"Making treasure in heaven": family chapels as a manifestation of the social power of urban elites (Portugal, 14th-17th centuries)[1]

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Abstract. This article aims to analyse the family chapels founded by the urban elites of four Portuguese cities – Évora, Lisbon, Porto and Santarém – between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Beginning by presenting a sociological characterisation of the founders and their families, according to their social and professional status, this will be followed by a definition of the profile of these individuals, based on the relationship they established with their ancestors and successors at the time of their souls' suffrage. Lastly, the family chapels will come in to focus as a manifestation of the lineage's memorialisation and an exhibition of the founders' economic and social power, further to the investment they made in ornamentation and architecture. As such, an understanding of how the urban elites used these institutions in the context of the processes of social climbing they aimed for and how the chapels reflect the awareness of the power they achieved.

Keywords. Entails, family chapels, urban elites, social power, social ascension.

Introduction

On 16 March 1488, João de Sousa, a knight of the King's Household and resident in Santarém, established a contract with the friars of the local monastery of S. Francisco, through which he founded a chapel, entrusting part of his estate and that of his late wife, Isabel de Rebelo. To fulfil his wish, the institution granted the founder and his entire generation the chapel located next to the sacristy, on whose altar the image of St Sebastian would be placed,

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becoming its invocation from then on. João de Sousa's objectives and reasons for founding the chapel are clear: "comssyrando elle como lhe era necessareo fazer tesouro no ceeo pera que aproveitasse a sua allma e daquelles a que he teudo rogar em especiall polla aalma d'Isabell de Rabeello sua molher que Deus aja" ("considering how necessary it was for him to make treasure in heaven so that it might profit his soul and those for whom he is obliged to pray especially for the soul of Isabel de Rebelo his wife, may God rest her soul."). The evocation of family members, in particular his ancestors and wife, was one of his main concerns. In fact, the souls of his wife, parents, and other deceased, not named, for whom he was obliged to pray, would be entrusted to God by the friars during the Masses of suffrage and near the grave where they were lain – and where João de Sousa himself would be buried (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 274: fls. 121v-123v).

This case exemplifies the strategies of social ascension and consolidation of the Portuguese urban elites of the Ancien Régime, often resorting to the foundation of entails (both *morgados*[2] and chapels) as a way of achieving the desired social mobility and, furthermore, as evidence of their power (ROSA 2012: 598; COELHO 2017 and SERRA 2018). In the specific case of chapels, through which the founders sought to suffrage their souls and frequently those of their relatives – both past and present – these institutions also played a fundamental role in the construction and definition of family and/or the identity of lineage, which, according to Maria de Lurdes Rosa, was "understood as a condition for the exercise of power" (ROSA 2012: 405). The chapels thus became a representation of the power of their founders, as well as that of the entire family, helping to identify the place they occupied in the society within which they were integrated.

Several foreign researchers have shown, particularly since the 1980s, that chapels could be a symbol of ostentation for their founders, usually the nobility. Wealthy social groups, however, sought to imitate aristocratic behaviour as a factor within and consequence of their social mobility (PRO RUIZ 1989: 589-591). At the same time, studies were carried out on the establishment of chapels in monastic and parish churches in England by wealthy founders, who, not only contributed to the salvation of their souls and those of their families, but also benefited the parish and local communities through an improved liturgy and the investment in liturgical objects, decoration and architecture (BURGESS 1985, 2011, 2018 and BROWN 1995). In line with these ideas, some authors focussed on the role of these institutions as instruments

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[2] In Portuguese, corresponding to the Spanish *mayorazgo* and the English entail.

of social promotion and family solidarity, becoming places of memorialisation and the perpetuation of lineage (SORIA MESA 2002 and ROTH 2007). Studies have also been carried out that emphasise the importance that chapels had for the founder's family, acquiring a very strong social component of prestige and familial conciliation (HERREROS MOYA 2012: 121-123). This reinforces their contribution, as pious foundations, to the construction of an identified lineage and intangible heritage, ensuring the memory and perpetuation of noble families (SOLIGNAT 2012).

In Portugal, certain studies have presented similar conclusions, particularly for the Late Middle Ages. In the early 1990s, Manuela Santos Silva argued that the chapels founded by the families of the urban elite were "a social mechanism of great importance, designed to preserve the prestige and fortune of certain families for eternity" (SILVA 1993: 117). Whilst this idea is also proposed by Filipe Themudo Barata and Hermínia Vilar, they, however, warn against extending the interpretation of chapels as "places of exaltation and reaffirmation of a lineage" to non-privileged urban groups (BARATA & VILAR 1993: 133). More recently, Maria de Lurdes Rosa demonstrated that the establishment of chapels "was an obligatory parameter of social ascension, a proof of success and integration into the social elite" (ROSA 2012: 598).

Based on these given assumptions and historiographical production, the aim of this article is to analyse the family chapels founded in four Portuguese cities – Évora, Lisbon, Porto and Santarém –, between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Firstly, these medium-sized and large cities were selected as case studies for their specific characteristics: all of them had a great importance in the kingdom since the twelfth century and throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period had a very significant presence of elite individuals linked to the royal court, municipal power and trade networks, especially during Portugal's period of expansion. In general, aspects such as proximity or, to the contrary, distance from the royal court, the development of a predominantly bourgeois and mercantile society, the affirmation of municipal power and the emergence of the municipal oligarchy were decisive in the movement to establish *morgados* and chapels in these urban centres. Secondly, surpassing the time limits traditionally defined in academic research, the study of the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries allows to understand the evolutionary processes that Portuguese society went through, particularly in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period and during overseas expansion, which had a very clear influence on the establishment of entails.

This paper is the first result of a larger study on the link between the practice of entailment and power in its many dimensions, which analyses the

establishment of *morgados* and chapels by members of the urban elite as a means of social ascension in Ancien Régime Portugal (1300-1700)[3]. For this reason, the documentary sample selected is the result of the research carried out in the context of that study and was drawn up based on the documents collected by the VINCULUM project and described in its database, in association with the entails to which they relate[4].

A variable number of entails were selected for each city, including the chapels analysed in this study. A common questionnaire was applied to all the cities, selecting the entails for study according to the socio-professional status of the founders and administrators. Those who belonged to the social category of urban elites, but also those who, coming from lower or higher classes, aspired, respectively, to social ascension or the maintenance of a status already achieved were favoured. Similarly, particular attention to the family names of the founders and administrators was paid, choosing entails belonging to recognised families for which there is a greater abundance of documentary and bibliographical data, and who were involved in processes of social advancement. Besides, the *morgados* and chapels with the greatest number of documents described in the database and with the types of documents considered most relevant and complete – entail or chapel foundation deeds, wills, codicils, donation deeds, dowry deeds, among others – were chosen. The application of these criteria resulted in the selection of 84 entails for Évora (out of 161 entails located in this city and described in the database), 150 entails for Lisbon (out of 1853), 60 entails for Porto (out of 94) and 20 entails for Santarém (out of 64).

Although not all these institutions were considered in this study, they were all analysed and contributed to its conclusions. In total, more than 280 documents have been collected through which members of the urban elite founded *morgados* and/or chapels, although there are no known foundation deeds for all the entails selected. These documents are divided into different types, including wills, entail foundation deeds, chapel foundation deeds, dowry deeds, donation deeds, contract and bond deeds, among others. The main type of document is wills, which together with codicils account for more than 73% of the total, followed by entail and chapel foundation deeds, which account for more than 17%. The other types have a smaller weight in the overall sample but are no less relevant. This is the case of the contract and

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[3] This study is part of the project *VINCULUM – Entailing Perpetuity: Family, Power, Identity. The Social Agency of a Corporate Body (Southern Europe, 14th-17th Centuries)* and will lead to the publication of a book on entailment and power.

[4] The VINCULUM project database is available online at the following address: https://www.vinculum-database.fcsh.unl.pt/ (consulted on October 24, 2024).

bond deeds, by which the founders entered into a contract with the monks or nuns of the monastery in which they founded their chapels. In all these documents, data was collected on the social category of the founders, the relationships they established with their relatives, past, present and future, at the time of their death, the motives for founding an entail and the investments the founders made in their chapels, with the aim of demonstrating their economic and social power.

Given the goals initially proposed and the questions posed to the documentary sample, this work will be based on the societal characterisation of the founders and their families, their profile in terms of ancestorial and progenitorial relationships, and an evaluation of the family chapels. With this in mind, an output of a deeper understanding of how the urban elites used these institutions in the context of the processes of social ascension and the reflection of the power they achieved in the public consciousness shall be presented.

1. Sociological characterisation of the founders: urban elites in Portugal during the Ancien Régime

The chapels were founded between 1300 and 1700 by members of families belonging to the elites of the cities of Évora, Lisbon, Porto and Santarém. It is important to provide a sociological characterisation in order to understand who their founders were and how their social status was reflected in the chapels they established. As Maria de Lurdes Rosa observed, "the foundation of perpetual suffrage institutions is, above all, a practice of the wealthier and more cultured elites (linked to administration and the exercise of 'liberal'/mercantile professions)" (ROSA 2012: 360), as, moreover, this author's research has proven.

The elites corresponded to the most powerful and wealthy groups in a society or, as Luís Miguel Duarte called them, the "best in the land" (DUARTE 2001). Generally speaking, they were landowners, nobles, merchants, craftsmen and clergymen, among other roles. In common, and above all, they had the exercise of power in its multiple dimensions – it was this that was the basis of their fundament, allowing them to thus impose themselves and endure (DUARTE 2001). Ângela Beirante reinforces this idea by suggesting that the urban oligarchy (the "power elites") can be defined as "the group of city dwellers who combine wealth and prestige with the exercise of public functions in close connection with the monarchy" (BEIRANTE 1995: 565). They were those who held power and decision-making capacity in the context of the city or town where they were based.

Based on these assumptions, the chapels that make up the sample within this study were mostly founded by high-ranking royal officials, members of municipal oligarchies, significant landowners, merchants, and other individuals who aspired to rise to nobility. In fact, many of these founders who came from lower social categories had already achieved nobility, forming part of the various aristocratic layers of Portuguese society, from petty to great nobility. They all moved within the socio-political and economic context of the cities under study, in which the presence of all these social groups can be observed, with varied visibility dependent on their own historical evolution and other specific conditioning factors.

A significant number of chapels were founded by high-ranking royal officials who moved through the court and gravitated towards the king, particularly in the cities of Lisbon, Évora and Santarém. Thus, from the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, senior officials linked to the chancellery and writing offices, royal treasury, justice, *Contos do Reino* and, from the sixteenth century onwards, the administration of the Empire, including governors of overseas territories can be found amongst their number.

From the various founders considered in the sample, the following stand out: Doctor Martinho do Sem, co-founder of a chapel in Santarém in the first decades of the 1400s, who held the position of *chanceler-mor* (chancellor) to King João I (ANTT, Chanc. D. João II, L. 20: fl. 39), Nuno Martins da Silveira, who established a chapel in Évora in 1431 when he was *escrivão da puridade* (personal clerk) of Prince Duarte (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fl. 150), and Gil Eanes da Costa, *vedor da Fazenda do Rei* (overseer of the Treasury), founder of a chapel in the monastery of Nossa Senhora de Almoster (Santarém) in 1560 (ANTT, Morgados e capelas, NA 190: fl. 21). In Lisbon, the officials attached to the administration of the Empire have particular importance, such as Vasco Fernandes César, *guarda-mor das Naus da Índia, Mina e suas Armadas*, in 1556, when he founded a *morgado* and chapel together with his wife, Inês Gonçalves Batavias (ANTT, Chanc. D. João III, Priv, L. 3: fls. 214-222), and Duarte de Albuquerque, captain and governor of Pernambuco, who created a chapel, with his wife, in the monastery of Santíssima Trindade in 1625 (ANTT, Conv. Sant. Trindade de Lisboa, L. 104: fl. 107).

A significant number of chapel founders in the four cities exercised their power at the level of local government, making up the ranks of the municipal oligarchy, where strategies for social ascension and consolidation were more evident. In this respect, Évora, Lisbon and Porto are paradigmatic, while there are very few examples for Santarém. In these larger cities, it is possible to recognise families (and their members) associated with local power, occu-

pying the main municipal positions for generations.

Families such as Lobo, Espinho, and Fuseiro were involved in the municipal government of Évora at the end of the Middle Ages, and some of their members established important chapels in the city's religious institutions[5]. The most exemplary cases are those of Fernando Lopes Lobo and Lopo Dias de Espinho. Fernando Lopes Lobo, who established a chapel in the monastery of S. Francisco of Évora in 1422 (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fls. 101-102v), came from a family that received the title of baron of Alvito in the fifteenth century. Furthermore, as well as being a knight, he may have served as a criminal and/or civil judge at the beginning of the century (COELHO 2017: 135-136 and SERRA 2018). The same position of civil judge was held in the transition from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century by Lopo Dias de Espinho, who founded a chapel divided between the monastery of S. Francisco and the church of S. Pedro of Évora in 1422 (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fls. 91-92v).

In Lisbon, during a similar period, families such as Carregueiro, Palhavã, and Nogueira were particularly important in municipal government, to which some of the family chapel founders considered in this study belonged[6]. Although the documentation does not always reflect this, it is known, for example, that João Eanes Palhavã, founder of a chapel in the convent of S. Domingos in 1306, identified as a citizen of Lisbon (ANTT, Cap. Coroa, L. 4: fls. 76-77), and Afonso Eanes Carregueiro, institutor of a chapel in the same monastery in 1347 (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 8: fls. 1v-5v), were merchants and progenitors of two important lineages of municipal administrators (FARELO 2007: 151; FARELO 2008: 481-487 and 649-654). The Nogueira family, in turn, are represented, among others, by Teresa Nogueira, founding a chapel in S. Domingos of Lisbon in 1427 (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 14: fls. 164v-166v). She was the daughter of Afonso Eanes Nogueira, the great protagonist of this family's nobility, and married to Diogo Fernandes de Almeida, *rico-homem* (a member of the highest nobility) and member of the King's Council (ROSA 2012: 779; SILVA 2012: 102-105).

An analysis of the institutors belonging to municipal oligarchies would not be complete without a reference to Porto, where a remarkable number of members of families traditionally associated with the exercise of local or mu-

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[5] These families and their role in Évora's municipal administration are analysed in detail by Joaquim Bastos Serra (SERRA 2018).

[6] Miguel Gomes Martins, Mário Farelo, and Gonçalo Silva, among others, have studied these families and their role in Lisbon's municipal power structure (MARTINS 2007; FARELO 2007; FARELO 2008; SILVA 2012).

nicipal power founded important chapels. Families such as Baldaia, Figueiroa, Pamplona, Valadares, and Carneiro played important roles in the municipal administration, particularly in *vereação* (councillorship), as well as having considerable economic power (BRITO 1997; GAGO 2019: 63-74). Among the many examples that could be cited, is the citizen João de Figueiró (or Figueiroa), who was unequivocally identified in the documents instituting his chapel in the monastery of S. Francisco of Porto in 1525 as a municipal official, occupying the position of *escrivão dos órfãos* (clerk of the orphans) in this city (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-93: fls. 135-136v). He was also a knight of the King's Household, showing that his family, from the mercantile bourgeoisie, had achieved nobility (BRITO 1997: 397-398).

The bourgeoisie was, in fact, the originating social group of a significant number of founders of the chapels considered in this study, due to the prominent place their members occupied within the urban elites in the cities under study. To a varying extent, institutors who were dedicated to the liberal professions and mercantile activities are found in all of the cities. In Évora and Santarém, some founders held the academic titles of graduate or doctor, and in some cases the activity they carried out in the urban context is known. At the end of the Middle Ages, in Santarém, members of the Sem family are known, namely Gil do Sem and his son, Martinho do Sem, already referenced, both holders of a doctor's degree and with connections to the royal court (ANTT, Cap. Coroa, L. 5: fls. 458-460v; GOMES 1995: 136-138). In Évora, the graduate Gabriel Gonçalves, a lawyer who established a chapel in 1622, stands out (ANTT, Arq. do Arq., Livs. Registo, L. 12: fls. 3-6v).

In Lisbon and Porto, as could be expected, the literate founders were even more numerous. In sixteenth-century Lisbon, the institution of a chapel by the king's *físico-mor* (chief physician), Mestre (Master) Diogo Lopes Franco (ANTT, Arq. do Arq., Livs. Registo, L. 29: fls. 203-206v), and another by Mestre João, a physician (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 51: fls. 300-302) are particular highlights. However, in both cities, the main roles belonged to the merchants. Documented among the institutors since the fourteenth century, they gained special importance from the sixteenth century onwards in the context of Portuguese expansion, trading products from the various parts of the Empire. It was these very lucrative activities that allowed them to accumulate enough capital to invest in land, which they came to entrust in family chapels, flaunting the power they had achieved. Dietmar Roth also observed that some merchants from Vélez Blanco (Almería, Spain) entailed their properties, for the benefit of their descendants, to consolidate their social ascension (ROTH 2007: 233).

In Porto, as already seen, some of the families of the urban patriciate ascended from commerce, an activity which, in some cases, they maintained (BRITO 1997: 303-310). Among these founders were Fernando Álvares Baldaia, a merchant who founded a chapel in the monastery of S. Domingos in 1469 (ADP, Conv. S. Domingos – Porto, K/19/6-1: fls. 1-2), and João Martins Ferreira, who established a chapel in the same monastery in 1492, as *moço fidalgo* (a member of the lower nobility) from the house of the late *infante* Fernando, Duke of Viseu (ADP, Prov. Com. Porto, K/21/2-43: fls. 13-19). However, this founder began his social career as a merchant, which allowed him to accumulate both wealth and social prestige enough to become one of the most important men in the city's municipal government and, apparently, achieve nobility (MOUTA 2022).

The merchants in Lisbon were even more numerous and, over time, references to the commercial companies they owned multiply, showing a far-reaching and particularly lucrative trade. Among these merchants, Lopo Afonso Cardim, who established a family chapel in the monastery of S. Francisco of Lisbon in 1475 – highlighting his membership of the convent's merchants' confraternity and, consequently, his integration into the networks of sociability and solidarity of Lisbon's merchants (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 2: fls. 222v-223) – can be cited as a prime example. Finally, in 1674, when Amaro de Cerqueira founded a chapel in the church of S. Nicolau, he identified himself as a merchant and referred to his commercial activities in the Empire and elsewhere in Europe (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 31: fls. 18v-28v).

These examples illustrate the variety of socio-professional situations found among the medieval and modern urban elites who established chapels in the cities under study. Many of the founders analysed had already achieved nobility, while others continued to make efforts in this direction, accumulating wealth, which they entrusted, in part, to this goal. However, all showed, through their chapels, the social power they had, or indeed hoped to gain in the near future.

2. The founders' profiles: between the memory of the past and the organisation of present and future

When founding a chapel, or at least when considering passing on from this mortal coil, the institutors often invoked their ancestors, including them among those whose souls they instructed to be celebrated with suffrages, meanwhile looking to the future by involving their successors in the con-

struction and maintenance of their new pious institution. These attitudes towards death varied from founder to founder, allowing their profiles in terms of the relationship they established with their ancestors and successors to be traced, but furthermore in the manifestation and awareness of social power.

In this sense, the image of the institutor was built on the basis of the main beneficiaries of the suffrages. They could choose to save the souls of their ancestors, their own or indeed those of their nuclear family. Maria de Lurdes Rosa, who tried to trace the profile of the founders of chapels in late medieval Lisbon based on the recipients of suffrage, distinguished three large groups: those who offered suffrage for their ancestors, usually along with themselves; those who wished for the suffrage of their own souls and the members of their nuclear family; and those who included both groups along with themselves. In this way, the founders could be "more defined according to the past, organising the future", others "who organise the present and the future" and, finally, founders "who organise the past, the present and the future" (ROSA 2012: 402-403).

In the cities of Évora, Lisbon, Porto, and Santarém, the elites opted more often to offer suffrage for their ancestors or to invoke them together with their nuclear families, in a trend that runs through the entire period under study (1300 to 1700). In fact, remembering ancestors was a significant demonstration of power and strengthening of family/lineage, playing an important role in the processes of ascension and social consolidation of groups with greater possessions. According to Ângela Beirante, "having a large number of relatives is synonymous with social prominence and a certificate of power" (BEIRANTE 1995: 584).

Mention of ancestors usually appeared in the wills of founders, particularly in the description of the pious charges, but also at the time of selecting the burial site with the relatives, which presupposed the celebration of suffrage ceremonies. The choice of recipients of suffrage mostly highlighted the founder's parents. In these cases, the wording is very simple and does not extend much further than indicating that the ordained Masses should be celebrated for the soul of the founder himself and his father and/or mother. This was Fernando Lopes Lobo instruction in Évora in 1422. Among the various ceremonies ordered, this testator had a silent Mass said every Sunday for his soul and those of his parents (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fl. 101). These celebrations could sometimes also be extended to siblings, as João Carneiro de Morais, the founder of a chapel on the Boavista estate in Porto, did in 1676. He instructed Masses for his father, João Vicente Carneiro, for Antónia Felgueira, and for his brother Estêvão, bishop of Brazil, as well as for his own soul

(ADP, Prov. Com. Porto, K/22/4/5-60.3: fl. 279). In this way, the founder was linked, beyond life, to a prominent figure in the Empire's ecclesiastical hierarchy, whose status contributed to strengthening the family's social power.

In other circumstances, founders broadened the range of family members whose souls were to be included, bringing grandparents and even uncles into their prayers. In 1639, in Évora, Baltasar Mendes dos Reis, having already instructed Masses for his and his parents' souls, left his books to the priests of the convent of Nossa Senhora da Graça in exchange for fifteen Masses to be sung as well for the souls of his four grandparents and five brothers (ANTT, Arq. do Arq., Livs. Registo, L. 29: fls. 46v and 50).

In some cases, it is clear that a debt of gratitude to those who had left the founder property was owed, recognising that it was thanks to their ancestors that they had achieved their current status. Also in the fifteenth century, Gil Martins do Poço, *contador do rei* (king's accountant), instructed Masses to be said each year in the church of Santa Justa and in the monastery of S. Domingos in Lisbon for the souls of his grandparents and parents, who left him their property, and also for his wife. The strong bond with his ancestors was thus extended into eternity, as Gil Martins chose to be buried in the grave where his father already lay, next to his grandfather's grave (ANTT, Most. S. Domingos de Lisboa, L. 54: fls. 113-113v).

All these founders, presented only as an example of a wider reality present in the four cities, were situated at the confluence of past, present, and future, where the past, together with the social relevance of their ancestors, was used to organise the present and the future. The chapels and anniversaries provided continuity for the family, "projecting into the past (through suffrage of the souls of the progenitors and burial with them) and perpetuating it in the future (through an administrator of their lineal blood)" (BEIRANTE 1995: 584).

Some of the founders of urban chapels in medieval and modern Portugal opted to suffrage only their own souls and members of their nuclear families (spouse and children), breaking the link with the past and the relatives preceding them. The profile of this type of founder assumed himself to be the creator of the lineage, at a time when he had achieved social ascension. He may have also sought affirmation in relation to other, more important branches of the lineage, which would already be responsible for the suffrage of the souls of ancestors (ROSA 2012: 405).

Although the references to the suffrage of the souls of the nuclear family are usually relatively brief, some examples are longer and allow us to understand the founders' intentions, such as the case of the lady Maria de Vilhena.

She created a *morgado* in the outskirts of Santarém in 1483, including the celebration of Masses wherever the administrator happened to be on feast days, showing how the memory of the spouse could play the role of "structuring" the present and, above all, the future. In fact, this founder – the widow of Fernando Teles, son of Aires Gomes da Silva, lord of Vagos, and Beatriz de Meneses, *aia* (nurse) to King Afonso V (ROSA 1995: 39) – placed an enormous weight on the memory of her late husband, which was to be then maintained by their descendants. Upon the death of Fernando Teles, Maria ordered her children and other successors to sing three Masses each year with responsory for the dead and prayers for her husband's and her own soul. She also explained that she had established the *morgado* "por ho nome do dito senhor seu pay [Fernando Teles] sempre ficar em memoria e lembrança" ("so that the name of their father [Fernando Teles] would forever remain in memory and remembrance") (ANTT, Leitura Nova, L. 18: fls. 290v, 292 and 294). The memory of Fernando Teles was transformed by his wife into a "factor in structuring the lineage", as observed by Maria de Lurdes Rosa (ROSA 1995: 41).

In this context, the chapels and the pious charges associated with them made manifest the identity of the family and, specifically, the power and social status that the lineage had achieved or hoped to achieve. At the same time, they had a strong social component, contributing to the prestige and protection of the family, as seen in Córdoba (HERREROS MOYA 2012: 122). All these aspects were further reinforced when the founders built family chapels and tombs in which they displayed the symbols of their social and economic power.

3. Family chapels as a material realisation of the memorialisation of lineage and a manifestation of social power

Medieval and modern chapels could play a preponderant role in linking the founders to the past, as well as to the future, through their antecedents, particularly when they took on a material dimension and became the pantheon of the lineage. Thus, they became actual places of family worship, full of symbolism and an outward demonstration of their social and economic power. For the elites, funerary chapels were of added importance and were one of the landmarks characterising their establishment within the urban patriciate, as Rafael Sánchez Saus showed (SÁNCHEZ SAUS 1991: 299).

Serving these purposes, between the fourteenth and seventeenth centu-

ries, the chapels founded and erected by the elites in the religious institutions of the main cities and towns of the kingdom multiplied, often serving as family pantheons. As such, the chapel transcended its spiritual dimension and took on a physical and material expression, housing the bodies of the founders and their families, as well as the respective identity and devotional signs that would guarantee the identification of their lineage and represent their societal power.

Generally, these chapels could take one of two forms, closely linked to their funerary functions. Firstly, and relatively often, these institutions were the continuation of extant chapels, where the founders' ancestors had previously commissioned the celebration of their pious charges and where they had chosen to be buried. Secondly, chapels could be created *ex nihilo* by a founder who chose to start a new cycle, separating himself from his ancestors and choosing a place of worship and burial for himself and his descendants, becoming the aggregating link in the lineage.

As seen with the profiles of the founders, in a large number of cases the institutors opted to be close to their ancestors for eternity, either by having their souls suffraged in their chapels or buried in the graves of the lineage. The choice was most commonly made regarding entwining with parents. In the four cities, several examples of founders who chose to be buried next to their parents were found, in chapels or graves where the forebears already lay. Among many others, this was the case of the bachelor Gomes Eanes Aranha, who had his body buried in the same grave where his mother lay, in the monastery of S. Domingos in Porto, in 1464 (ADP, Conv. S. Domingos – Porto, K/19/6-1: fl. 6v); Inês Rodrigues de Góis, who ordered her bones to be taken to her father's chapel and laid in her mother's grave, in the monastery of S. Francisco of Santarém, in 1478 (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 274: fl. 20v); Constança Salvado, widow of Mestre João Vasques, who asked to be buried with her father in the monastery of S. Domingos in Évora in 1522 (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fl. 178); and that of Francisco Velasco de Gouveia, whose *morgado*, established in 1651, had its core in a chapel in the cloister of S. Domingos in Lisbon, where his father and mother lay and where he and his brothers would be buried (ANTT, Arq. do Arq, Livs. Registo, L. 56: fl. 114).

However, in many cases, the family extended beyond solely the parents, and the founders chose to be buried with other relatives and ancestors or to have their remains moved to the new chapels they founded. This was a recognition of the power of the lineage and the role of predecessors in the process of ascension and social consolidation achieved by the current founders. Here, grandparents and even great-grandparents played a fundamental role, being

a regular presence in the family chapels. Connecting with his ancestors was one of the aims of Lourenço Martins do Avelar, the *alcaide-mor* (chatelain) of Santarém, when he established a chapel in the local monastery of Santa Clara in the fourteenth century and had his body buried in a chapel attached to that of his grandfather, great-grandfather and great-grandmother (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 274: fls. 68-68v). The most curious thing about this testamentary passage is that Lourenço Martins turned his institution into an actual family chapel and burial place for the lineage, as he ordered the union of both funeral chapels, tearing down the wall that separated them and installing iron railings with doors. In seventeenth-century Lisbon, Diogo Mendes de Castro established a chapel in the sacristy of the church of Nossa Senhora da Luz for his burial, that of his wife and heirs, as well as all the people they selected. What was initially intended to be a chapel for the nuclear family and their descendants quickly became a chapel for the lineage, as he ordered his heirs to add the bones of their ancestors to it, making the sacristy a "cauza nossa própria (…) na qual se não sepultara outra pessoa algua" ("our own cause (…) in which no other person will be buried") (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 25: fls. 237-237v). Both chapels truly took on the dimension of places of memory and perpetuation of lineage (ROTH 2007: 234), where ascendants and descendants were gathered in a sacred space full of symbols announcing their social status.

Continuing on the topic of ancestors and descendants in the same space, as well as pious charges, there are some physical chapels in which successive foundations and the burial of several individuals with family ties are documented, including collateral or even more distant relatives. The same site thus housed a "cascade" of chapels that were independent of each other, but intrinsically linked by the social position of the same family or lineage. The religious institutions in the cities of Lisbon and Porto were particularly favoured locations for the foundation of these chapels, offering an insight into how the different pious institutions coexisted in a common space and jointly contributed to the social affirmation of the lineages and their members within the community to which they belonged.

Examples of overlapping chapels, pious charges, and graves from the beginning of the fourteenth century can be found in Lisbon. As early as 1306, João Eanes Palhavã and his wife Sancha Pires ordered Masses at the monastery of S. Domingos in Lisbon, where they wanted to be buried, specifically in the chapel that Maria Soares had ordered to be built and where she lay with her husband, Martinho Pires Palhavã, and their daughter (ANTT, Cap. Coroa, L. 4: fls. 76-76v). However, contrary to what was common or expected,

there were no blood ties between members of either couple. In fact, João Eanes Palhavã was *criado* (someone who was raised and educated by someone else) of Maria Soares and her husband, from whom he received the nickname "Palhavã". He was also executor of the former's will and heir to her fortune[7]. In appreciation of everything they had received from the couple who raised him, João Eanes Palhavã and his wife re-founded their chapel in S. Domingos, continuing to benefit from the oversight of Martinho Pires and Maria Soares even after their deaths (MARTINS 1997-1998: 62-63). In this case, artificial kinship took precedence over genetic lineage but assumed the same value and functions both in life and in death. As Ana Cláudia Silveira pointed out, in line with the conclusions this work has been drawing, "the choice of a common place to establish their graves appears to be a factor of lineage cohesion, reflecting an attempt to affirm the unity, prestige and power of the family" (SILVEIRA 2007: 198).

In Porto, the "Capela dos Carneiros", as the chapel of S. João Batista in the monastery of S. Francisco came to be known, is exemplary of the paradigm. Founded and built by João Carneiro, a schoolmaster at the Cathedral of Braga, in 1525 or 1532[8], this chapel became part of successive pious charges or chapels belonging to members of the Carneiro family and others (BRITO 1997: 352-353). Among these, the chapel of João Domingues and Maria Eanes da Rua was even established a few years earlier, in 1523, and was eventually integrated into that of S. João Batista (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-93: fls. 88v-90; BRITO 1997: 353 and 361). Subsequently, the pious charges of Vasco Carneiro and his wife, Beatriz de Figueiroa (1541) (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-96: fls. 58v-60); Ana Bravo and Manuel Carneiro, her husband and son from the previous couple (1558) (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-96: fls. 50-56v); Luís Carneiro, João Carneiro's brother, and his wife, at an uncertain date; António Carneiro, his son and the founder's nephew (1575) (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-96: fls. 89-107); Milícia de Novais Carneiro, her daughter, Vitória Carneiro, and Beatriz de Almeida, all at an unknown date, were added[9]. With

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[7] On the Palhavã family and specifically on these characters, see MARTINS 1997-1998 and SILVEIRA 2007.

[8] Following other authors, Pedro de Brito states that João Carneiro's will was written on 20 March 1532 (BRITO 1997: 353), while Lúcia Rosas gives the date as 2 December 1525 (ROSAS 2013: 464).

[9] The charges and chapels annexed to the chapel of S. João Batista are listed in ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-96: fls. 1-12v. However, this list has some errors, namely the identification of Vasco Carneiro and Beatriz de Figueiroa as the parents of João Carneiro, the founder (fl. 6), when in fact they were his brother and sister-in-law and the son of Vasco Carneiro, the Elder (BRITO 1997: Quadro CARNEIROS I). An abbreviated list of these charges was presented by Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, who repeats this misidentification (SOUSA 1982: 54-55).

all these charges and burials that were accommodated in the chapel of S. João Batista, in which various members of the same lineage added "something of their own, contributing to a family task" (SOUSA 1982: 55), the Carneiro's memory and the ostentatious social power they enjoyed in the city of Porto were assured. This was also a demonstration of the group solidarity and contributed to the chapel's assets increase, as demonstrated in the town of Vélez Blanco (ROTH 2007: 228).

If, in the examples presented above, chapel founders chose to join their ancestors physically and spiritually, a similar number of founders broke with the past and began a new pious and funerary cycle, choosing their nuclear family and their descendants as their eternal companions. Among the many chapels of this group, the examples of Nuno Martins da Silveira and Leonor Gonçalves de Abreu (monastery of S. Domingos of Évora, 1431); and Jorge de Albuquerque (monastery of Santíssima Trindade of Lisbon, 1649) can be cited. Despite some similarities, each one has some characteristic aspects that should be emphasised.

The first chapel, with the invocation of the Saviour, in which the founders and all their sons, daughters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all direct descendants would be buried, stands out for the family hierarchy that Nuno Martins da Silveira made a point of imposing. While he and his wife would be buried in a monumental tomb, his descendants could only be buried in *campa rasa* (an ordinary or shallow grave) (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fl. 150v). This bears witness to the presence of a "hierarchical space, destined firstly to perpetuate the glory of the founders, and then the belonging of the successors to the lineage, but in a position of submission" (ROSA 1995: 143).

Finally, Jorge de Albuquerque, a member of *Conselho Ultramarino* (Overseas Council), knight of the Order of Christ and son of Fernando de Albuquerque, governor of the *Estado da Índia* (State of India, the Portuguese empire in Asia), acquired a chapel in the monastery of the Santíssima Trindade in Lisbon for himself, his wife, Ana de Noronha, and their heirs. But he specified that, while he would be buried on the Gospel side, where his arms and epitaph would be displayed, his wife would be buried on the Epistle side, which would bear her own arms and epitaph, and that they would thus be close enough so that, after their deaths, their bodies would remain "companheiros como na vida o fomos, pelo muyto que sempre lhe [a D. Ana de Noronha] quiz" ("companions as we were in life, for the affection I have always felt for her [Ana de Noronha]") (ANTT, Conv. Sant. Trindade de Lisboa, L. 105: fls. 312v-313). Jorge de Albuquerque thus ensured his own identification – and likewise his wife's and both of their lineages' – through their

respective epitaphs and arms, which also identified their families as belonging to the city's elite.

4. The ostentation of power: the ornamentation and architecture of family chapels

Many of the chapels considered in this study bore their familial coat of arms and had valuable ornaments, vestments, and artistic and architectural works that distinguished them within a church, making them a true showcase of the power of their founders and their families. The presence of decorative elements points to the organisation of "a dignified physical space for the suffrage of the souls themselves, which also expresses the cohesion of the lineage through the artistic language of the space in which it is inserted", contributing "not only to a religious insertion in the local liturgy, but also to the constant reminder of the power and importance of the chapel's owners" (ROSA 2012: 606).

The wealthier founders spared no expense in donating silverware and vestments, which lent a more ceremonial feel to liturgical celebrations. The objects donated could also include liturgical books, which were necessary for the celebration of the liturgical offices, although references to such objects are very rare. In the universe of documents considered in this sample, the generous donation of Filipa Coutinho to the chapel she established in 1478 in the monastery of S. Francisco of Porto mentions books. Her donation comprised a satin vestment, hangings and frontals for the altar, corporals with a pall and a small ark, a chalice with silver cruets and also her own missal and a breviary, which were to be placed on an "iron rack" (a lectern?) for the use of the friars and clergymen (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-95: fl. 404). Unfortunately, this information reveals nothing regarding the "piety, religious culture, and liturgical knowledge" of the lady herself, revealing only what may have been a requirement by the ecclesiastics and confirming that missals were the most donated books (ROSA 2012: 505-506).

In fact, among the most frequently bequeathed ornaments were pieces of jewellery, vestments, and other fabrics, sometimes originating from distant lands – take the case of Mécia Mendes de Aguiar, widow of Gonçalo Gil Barbosa, who spent around six years in India. In her will of 1532, she instructed that her chapel be given various objects to be used in Masses, such as vestments, frontals, a hanging, a chalice and cruets, as well as "outros pannos de seda da India" ("other silk cloths from India") (ANTT, Morgados e capelas,

Vínculos, Santarém 17, fls. 22-23). It is hard not to associate this reference with her husband's time in India, where he made his fortune, and from where he may have brought the cloth. This donation seems to be a demonstration of the luxury that this family enjoyed and the place that it came to occupy, thanks largely to the service of the founder of the lineage in the territories of the Empire (REIS 2022: 120-130). Approximately a century later, in 1635, in Lisbon, a visitation to the chapel of Catarina da Rocha, located in the convent of the Santíssima Trindade in Lisbon, reveals, among an extensive list of ornaments, several pieces that had come from Milan, as there were none of the same quality anywhere else (ANTT, Conv. Sant. Trindade de Lisboa, L. 105: fls. 114-114v). These investments are, above all, a reflection of the economic power and connections of the founders.

Likewise, the power and devotion of the founders were reflected in the commissioning of artistic works, such as paintings and sculptures, for the decoration of their chapels. Stone or alabaster images and altarpieces depicting the saints of the chapel's invocation or of the founders' greatest devotion, as well as scenes from the life of Christ, were particularly common. The examples are varied and illustrate the ornamental richness of the chapels of the urban elites in medieval and early modern Portugal. In 1388, Catarina Fernandes had an alabaster image of Santa Maria placed in the chapel she founded with her husband, Lopo Fernandes, in the monastery of S. Francisco of Porto, while Inês Rodrigues de Góis, in 1478, commissioned "huūa imagem de pedra bem lavrada de Sancta Maria" ("a well-cut stone image of St Mary") for her chapel in the monastery of S. Francisco of Santarém (ADP, Conv. S. Francisco – Porto, K/20/6-93: fl. 76v and ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 274: fl. 20v). One of the most surprising artistic donations, however, was made by Bárbara Pires de Figueiroa, widow of Afonso Luís Ribeiro, a citizen of Porto, and a member of an important family in the city's urban patriciate (BRITO 1997: 104). This widow gave the chapel of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, which she established in 1568 in the church of S. Pedro de Miragaia (Porto), an altarpiece depicting the Descent from the Cross and the Resurrection, which she had commissioned in Flanders (ANTT, Arq. do Arq., Livs. Registo, L. 54: fl. 80).

While all these objects reflected the economic and social power of the founders to some degree, other elements made it possible for any observer to quickly identify the commissioners of the chapel and/or tomb, as well as their association with prestigious families. In this sense, the arms of the lineage, other heraldic signs, and inscriptions or epitaphs conveyed a very clear message. It was thus common for founders to have their coat of arms visi-

bly placed in chapels, as was the case with Nuno Martins da Silveira, whose arms topped the arch through which one entered the chapel and were also displayed next to his tomb (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 276: fl. 153v).

A common practise was for such heraldic representations – displayed in one of the most emblematic and important places for the family – to serve as a "correct" reference model for any other uses that the chapel's administrators had to make of the lineage's coat of arms (ROSA 1995: 110 and 114-115). Inscriptions could have a similar function, in part, by identifying the founder of the chapel and possibly his family origins. They could also include the profession, social status, or even notable achievements. In 1572, Isidro de Almeida, a military man who specialised in mines and fires, had a tomb made for himself in the chapel he was then establishing in the convent of S. Bento de Campolide (Lisbon), on which he would have inscribed his name, the "good fortune" he had at the siege of Mazagan (1562) and his current journey in Africa (ANTT, Fam. Gama Lobo Salema, cx. 16, pt. 129: fls. 5-5v)[10]. This was a slightly more original way of signalling the founder's social importance, standing out among his peers for his feats of arms.

All these objects, works of art and heraldic signs were surrounded by sumptuous architecture to some degree, another factor that revealed the status of those who commissioned it. Naturally, as time moves on, documentary descriptions become more generous, revealing further artistic details, in some cases of great richness. First, iron (or wooden) railings and doors became common in the Middle Ages. Their function was to close off the chapel and, consequently, separate it from the rest of the church, demarcating a private space within a public arena, as also observed in medieval English parish churches (BURGESS 2011: 100). This was previously shown as the aim of Lourenço Martins do Avelar, in the fourteenth century, when he joined his chapel to those of his grandfather and great-grandfather, enclosing them with iron bars (ANTT, Feitos da Coroa, NA 274: fl. 68v). Likewise, in 1530, Lopo Soares, member of the King's Council, had the wooden railings that surrounded his parents' graves and the place where he and his heirs would be buried, in the convent of Nossa Senhora da Graça in Lisbon, replaced with iron, referring several times to their function of protecting and delimiting the space (ANTT, Hosp. São José, L. 153: fls. 26-27). This chapel also had other important architectural details: it was vaulted and its choir was decorated inside and out. These features can be found in other examples, to which can be added the tribunes with small windows in the chapel of Duarte de

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[10] On Isidro de Almeida, see NÓVOA 2016: 149-150.

Albuquerque Coelho, governor of Pernambuco, and Joana de Castro, in the convent of Santíssima Trindade in Lisbon (1625) (ANTT, Conv. Sant. Trindade de Lisboa, L. 104: fls. 107v-108v). This couple was, in fact, quite meticulous in describing the architecture of their chapel, located in the convent's main chapel, to the extent that they appointed Pedro Nunes Tinoco, the royal architect, to carry out the work (ANTT, Conv. Sant. Trindade de Lisboa, L. 104: fl. 109v). This reference fully demonstrates the social power and influence they enjoyed at court and in the city of Lisbon in the first decades of the seventeenth century, serving as a paradigm of the urban elites of the Ancien Régime and the role their chapels played in their processes of ascension and social affirmation.

Conclusion

Between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, the chapels founded by members of the urban elite in the cities of Évora, Lisbon, Porto, and Santarém were part of these individuals' strategies for social advancement and promotion. Coming from the groups that held economic and political power in the communities where they were based, they all aspired to achieve nobility or at least maintain the status they had achieved thanks to their own actions or those of their ancestors. At this juncture, the foundation of a chapel could contribute to the realisation of these goals, becoming a material manifestation of their career and social position.

These institutions also played a fundamental role in building family identity, which reinforced the exercise and control of power. For this reason, the founders sought to connect, beyond death, with their ancestors, who would have guaranteed or contributed to the social and economic promotion of their lineage. The evocation of parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and other relatives through the suffrage of their souls – together with that of the founder – served this purpose, demonstrating that the founder stood at the intersection of past memory and the organisation of the present and future. For various reasons, however, the founder may choose to break with their antecedents and only suffrage their own soul and that of their nuclear family, starting a new cycle of preparing for the present and the future. The importance of the family could also be seen in the physical dimension of the chapels, which often became burial places for their members, both ascendant and descendant. It was, above all, in this dimension that the power of the founders was projected, visible in the people with whom they chose to spend

eternity, in the heraldic representation, in the ornamentation and architecture of the space.

In this sense, analysing the family chapels founded by Portuguese urban elites in the medieval and modern periods shows that the wealthiest social groups used these institutions to affirm their lineage and the power and social influence they enjoyed, by evoking their ancestors, affirming their present and future family, and investing in ornaments, architecture, and identity symbols. All these elements reflected the founders' awareness of their economic, political, and social power and the prominent place they and their lineage occupied within the urban societies of which they were a part.

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