dos Muzicos*, was intended just for the group of instrumentalists or for all the chapel musicians, including the choir. This drawing also indicates the location of the high altar and that of the King's tribune, and provides almost the exact measurements of the chapel interior. Unfortunately, however, as this is merely a plan of one of the chapel walls, we have no details of where exactly the clergy and chapel officers normally took their places beyond the descriptions found in the *Regimento*.⁵ If the scale of this plan is accurate, and it shows the entire length of the chapel, we can deduce that the interior (including the area reserved for the high altar), was 135 palmos (about 14 or 15 metres) in length, and the width of the tribunes about 23 palmos. Further, the existence of this plan may help us to visualize and obtain a more accurate interpretation of the geography of the chapel and palace as described in contemporary documents.

Philip II's series of letters to his two daughters Isabel and Catalina written on his visit to Lisbon in 1581-83, for instance, includes several references to the liturgical services in the chapel attended, or at least heard, by himself 'desde una ventana que tengo por acá dentro sobre la capilla'.⁶ It seems likely that this 'ventana' was synonymous with the

⁵ For information of the seating arrangements and a plan of the interior of the royal chapel in Madrid in 1651, when the King appears in public at his canopy in the chapel, see L. ROBLEDO, 'Questions of performance practice in Philip III's chapel' *Early Music* 20/2 (1994), p. 202 (illus. 3).

⁶ F. J. BOUZA ÁLVAREZ, ed., *Cartas de Felipe II a sus hijas*, Madrid, 1988, p. 56. On this occasion Philip is describing his attendance of the Dawn Mass ('misa del gallo') on Christmas morning. For a short consideration of Philip II's attitudes towards music at the Lisbon Royal Chapel, see B. M. NELSON, 'Philip II and the Portuguese Royal Chapel, 1580-98' *Leading Notes* (Spring 1998), pp. 14-19.

tribune allocated to the King on this plan. During Holy Week in April 1582 Philip writes:

Esta Semana Santa la he pasado bien y en esta casa, con las ventanas que tiene a la capilla, adonde he estado a los oficios, sino que bajé a la capilla por una escalera que hay allí...⁷

The staircase to which he refers is probably the same one to be used by the King (João IV and his successors) when, as elaborately described in the *Regimento dos Officios*, he was to attend a service in the chapel itself.

Nesta forma baixa S. Magestade à Capella, e à porta que està no fim da escada que desce da Galeria da banda da fora por huma e outra parte, estarão as Guardas em ala huma da mão direita, e outra da esquerda.⁸

From this latter passage, we gather that one would approach this staircase leading down to the chapel from an upper outside gallery which presumably communicated with the royal apartments.⁹ The following extract from the *Regimento*, not only gives us a fascinating view of the formalities and courtesy to be exercised by the 'Titulos' towards members of the royal family and the Ladies of Court before the former took their places in the chapel below the tribunes, but also informs us that the Queen's own tribune was located directly opposite to that of the King on the other side of the chapel:

Quando S. Magestade estiver na Tribuna terãõ advertencia os Titulos, que quando forem tomar o seu lugar, farãõ primeiro mezura para o Altar, e depois para S. Magestade a qual se fará não do meyo da Capella por não virar as costas para o Altar, mas

⁷ F. J. BOUZA ALVAREZ, ed., *Cartas de Felipe II*, p. 67.

⁸ *Regimento*, in A. Caetano de SOUSA, *op. cit.*, paragraph VI, p. 391.

⁹ This upper level outside gallery can be seen on the chapel building in the 17th-century painting of the *Paço da Ribeira* by Dirk Stoop (Museu da Cidade, Lisboa). A colour reproduction of this painting is included in J. V. SERRÃO's *História de Portugal, IV: governo dos reis espanhóis, 1580-1640*, Lisbon [1979], opposite p. 288.

desviado hum pouco para a ilharga donde se entra; e a mesma advertencia terãõ quando fizerem mezuras para a Tribuna da Raynha que ha de ser da outra banda; e depois quando chegarem junto do seu assento farãõ cortezia às Damas, mas esta não ha de ser taõ baixa como as das pessoas Reaes; e sendo cazo que estejaõ as Damas em parte que do mesmo lugar em que se faz a mesma a S. Magestade se possa tambem fazer a ellas, a farãõ, dando porem dous ou tres passos de lugar em que a fizeraõ a S Magestade...¹⁰

Unfortunately, this *Regimento dos Officios da Casa Real* never alludes to the musicians, nor does it give any indication of their positioning within the main body of the chapel, or of the position of the organ.

Although this *Perfil de hum dos lados da Igreja e Capella Real* at last provides us with some idea of the Royal Chapel interior before its destruction in the Lisbon earthquake of November 1755, and the style of setting for the performance in particular of music by the royal chapelmasters Francisco Garro and Filipe de Magalhães, which was published during the first decades of the 17th century, it is to be hoped that more visual documentation will soon be found which could give us an even closer understanding of music and ceremony in the Portuguese Royal Chapel.

¹⁰ *Regimento*, in A. Caetano de SOUSA, *op. cit.*, paragraph XXXVIII, p. 399. This passage also describes the formalities to be observed when the King attends a liturgical Office down in the chapel itself, when he is seated within his 'quartina'. There are, in addition, several other passages in the *Regimento* which provide fascinating insight into the rituals to be observed on these occasions. See especially paragraphs IX, XVI-XIX, and XXXII.

