

Inventories and Courtly Spaces

Workshop

13-14 January 2012

Sintra, Portugal

Organized by

ESF Research Networking Programme PALATIUM

Co-Organized by

Centro de História de Além-Mar, Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Palácio Nacional de Sintra

Inventories constitute a fundamental source for the study of courtly life and the spaces in which it took place. Plans and the buildings that have survived allow us to study the materiality of the spaces and their organization. Descriptions of ceremonies, banquets and receptions can be combined with the knowledge of those spaces to complete it and provide a more thorough understanding of their functioning.

Inventories add an additional layer to complete the picture. They are fundamental for reconstructions of the interior decoration of palaces on special, celebratory occasions, as well as in everyday life situations. They can provide information on the types of objects, the terminology used, their materials and colours, their shapes and their values, their location inside the palace, their function, and sometimes even about who offered them and on which occasion. Inventories can be a priceless source for the construction of historical knowledge.

This workshop will focus on the methodological problems raised by inventories as sources for the analysis of space in courtly contexts. Questions that can be addressed include the following: How are inventories organized, and according to which criteria? Do different organizational choices affect the way they can be used to study space? What is the nomenclature used in relation to space and what are the problems it raises? What types of information do inventories offer; do they mention the scale and placement of the objects, their materials, color, decoration, prices, origin, or author; do they contain information on mechanisms of acquisition and donation; does this add to our understanding of space? How can the data be treated; is an Excel spreadsheet sufficient, or is a database a more effective approach? And if so, are there “best practices” that have been tested and proven, and that should be followed? In short, how can inventories help us reconstruct courtly spaces and their organization?

This workshop will be organized in two parts. In the first, called *Problems and Questions*, speakers will prepare materials for discussion, which will be circulated a month before the workshop. These may comprise excerpts of one or several inventories, or a selection of entries that raise pertinent issues. A short presentation of the selected material will be followed by a longer discussion led by the speaker. The second part, called *Case Studies*, will consist of 20-minute presentations from doctoral and post-doctoral researchers on inventory-based projects, followed by a shorter discussion period.

How to Apply?

Abstracts are invited by **21 October 2011**. Abstracts should be limited to 300 words, and are to be headed with the applicant's name, professional affiliation, and title of the paper. All abstracts must be in English, which will be the working language of the workshop. Submit with the abstract a short, one-page curriculum vitae with a mailing and e-mail address.

Submit your proposal by e-mail to the two conference chairs, Dr. Nuno Senos (nuno.senos@gmail.com) and Dr. Jessica Hallett (jessica.hallett@fcsh.unl.pt), with a copy to the PALATIUM coordinator Dr. Pieter Martens (pieter.martens@asro.kuleuven.be).

Abstracts should define the subject and summarize the questions to be raised in the proposed paper. All abstracts will be held in confidence during the selection process. Only one submission per author will be accepted. All applicants will be notified of the acceptance or rejection of their proposal by 4 November 2011.

Grants for Young Scholars

PALATIUM offers travel grants to junior researchers who want to participate in this workshop and briefly present their work in progress. The number of available grants is limited. The deadline for grant applications is 30 October 2011. All grant applications must be made online. See the PALATIUM website for more information (<http://www.courtresidences.eu/index.php/grants/>).

- Convenors:** Dr. Nuno Senos (CHAM, Universidade Nova de Lisboa)
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PALATIUM

This workshop is part of the ESF Research Networking Programme PALATIUM: *Court Residences as Places of Exchange in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1400–1700)*. The PALATIUM programme aims at creating a common forum for research on the late medieval and early modern European court residence or “palace” (*palatium*) with an interdisciplinary perspective. The world of the courts 1400–1700 constituted a network of truly European scale and international character, but its architecture is only rarely studied in its “connectivity”. Here the “palace” is seen as a place for cultural exchange. Human interaction in this space is regulated and codified by a set of rules, known as “ceremonial”. The interaction between palace architecture (tangible) and ceremonial (intangible, but known through a set of tangible testimonials of different types, written and visual) is one of the key questions the PALATIUM network aims to address.

The palace’s space and form carry multiple connotations. To the informed observer they represent power, lineage, and tradition versus innovation. The decoding of this system of signs necessitates input not only by architectural and art historians, but also by various other disciplines, such as archaeology, politics, literature, theatre and music. The PALATIUM programme wants to encourage theoretical and methodological debates in the field, and aims in particular at stimulating exchanges of knowledge and experience between historians, architectural historians, art historians, and researchers in related disciplines – thus building up a network of scholars, institutions and research groups across Europe which mirrors the international network of courts that is being examined.

The present workshop belongs to section WPM2 of the PALATIUM programme: “Heuristics in an Interdisciplinary Perspective”. For further information on the various topics and working parties of PALATIUM, see www.courtresidences.eu.

CHAM

The Centro de História de Além-Mar (Centre for Overseas History) is a research centre of the School of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa and the Universidade dos Açores, financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT, also one of the funding agencies for PALATIUM).

CHAM’s work is focused on the history of the Portuguese expansion and the Portuguese presence around the world, in an interdisciplinary perspective, and with a particular focus on the period between the origins of the overseas expansion and the independence of Brazil (1822).

Research activities of CHAM are organized in nine major areas, each under the responsibility of a PhD researcher: Antiquity and its perception in the Early Modern Age, Early Modern archaeology in the Portuguese expansion, The arts and the Portuguese expansion, Political and institutional frameworks of the Portuguese empire, Religion and the Portuguese expansion, Dynamics and contexts of Portuguese colonialism in the Contemporary Age, Overseas economies and trade networks, Social groups and representations in the Portuguese empire, Cultural exchanges and globalization.

CHAM hosts several research projects including “All His Worldly Possessions: The Inventory of the 5th Duque of Bragança, D. Teodósio I” (PTDC/HAH/71027/2008), coordinated by Professor Jessica Hallett, under which this workshop takes place. When the 5th Duke of Bragança, D. Teodósio I, died in

1563, an inventory was prepared of the entire contents of his palace in Vila Viçosa (Portugal). This enormous list comprising more than 1,300 pages and some 6,300 entries, records the international splendour of the duke's possessions, as well as every item of value encountered in the palace, from the buttons on his shirts to the pots and pans in the kitchen, to his precious tapestries and other works of art. It is the largest 16th-century inventory to have come to light so far in Portugal, and is currently being studied by a large interdisciplinary research team. Its work aims to reconstruct the life of this great ducal house at the precise moment in which Portugal, through its programme of overseas exploration, was being transformed from a small country on the periphery of Europe to an imperial power, thereby connecting the micro-history of the domestic household with the macro-history of an increasingly global world. The final result will be an innovative study which looks at the diverse complexity of the Bragança household: its people, contents, activities, architecture, organization and economy, and reveals it to be one of the great cosmopolitan houses in the Europe of its age.

Venue of the workshop : Palácio Nacional de Sintra
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