



ALL SAINTS  
ROYAL HOSPITAL:  
LISBON AND PUBLIC HEALTH

 LISBOA  
CAMARA MUNICIPAL

SANTA CASA  
Misericórdia de Lisboa

omnium  
sanctorum

# specifications

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# Index

## PRESENTATION

- 15 **Câmara Municipal de Lisboa** | Councillor for Culture, Lisbon City Council, João Diogo Santos Moura
- 17 **Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa** | Provost, Edmundo Martinho
- 19 **NOVA FCSH** | Director, Francisco Caramelo

## INTRODUCTION

- 23 | André Teixeira / Edite Martins Alberto / Rodrigo Banha da Silva

## AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE AREA

- 41 **The area before human occupation**  
| Ana Maria Costa / Maria da Conceição Freitas
- 47 **From Late Bronze Age small settlement to Muslim *arrabalde* in the city of Lisbon**  
| Rodrigo Banha da Silva / André Bargão / Sara da Cruz Ferreira
- 57 **The vegetable gardens of São Domingos Convent**  
| Rodrigo Banha da Silva / Filipe Santos Oliveira
- 63 **The Lisbon of King Manuel I**  
| Hélder Carita

## THE LARGEST BUILDING OF EARLY MODERN LISBON

- 75 **The building's architecture: antecedents, comparisons and parallels**  
| Paulo Pereira
- 125 **The iconographic representation of the Royal Hospital**  
| Ana Cristina Leite
- 145 **Fernão Gomes and the project for painting the ceiling of All Saints Royal Hospital church**  
| Vítor Serrão
- 153 **The fires of 1610 and 1750: description, damage, salvage, means and participants, complementary measures**  
| Mónica Duarte Almeida
- 163 **The Royal Hospital's water supply and Lisbon's sanitation**  
| Ana Patrícia Alho
- 169 **The 1755 Earthquake and the recovery interventions**  
| Adélia Caldas
- 175 **From Rossio to Santo Antão-o-Novo College**  
| Maria João Pereira Coutinho
- 183 **The *heirs* of All Saints Royal Hospital. Places in the health history of Lisbon after 1775**  
| Carlos Boavida / Fátima Palmeiro / Luiz Damas Mora

## FROM HOSPITAL TO PUBLIC SQUARE

- 189 **The last two decades of the Royal Hospital in Rossio (1750-1775). Accommodate, protect and assist the sick from the injuries of time**  
| David Felismino / Inês Oliveira / Helena Rebelo-de-Andrade
- 201 **The genesis of a new square: Praça da Figueira**  
| Hélia Silva / Tiago Lourenço
- 211 **The Lisbon Metro and the re-discovery of the Royal Hospital**  
| Helena Taborda

# 1

## THE CITY AND THE BUILDING

## REFORM AND REORGANIZATION OF ASSISTANCE

- 223 **Assistance reform: antecedents and components in Portugal at the dawn of modernity**  
| Joana Balsa de Pinho
- 243 **Portugal and Europe: the dimensions of assistance reform (14th-16th century)**  
| Joana Balsa de Pinho
- 257 **Poverty and assistance in Early Modern Portugal**  
| Maria Antónia Lopes
- 263 **Lisbon's assistance network before All Saints Hospital**  
| Mário Farelo
- 283 **A new model of hospital organization in 16th century modernity**  
| José Subtil
- 293 **16th century central hospitals in Portugal**  
| Lina Maria M. Oliveira
- 297 **The Hospital and the *Misericórdia* of Lisbon during the government of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo**  
| Laurinda Abreu

FROM THE CROWN TO THE *MISERICÓRDIA*'S ADMINISTRATION

- 307 **The order of São João Evangelista (Lóios) in Royal Hospital**  
| Nuno Falcão
- 313 **From the São João Evangelista management to the *Misericórdia*'s administration**  
| Maria Marta Lobo de Araújo
- 319 **The people and daily life in a period of change: the administration of the *Misericórdia***  
| Rute Ramos
- 327 ***Between four walls and more: the other institutions in the Hospital space***  
| Rute Ramos
- 335 **Religious orders in hospital care: Arrabidians, Obregonians and Camillians**  
| Rita Mégre / Tiago Lourenço

## HERITAGE AND RESOURCES

- 347 **The economic policy of the Hospital: revenues and expenses**  
| Rute Ramos
- 355 **All Saints Royal Hospital's properties estates**  
| Carlos Boavida
- 361 **The theatre and the Royal Hospital's finances**  
| Silvína Pereira / Júlio Martín Fonseca

## TREAT THE SOUL AND BODY

- 371 **The Royal Hospital in 16th to 18th century medicine**  
| Adelino Cardoso
- 381 **The status of the patient and the 1504 *Regimento***  
| Luís Lisboa Santos / José Subtil
- 389 **Identification plates in the ward beds**  
| Alexandre Pais / Lurdes Esteves
- 393 **Raising foundlings in the Royal Hospital**  
| Milene Alves
- 399 **The *Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa* and the foundling tokens**  
| Francisco d' Orey Manoel / Nelson Moreira Antão

## THE HEALERS

- 407 **Positions, professions and service**  
| António Pacheco
- 415 **Occupations in Royal Hospital and purity of blood**  
| João de Figueirôa-Rêgo
- 419 **Portuguese surgery in the genesis of surgical activity in the Royal Hospital**  
| Cristina Moisés
- 423 **Surgeons, barbers and bleeders (16th-18th centuries)**  
| Florbela Veiga Frade / Joaquim Barradas / Adelino Cardoso
- 433 **The literate and practising healers**  
| Luís Ribeiro Gonçalves
- 441 **Nursing, male and female nurses**  
| António Pacheco

## THE MEDICAL-SURGICAL PRACTICES

- 451 **Medical practice and diet in Portuguese texts of the Early Modern Era**  
| Inês Ornellas e Castro
- 459 **Vegetable and Herb Gardens: diet and pharmacy (16th and 17th centuries)**  
| Bruno Barreiros / Adelino Cardoso
- 467 **The diet in the Royal Hospital in the 18th century**  
| Bruno Barreiros
- 475 **Manoel Constâncio (1726-1817) and the restructuring of anatomy and surgery in Portugal**  
| Luiz Damas Mora
- 481 **The Royal Hospital's *botica***  
| Paula Basso
- 493 **An 18th century inventory of the Royal Hospital's *botica***  
| Ana Cristina Leite
- 515 **Death in the Royal Hospital: 18th century testimony**  
| Sílvia Casimiro / Francisca Alves Cardoso

## INHABITING THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

- 523 Spaces and social distinctions (1502-1620)**  
| Isabel dos Guimarães Sá
- 533 Clothing, gender and disease in the 1504 *Regimento***  
| Carla Alferes Pinto
- 541 Music at the Royal Hospital of Lisbon (16th-17th centuries): pageantry, therapy or devotion?**  
| Isabel Monteiro
- 545 The *merceiras* of the Royal Hospital (15th-18th centuries)**  
| Maria Teresa Avelino Pires
- 549 Caring for the war wounded in Portugal in the beginning of the Early Modern Era**  
| Luís Costa e Sousa
- 555 The foreigners: patients and health officials**  
| Paulo Catarino Lopes
- 565 The slaves in the Royal Hospital**  
| Jorge Fonseca

## EXISTENCES AND PROVISIONS

- 573 Among old things and non-European products: the Royal Hospital's material culture in the 16th century**  
| Isabel dos Guimarães Sá
- 581 The textiles of the Royal Hospital church in the 16th century: typologies and operational dynamics**  
| Maria João Ferreira
- 587 Tableware in the Royal Hospital**  
| André Bargão / Sara da Cruz Ferreira
- 595 Utilitarian ceramics in the Royal Hospital**  
| André Bargão / Sara da Cruz Ferreira
- 605 Other daily objects from the Royal Hospital**  
| Carlos Boavida / Inês Coutinho



# Index

- 615 **The city of Lisbon and the fight against epidemics**  
| Edite Martins Alberto / Paula Serafim
- 627 **The regulation of practices and officers of the *Casa da Saúde* (16th-17th centuries)**  
| Edite Martins Alberto / Paula Serafim
- 639 **Fighting the diseases that arrived by sea (and by river!): the 1693 *regimentos***  
| António Costa Canas
- 647 **The House of Saint Lazarus and assistance to lepers**  
| Rita Luís Sampaio da Nóvoa

# 5

PRESERVING  
HEALTH  
IN LISBON



## FROM THE SÃO JOÃO EVANGELISTA MANAGEMENT TO THE MISERICÓRDIA'S ADMINISTRATION

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The uniqueness of All Saints Hospital in the Early Modern Age stems from the innovation and greatness it achieved, constituting a singular institution within the national public health panorama. The hospital was administered by a royal-appointed *provedor* [purveyor], from its inception until 1530, and afterwards by priests from the Canons of São João Evangelista or Lóios, later passing to the *Misericórdia* of Lisbon. Its management must be analysed considering the Royal House's policy for assistance institutions and, therefore, integrated within a broader political action.

The administration of Portuguese hospitals by this religious Order covers only some of these institutions and was limited geographically to the centre and south of the kingdom. However, this included the largest hospitals: All Saints (1530), Holy Spirit in Évora (1531), Caldas da Rainha (1532) and Coimbra (1548). Giving the Kingdom's largest hospital to the Lóios clearly paved the way for them to administer other hospitals. D. João III also gave them the administration of other smaller hospitals: Our Lord Jesus Christ in Santarém, Santo André in Montemor-o-Novo, Vimieiro and Castanheira (Sá, 1997, p. 80). Subsequently, the House of Bragança followed his footsteps and, at the request of Duke

D. Teodósio I, the Order became responsible for the management of the hospitals of Arraiolos and Portel (Sá, 1997, p. 80). The latter remained the longest time under the Order's administration, namely between 1541 and 1834, with an interruption of about 80 years. The Order managed that Hospital between 1541 and 1578, when it was given to the local *Misericórdia*, but returned in 1581 to the Order's administration. Later it returned to the *Misericórdia*, but in 1658 Queen D. Luísa de Gusmão determined its passage once more to the Order, because of changes to property ownership, among other administrative reasons (Araújo *et* Paiva, 1997, p. 139). These two hospitals had initially been given to the *Misericórdias* of their respective villages, by Duke D. Jaime (Araújo, 2003, pp. 344-345). The hospital of Montemor-o-Novo had a similar history, passing from the *Misericórdia's* tutelage, by order of King D. João III, in 1531, to the administration by the priests of São João Evangelista, but as with Portel, the process was reversed in 1567, by determination of King D. Sebastião. This change seems to have been due to the inability of these priests to treat all the sick, particularly those with contagious diseases and women, the latter for moral reasons. There were also financial problems, as the Lóios were paid for their

services (Fonseca, 2004, pp. 28-30).

In contrast, the hospital of Coimbra remained under the administration of these religious for a long period, until 1772, except for a short period between 1741 and 1743. However, the presence of the Lóios fell under criticism since the late 17th century, due to irregularities, cronyism and favours (Lopes, 2000, pp. 619-621). Despite the measures implemented, the situation did not seem to change significantly and in 1741 they were removed from the administration. They returned after two years, remaining until 1769, when the Hospital administration was given to the county's ombudsman, although the religious remained in the building another three years (Lopes, 2000, pp. 623-625).

Construction of All Saints Hospital began in 1492. It received its first patients in 1502 and, although it had its own revenues, the first administrators informed the king of difficulties in securing revenues (evidencing the difficult financial situation), together with incompetence by some officials, despite being governed by highly prestigious figures (Pacheco, 2008, p. 69; Ramos, 2018, p. 53). There were many expenses and a lack of liquidity to pay debts, some of them due to expenses with foundlings, a concern the administrators repeatedly expressed to the Royal House (Ramos, 2018, p. 54). This lack of control must have led King D. João III to hand over the hospital's administration to the Canons of São João Evangelista, on the date indicated (Pacheco, 2008, p. 69). Moreover, note that the presence of religious in the Hospital's administration had been practically constant, in fulfilment of the 1504 *Regimento* [rules of procedure] (Pacheco, 2008, p. 69). The reason the administration was given to the Lóios was associated with a lack of charity and hygiene in patient treatment, although other reasons motivated this change: religious issues that included restructuring the people in this sector, and measures to contain expenses (Pacheco, 2008, p. 70). Perhaps for the latter reason, but also because of the Royal House's connection to the hospital, the most relevant decisions were made by the monarch, even under the Order's governance (Ramos, 2018, p. 54).

In mid-1564, the last *provedor* of the said order, Father Gaspar da Asunción, asked the king to be excused from the demanding task of hospital administration, alleging the losses to the congregation's functioning, given its canons

of “mayor talento & virtude” [greater talent and virtue] were involved in these undesired positions. He went further, indicating the envy of secular people and the interests “dos que desejavam meter a mão em tanta copia de fazenda” [of those who wanted to get their hands on so much treasury] (Maria, 1697, pp. 284; 286-287). The text praised the referred religious and criticized the alleged interested parties, but this should be analysed with some caution as this was the Order's chronicler.

The argument may be true, but not entirely real, since the financial difficulties continued under the Order's administration, with signs of some permanence, disturbing the institution's operation, at a time when the hospital already had a large number of patients and a weighty structure. Evidently, the religious congregation was disinterested, and thereby requested its removal. Following this decision, that same year, Cardinal D. Henrique gave the Hospital's administration to the *Misericórdia*. Three years later, the Évora hospital also changed to an administration by the local *Misericórdia*.

According to the chronicler, around the same time, the religious also asked Duke D. João I to be relieved from managing the hospitals of the House of Bragança, but he requested they remain (Maria, 1697, p. 287). This suggests the Order had decided to leave these functions, at least in some of the hospitals it managed.

The involvement of the Lóios in the administration of some of the kingdom's most important hospitals had naturally caused them some strain due to various issues, from the transfer of members from religious activities to administrative tasks - not always appreciated and even motive for dispute -, to accusations of poor management (Tavares, 2009, pp. 28-29; Rodrigues, 2013, pp. 241-242; Rodrigues, 2007, p. 27), even as they sought to make collections, without results, jeopardizing the institution's financial health (Ramos, 2018, pp. 57-58). This accusation is contested in some works, which underline the Order's good performance in All Saints Hospital, based on the relevant changes introduced upon opening a new ward for the Capuchin priests and another for the insane (Abreu, 2009, p. 110), the latter inaugurating a new line of care for a sector of society with mental problems.

The change in All Saints Hospital's administration is part of “a key moment” for the *Misericórdias* (Xavier *et* Paiva,

2005, p. 10), which at that time experienced the most significant period of annexations, during the regency of Cardinal D. Henrique. Angela Barreto Xavier and José Pedro Paiva analysed the documents sent and dispatched by the said Cardinal, demonstrating the Lisbon *Misericórdia's* request made to D. Henrique and the importance he gave to the Hospital, but also his “great trust” in the confraternity’s brothers. In line with these historians, the annexation was done with consideration and only implemented after verifying the success of the *Misericórdia's* integration of other hospitals, proving its ability to manage these institutions. They also underline the fact that the Count of Odemira, the *Misericórdia* administrator, maintained close relations with the Crown (Xavier *et* Paiva, 2005, p. 10).

Following the Crown’s wishes, All Saints Hospital was given to the administration of the Lisbon *Misericórdia*, along with all its incomes, privileges, and freedoms. In this process, therefore, there was a strong relationship between the growth and consolidation of the *Misericórdias*, and that of Lisbon in particular, and the Crown’s desire to endow these confraternities with hospitals. Simultaneously, the Royal House had a residing trust in some of the protagonists.

While in the beginning the *Misericórdia's* incomes were dependent on alms and other sources of non-permanent and limited revenue, from 1559, with the incorporation of the hospitals in these confraternities, their financial base became sufficient and dense, and persisted in time (Abreu, 2003, pp. 10-11). The Crown had a clear desire to strengthen the *Misericórdias*, endowing them with permanent income, which enabled them to consolidate their position and extend the assistance practices already underway. On the other hand, as Mário Carmona argues, only the *Misericórdia* with a more extensive experience could provide the hospital with an integrated administration that included caring for the sick, but also raising the foundlings and supporting the elderly and poor, since it combined several sources of income (Carmona, 1954, pp. 231-232).

The transfer of All Saints Hospital to the *Misericórdia* must therefore be considered as part of the Crown’s strategy for these confraternities, as also occurred with the Holy Spirit Hospital in Évora, in 1567. The Lóios remained in this Hospital from its inception until 1551 and from the later date until 1567, governed by people nominated by D. João III and then by King D. Sebastião (Gusmão, 1958, p. 155).

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**Holy water font**  
Pink limestone. Lisbon workshop  
17th century  
Hermitage of Nossa Senhora do Amparo  
Height 64 cm; width 34 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1960 excavation  
CML-CAL (HTS.60/1EA)  
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Architectural element with cross in relief  
Pink limestone. Lisbon workshop  
1623  
Hermitage of Nossa Senhora do Amparo  
Height 64 cm; width 34 cm  
Praça da Figueira. 1960 excavation  
CML-CAL (HTS.60/208EA)  
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