



# LA CASA

ESPACIOS DOMÉSTICOS  
MODOS DE HABITAR

**ABADA EDITORES**

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## ESPACIOS DOMÉSTICOS MODOS DE HABITAR

II CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL CULTURA Y CIUDAD  
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## **La fundación del rey: casa, poder y modernidad en el inventario del Rey Manuel I (1522-25)**

### *King's Foundation: House, Power and Modernity in King Manuel I's inventory (1522-25)*

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#### **Resumen**

La Edad Moderna asevera la dimensión privada del individuo cambiando sus sociabilidades, espacios de convivencia y, por efecto, la arquitectura y objetos. La centralización del poder en los príncipes y mayor sedentarización de la corte son características de la modernidad. La opción por el consumo y utilización de determinado tipo de objetos, presentes en documentaciones privilegiadas como los inventarios regios, permite comprender los espacios domésticos en la vida cotidiana. El monarca asimila las innovaciones como entidades de distinción social. Los objetos, sus materiales y tipologías lo afirman de forma paradigmática.

Problematizaremos, así, la "casa" del Rey Manuel I (r. 1495-1521) como instancia material e inmaterial vinculada con la modernidad de su reinado y la preferencia de ese rey por el consumo de determinadas tipologías de objetos decorativos y domésticos. La arquitectura del rey se pone de manifiesto en sus sentidos funcionales y simbólicos, que componen su fundación. El inventario permite vislumbrarlos.

**Palabras clave:** Edad Moderna, cultura material, poder real, élites y poder

**Bloque temático:** La casa: mitos, arquetipos, modos de habitar

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#### **Abstract**

*The Early Modern Age affirmed the private dimension and changed human sociability, forms of living together, architecture and domestic objects. The centralization of power in the prince's persona and the court sedentism are characteristics of this particular period. We can study the objects and their consumption by elites in privileged documents such as royal inventories. Through that source, we can understand domestic spaces in daily life. The monarchy assimilates innovations as entities of social distinction. The objects, their materials and typologies assert this in a paradigmatic way.*

*In this paper, we shall problematize the «house» of King Manuel I (r. 1495-1521) as a material and immaterial instance between the modernity of his reign and his preference for the consumption of particular types of decorative and domestic objects. Objects, in their functional and symbolic senses, compose the king's and his power foundation. Although incomplete, King Manuel I's inventory allows to glimpse them.*

**Keywords:** Early Modern Age, material culture, royal power, elites and power

**Topic:** The house: myths, archetypes, forms of inhabitation

## Introduction

This text aims to question the privatisation processes, centralization and civilization of the materiality described in the inventory of King Manuel I (birth 1469; reign 1495-1521). Architecture and power articulate in the material realities that accompany the development and affirmation of modernity in a different conception of human in light of Renaissance and Humanism.<sup>1</sup>

It is of our interest to discuss how King Manuel I's goods intercept with their period. Based on the analysis of his inventory, we aim to divide and to offer typologies and materials, giving a notion of the collective. History of consumption allows understanding the continuity of the goods and the symbolic better.<sup>2</sup> Material culture crosses objects with practices, images and social statements. The style process affects the house differently,<sup>3</sup> in a society where the individual was what he/she seemed.<sup>4</sup>

This text is organized as follows. In the first part, we shall focus on the discussion of the house, power and modernity to the rule and personality of King Manuel I. Then (Part II), the analysis focus on the objects of the inventory, through a functional categorization and adopting a qualitative methodology, questioning them regarding the period and space under analysis.

## 1. House, power and modernity

Phillippe Ariès established six indicators of privatization through which it is conceivable to evaluate the privately owned. Those include the courteousness literature, personal taste in organising daily life marked by the emergence of furniture based on the art of good living, and the alterations produced in the houses' architecture. The dimensions of the divisions were altered, small spaces were multiplied, independent communication architectures such as atriums and passageways emerged, suitable places to read, write or sleep were created and illumination and heating resources were modified.<sup>5</sup>

Typically medieval house objects, such as chests and tapestries to adorn walls, were gradually upgraded between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. During this period, the house became less mobile and its architecture and objects became more complex. Conviviality and social conducts were modified according to the gradual separation of the private (related to family) and the public (associated with the State). However, this process was slow, asymmetric and, as applied to different geographies, acquired specific characteristics. The private debate happened in parallel with questions about the construction of the State, the processes of centralization of power and the construction of government institutions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Burke, *O Renascimento*, trans. Rita Canas Mendes (Lisbon: Texto e Grafia, 2008), 59-82. V.H.H. Green, *Renascimento e Reforma*, trans. Cardigo dos Reis (Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 1991), 61-65.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Roche, *História das coisas banais*, trans. Telma Costa (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1999), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Civilização Material, Economia e Capitalismo (séculos XV-XVIII): As estruturas do quotidiano.*, trans. Telma Costa, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Teorema, 1992), 272.

<sup>4</sup> Phillippe Ariès, "Para uma história da vida privada", trans. Armando Luís Carvalho Homem, in *História da vida privada: a Idade Moderna*, vol. 3, dir. Phillippe Ariès e Georges Duby (Lisbon: Edições Afrontamento, 1990), 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ariès, 12-15.

<sup>6</sup> Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, *Elites e poder: entre o antigo regime e o liberalismo*, (Lisbon: ICS, 2007), 19-36; António Manuel Hespanha, *As vésperas do Leviathan: instituições e poder político (Portugal - século XVII)* (Coimbra: Almedina, 1994), 21-60.

Ribeira Palace, commissioned by King Manuel, in 1498, had a ward for the king's quarters and was formed by an antechamber, chamber, oratory and a treasure room (commonly named wardrobe room). These spaces were versatile in function.<sup>7</sup> The significance of the house was complex and based on the interpenetration of spaces.<sup>8</sup> The notion of family was extensively applied to all members living under the influence and power of the same master. Administrative and politic seats, such as kings' houses, often merged with monastic or conventual spaces, whose borders between domestic/institutional and holy/profane were fluid.<sup>9</sup>

The fluidity of personal functions was characteristic of the way royal power manifests and develops in Portugal over the Early Modern Age. The staff who undertook the crown governance competences was the same who carried out household functions.<sup>10</sup> The court was the house of the king and his power. The *Mordomo-mor*<sup>11</sup> and *Camareiro-mor*<sup>12</sup> were prominent figures on the daily life of the king. They were the ones who performed the functions related to the King's daily routine and the ones closer to his physical body. These members of court penetrate the «safe zone» of the monarch, delimited by antechambers, curtains, passageways and interior divisions. The process of ritualization of the court, in Portugal, was slow concerning the royal houses of the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

João Paulo Oliveira e Costa analysed the ruling action of King Manuel I according to a three-folded perspective between internal policy, overseas policy and the involvement of the monarch in the Hispanic dynastic matters.<sup>14</sup> Benefiting from the brutal increase of the markets under its influence, mostly after the successful trips to India in 1497 and 1500, the rise in liquidity allowed the augment of nobles dependent on the Crown. Moreover, King Manuel I opposed the medieval tendency of court itinerancy, with the apparent preference for Lisbon, where he remained eight years, particularly between 1498 and 1505.<sup>15</sup> However, it was not real sedentism, but a significant decline of the transit of the kings of the same period. The concern with the population count, the reformation of the new charters, the publication of *Ordenações do Reino* (Portuguese Law) or the establishment of the extended assistance program combine in modernisation and centralisation policies.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Nuno Senos, *O Paço da Ribeira (1501-1581)* (Lisbon: Notícias Editorial, s.d.), 136-41.

<sup>8</sup> Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, "Habitar: del espacio a los objetos", in *Cultura material y vida cotidiana moderna: escenarios*, dir. Máximo García Fernández (Madrid: Sílex, 2013), 127.

<sup>9</sup> Sá, "Habitar...", 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> Pedro António Almeida Cardim, "Os espaços da vida privada: a corte régia e o alargamento da esfera privada", in *História da Vida Privada em Portugal: a Idade Moderna*, vol. 2, dir. José Mattoso (Lisbon: Temas e Debates, 2011), 194.

<sup>11</sup> First official of the Portuguese Royal House which oversaw all of house functions.

<sup>12</sup> Second official of the Royal House responsible for dressing and undressing the king.

<sup>13</sup> Cardim, "Os espaços da vida privada: a corte régia e o alargamento da esfera privada", 169.

<sup>14</sup> João Paulo Oliveira Costa, *D. Manuel I* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2005), 141.

<sup>15</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 182-83.

<sup>16</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 189-91.

## 2. The King's inventory and the house objects

At 52 years old, the King succumbed to fever, on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1521. In the course of the agony, as a pitying Christian, he enunciated psalms and carried out sacraments. Dying well meant dying accompanied and fulfilling a set of public practises and ceremonies to ensure the soul would reach heaven redeemed of all its sins. The will was part of this proceeding and channelled a set of funds to acquire a place in heaven. Payments were proportional to the testator's status and power. The Church controlled this process of ritualization and death experience which, not ending with the life of the deceased, made him prolong beyond the finiteness of his body.<sup>17</sup>

King's Manuel I codicil was drawn in Lisbon, on December 11<sup>st</sup>, 1521, and confirms the will signed near Sintra on April, 1517.<sup>18</sup> The inventory is a notarial source produced after the death of the defunct and derives from the right of succession with property law. To protect the integrity of the goods, it was necessary to account the goods and nominate executors. The wills were regulated on the Portuguese Law (*Ordenações Manuelinas*), particularly on Book IV.<sup>19</sup>

The objects were delivered to the royal treasurer between the beginning of 1522, in Lisbon, and 1525, in Évora. Although their level of description highly fluctuates, the visual aspects prevail. Moreover, not all pieces have an associated coin value and it appears explicit in objects of gold and silver. Typologies, materials, colours and some appreciations related to the state of conservation or provenience (geographic and/or personal) integrate the descriptions.

Following the index of the document, only the three first chapters regarding the King's wardrobe room and treasure remain. Cash bonds, royal chapel contents, of Casa da Mina, customs house, royal treasury are missing, as well as the objects of the royal table, tapestry and frames. The inventory comprises 2.968 objects and, for this text, the primary criterion for the categorisation was to highlight body objects (74%) and house objects (26%). We excluded coins (4%), books (4%), objects to adorn or ride animals (3%), stamps (1%) and textiles with no specific function (2%). As a result, our sample comprehends 214 objects of 45 different typologies.

Versatile and mobile, the chests (32) establish themselves as objects to store things, easily transport them near the proprietary, also acquiring the form of furniture to put objects on top.<sup>20</sup> Besides coffers (9) and boxes (10), the inventory does not mention other furniture besides a marquetry inlaid silver table.<sup>21</sup> We do not know if this was the one receiving the five towels specifically described to serve on «the table of the wardrobe room». It is also worth noting that there are no beds, cots or chairs, which should be justified by their division on the document. Nonetheless, it is known that, in 1515, King Manuel I acquired silver roses to embed on chairs with backrests.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ana Cristina Araújo, *A morte em Lisboa: atitudes e representações 1700-1830* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 1997), 145-269.

<sup>18</sup> L.P., transc., "Testamento de el-rei D. Manuel", in *As gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, vol. VI (GAV. XVI-XVII, Maços 1-3) (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1967), 111-37.

<sup>19</sup> *Ordenações Manuelinas*, fac-simile of Real Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra edicion in 1797, vol. Book IV (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, s.d.), 149-228.

<sup>20</sup> Celina Bastos, "Os desta casa tratam-se ordinariamente como reis", in *De todas as partes do mundo: o património do 5.º Duque de Bragança D. Teodósio I*, vol. 1, coord. Jessica Hallett and Nuno Sennos (Lisbon: CHAM e Edições Tinta-da-china, 2018), 192.

<sup>21</sup> Anselmo Braamcamp Freire, "Inventario da guarda-roupa de D. Manuel", in *Archivo Historico Portuguez* 2 (1904): 415.

<sup>22</sup> Bastos, "Os desta casa...", 188.

The analysed cloths correspond to three small tablecloths, one black velvet oratory cloth, three oratory's antependium cloths, one cloth in white silk «as towel» and a cloth with a painting of Aden.<sup>23</sup> Three silver candleholders, one *porta paz* and one reliquary in gold, one Indian brocade curtain<sup>24</sup> and some brocade paraments from China complement the royal oratory.<sup>25</sup> The church paraments were destined to adorn walls of the temple and its furniture and included curtains, which protected their entrance, their shrines, covered crosses, retables or images, by determined liturgic seasons or particular needs of the temple.<sup>26</sup> These elements added comfort and privacy to the space for prayer, contemplation and adoration of the King, probably kneeled on the prayer stool, suggesting the presence of a red velvet pillow<sup>27</sup> listed after the brocade parament from China.

The chests and coffers had 21 sheets, probably to protect the pieces they contained. Of the 19 sheets<sup>28</sup> listed as independent items, nine were old or torn, confirming the wear this typology suffered in function of its use.<sup>29</sup> The majority did not indicate provenience or composition, with three being of «pano de holanda».<sup>30</sup>

Related to the chests and the boxes, as multifunctional objects, and tapestries, as fundamental elements of the sixteenth-century interior, there were 21 *alambéis*. Rafael Bluteau defines them as «thick wool cloths, mainly listed as of several colours, to cover some stool».<sup>31</sup> The inventory only includes one carpet «of coloured silk having belonged to the old Rey de Bombaça with two holes»,<sup>32</sup> with the chapter of tapestries and frames missing. To have an impression of the significance of the number of carpets, D. Teodósio de Bragança possessed 134 carpets,<sup>33</sup> Henry VIII of England 437<sup>34</sup> and the younger daughter of King Manuel I had several tapestries on her dowry, many of them with classical heroes' narratives or heraldic decorative elements.<sup>35</sup> Objects of distinction and affirmation of power, but also, by the limited number of furniture in the sixteenth-

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<sup>23</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 413.

<sup>24</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 408.

<sup>25</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 388.

<sup>26</sup> Maria João Pacheco Ferreira, "Os ornamentos têxteis com função religiosa", in *De todas as partes do mundo: o património do 5.º Duque de Bragança D. Teodósio I*, vol. 1, coord. Jessica Hallett and Nuno Sennos (Lisbon: CHAM e Edições Tinta-da-china, 2018), 251–52.

<sup>27</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 388.

<sup>28</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 389.

<sup>29</sup> Maria Marta Lobo de Araújo, *Memória e quotidiano: as visitas e as devassas ao hospital de S. Marcos de Braga na Idade Moderna* (Braga: Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Braga, 2014), 50–67.

<sup>30</sup> Very thin textile in linen or cotton.

<sup>31</sup> Rafael Bluteau, *Vocabulário português & latino: alíco, anatómico, arquitectónico ...*, vol. 5, (Coimbra: Collegio das Artes da Companhia de Jesus, 1720), 26.

<sup>32</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 407.

<sup>33</sup> Jessica Hallett, "O mundo debaixo dos seus pés: os tapetes do duque", in *De todas as partes do mundo: o património do 5.º Duque de Bragança D. Teodósio I*, vol. 1, coord. Jessica Hallett and Nuno Sennos (Lisbon: CHAM e Edições Tinta-da-china, 2018), 209.

<sup>34</sup> Hallett, "O mundo...", 210.

<sup>35</sup> Ana Isabel Buescu, "O dote de uma infanta: o casa de Beatriz de Portugal (1504-1538)", in *Con grande mare e fortuna. Circulação de mercadorias, pessoas e ideias entre Portugal e Itália na Época Moderna*, vol. 7, org. Nunziatella Alessandrini, Susana Bastos Mateus, Mariagrazia Russo and Gaetano Sabatini (Lisbon: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 2015), 63-64.

century house, tapestries attributed dignity, comfort, luxury and colour to spaces. In sum, they could divide rooms and reconfigure domestic spaces.

Being at the table was, *par excellence*, a political act, ritualised and marked by the abundance of food. The consumption of the elites consolidates itself by its exclusivity and ostentation integrating sacred elements of divine inspiration.<sup>36</sup> Even though the chapter of the King's table is missing, we count 30 more pieces of tableware. Although this number is significantly low compared with other royal inventories of the same period, observable tendencies exist: the presence of silver utensils to serve, an indicator of prestige; the objects of the hand wash ceremony, by the presence of a jug, two hand basins and 22 hand towels, were a fundamental part of the ceremony of eating at the King's table; the presence of knives which helped the act of eating, essentially manual; and, finally, the use of the fork and the appearance of napkins for the hands, whose inventory did not account for, but we know existed.<sup>37</sup> There is no description of glasses, salt cellars, spice cellars or egg cups, in contrast to the dowry of King's younger daughter Beatriz.<sup>38</sup> Despite these omissions, the royal chronicler Damião de Góis was resolute affirming the tableware was splendid and appropriate for a king.<sup>39</sup> The process of courteousness and good manners<sup>40</sup> at the table was gradual, with the coexistence of the hand wash ceremony (jug, hand cloths and basins) with more private elements (forks and napkins).

The prevalence of textile (43%), of silver (22%) and wood coated in leather (13%) confirm this correlation between the materiality of objects and the person representing through them. Leather, copper, precious and semiprecious stones, ivory, bone and iron were among the remaining materials. The presence of gold objects is scarce (3%), but pertains to pieces of great symbolic value: one *porta-paz*, one reliquary, a pouch transporting an amethyst stone and a box which kept a thick pearl offered by the King of Ormuz to King Manuel I, attached to create a pendent.<sup>41</sup> The mirror and the nine *penteadores*<sup>42</sup> demonstrate the King in the society of «social vanity».<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, "O rei à mesa entre o fim da Idade Média e o Maneirismo", in *A mesa dos reis de Portugal*, coord. Ana Isabel Buescu and David Felismino (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores / Temas e Debates, s.d.), 189-91; Ana Isabel Buescu, "À mesa do rei. Cultura alimentar e consumo no século XVI", in *Portas Adentro: comer, vestir e habitar na Península Ibérica (ss. XVI-XIX)*, dir. Isabel dos Guimarães Sá and Máximo García Fernández (Valladolid e Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade – Secretariado de Publicaciones/Universidad de Valladolid, 2010), 23.

<sup>37</sup> D. Manuel I acquired 579 napkins for the mouth, 173 napkins to serve with knife, 113 towels for the mouth, 30 towels for the chest, among others. Sá, 202-3.

<sup>38</sup> António Caetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia Genealogica da Casa Real Portuguesa...*, vol. IV (Lisbon: Officina Sylviana, 1742), 449-50.

<sup>39</sup> Damião de Góis, *Crónica do Felicissimo D. Manuel*, ed. José Barbosa Machado, fac-simile of princeps edicion 1566-1567 (Lisbon: Edições Vercial, 2010), 816.

<sup>40</sup> Norbert Elias, *O processo civilizacional*, trans. Lídia Campos Rodrigues (Lisbon: D. Quixote, 2006), 141-83.

<sup>41</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 407.

<sup>42</sup> Linen cloth wore around the neck to not soil the dress with hair. Rafael Bluteau, *Vocabulario portuguez & latino: aulico, anatomico, architectonico...*, vol. 6, 402.

<sup>43</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Civilização Material, Economia e Capitalismo (séculos XV-XVIII): Os jogos das trocas.*, trans. Telma Costa, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Teorema, 1992), 272.



Subject to wear through use, textiles were greatly reused during the Early Modern Age.<sup>44</sup> The brocade oratory's antependium, which was a mandil<sup>45</sup> and its disposition on the will of King Manuel I to dismantle silk and brocade cloths for paraments to be given to churches and monasteries of the Kingdom, is a clear example.<sup>46</sup> The objects in gold and silver made or commissioned by King Manuel I would serve as payment of debts and duties of the will,<sup>47</sup> allowing the sacralisation of the opulent consumption by the elites. The Church, which dominated the process of ritualization of death and condemned luxury and vanity, encouraged the dying to the elaboration of the will, becoming a relevant recipient on the movement of goods the defunct channelled to the salvation of the soul.

### 3. Conclusion

The global character of the Portuguese empire and the complexification of daily life objects combine to form a luxury daily life, exoticism and unique colourfulness. The enrichment of the King allowed the renovation of palaces. Ribeira Palace conjugated residential structure, political governance centre and warehouse where the products of the new commercial routes opened by the route of India conjoined. That palace affirmed itself as a body of a "merchant king", on the dictates of fluidity and versatility characteristic of spaces and power of the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Inhabit, eat and dress royals were State and public moments, exposed to ceremonial power and moments of value to those who had the privilege of contact with the king thanks to the nature of their functions. The palaces and the table present, in the sixteenth century elites, similarities: women and men eat and live in separate places; the chamber structure, that seems to develop from the most public to the most private places, revealing a functionality closer to the complexification of the means to the access to the king than with the privatisation processes. Objects are an integral part of the ritualised power. Textiles, like precious metals, are elements of status and apparatus of the highest importance. The painting of Aden, the nautical chart and the colourful clothes from India are evidence of the exoticism of Asian products.

New typologies of textile, clothing, architectural ambiances, means of transport, accompany the complexification of the codes of conduct and daily life behaviour during the Early Modern Age, becoming vehicles of affirmation, distinction and power. The search for the new is the driving force of style and the object which embodies it is a message of the historical present. Course and chance of time attribute to it the status of document and history tries to make sense of it with what is missing. Things contribute to the performance of powers, socially and culturally transforming the objects beyond their mechanical functions, shaping what is not ontological in them. King Manuel I entwined the old and the new in a world substantially bigger than the one of his ancestors.

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<sup>44</sup> Maria João Pacheco Ferreira, "A conversão e reutilização das peças têxteis. Uma prática comum da sociedade quinhentista portuguesa" (XXVIII Encontro da Associação Portuguesa de História Económica e Social, Universidade do Minho, 2008), 20–37.

<sup>45</sup> Freire, "Inventario...", 308. Mandil is an apron wore by women on duty to protect the skirts and a thick wool cloth used to make blankets. Bluteau, *Vocabulário portuguez & latino: aulico, anatomico, architectonico ...*, vol. 5, 286.

<sup>46</sup> L.P, transc., "Testamento de el-rei D. Manuel", 114.

<sup>47</sup> L.P, transc., 117.

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