

## THE NOBLE HOUSE IN BARCELONA AND LISBON IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> AND 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES.

ARCHITECTURE MASTER'S DEGREE. EXTENDED ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS PRESENTED TO INSTITUTO SUPERIOR TÉCNICO.

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In Barcelona, the first urban residences of nobles and merchants began to appear in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, almost located in the richest roads of the city, the *carrer de Montcada*, the *carrer Ample* and, later, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Rambla. Over time, this architectural typology will receive and reflect several influences, but mostly the Italian Renaissance and the French influences, the last one since the entrance of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite all the information coming from the exterior, the noble house in Barcelona is drawn according to the typological model of the Mediterranean house, mainly characterized by the central patio.

The path taken by noble urban house of Lisbon is very different from the previous one and there isn't a defined typological model. However, there is another type of conditions that, in one way or another, will eventually characterize these buildings. Despite all the differences, there are some things in common in both cities.

The case studies selection was made according to some basic criteria. The answer of each building to the theme and its relevance in the urban context were two of the adopted criteria. Another one is the importance of the building for the history of the city. A crucial point was, undoubtedly, the available information about each building, either written information, or drawn, allowing to take the highest knowledge out of it. It was also considered the conservation of the buildings, given that some of them were modified or even destroyed.

In this way, the case studies in Barcelona are arranged in two periods: the palaces of the transition between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and the palaces of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the first group are the Dalmases palace, in *carrer de Montcada*, the Mercader palace and the Comte de Fonollar, in *carrer de Portaferrissa*. The palaces of the latest period are the Moxó; the Sessa-Larrard, in *carrer Ample*, and the palaces of Virreina, March and Moja, all in Rambla.

In Lisbon, the case studies are more scattered. They are the palaces of Braço de Prata, in Santa Apolonia, Conde de Redondo in Santa Marta and Azurara, in Portas do Sol, all belonging to the first analyzed period. Of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century are the palaces of Porto Covo, in Lapa, Quintela and Manteigueiro, in Chiado. In Lisbon it also gets real expression the period between the previous two: the "joanino" period, in this way, the palaces of Barbacena and Lavradio, both in Campo de Santa Clara, were also studied.

The analysis presented in this work will address over the architectural options that most strongly characterize (and distinguish) the noble house in both cities: the typology of building, the characterization of the facades, the patio and the main staircase of the house, the most important elements of this constructions. Finally, the comparison will be established in order to realize in what way the noble urban architecture in these two cities as distant and different as Barcelona and Lisbon can be intersected.

## 1. THE LOCALIZATION OF THE NOBLE HOUSE

Some of Barcelona's palatial heritage was built from the ground in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; however, it's usual to find elder buildings that have been adapted to the requirements of *new architectures*.

In this city, a significant number of the examples of this typology are built in very specific areas of the city. Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century the most desired place for the construction of this houses was the *carrer de Montcada*, where are still found several examples of noble architecture of the city, some of them are still the gothic "caserones", the first noble houses of the city. From the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is notorious the curiosity about the new ways and techniques, as well as the knowledge of works of the architects from France, Italy or Madrid. In this period, the most wanted location for the construction was Rambla.

The noble house of Barcelona is built according to a specific typological model. In Lisbon, there is not a specific model; the noble house is marked by other sorts of conditions highlighting, amongst them, the "rightness between architectural expression and social status of the owner"<sup>1</sup>. Even though these conditions aren't reflected in the organization of the plan, they will eventually constrain the expression of the facades.

In Lisbon there are not some specific areas for the palatial construction, however, in some cases, these buildings take an important role in the city growth. At the time of the Restauração (1640), the Portuguese author José Sarmiento de Matos points some "aristocratic agglomeration" in the occidental hills of the city: the hills of the Trindade, of Carmo and São Francisco (MATOS: 1997, p.137). Even in the same century, the nobility also begins to settle in the major access roads to the city, punctuated by several 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries' palaces.

## 2. THE IMPLANTATION AND TYPOLOGY

None of the cities seems to have a rule suggesting the way these buildings are included in them, however, topographical issues appear as a strong constraint to the architectural options adopted and, actually, they will take considerably different importance in both cities. After all, some implantation solutions seem to be more consensual but, in one way or another, it goes towards to make the building stand of their surroundings. Thus, the most common solution in the two cities is the implantation in gavetos, which, by itself, guarantees greater visibility to the construction.

It is also common to align the building's facade with the other constructions of the street, as it happens in the Dalmaes and March palaces, however, while the first one is in a narrow street, the second relies on the generous width of the Rambla. From the case studies, what's clear is that all of the buildings search for anyways to get greater visibility, like the Moxó and Lavradio palaces, both of them facing a square.

It might be said that what most distinguishes this housing typology in the two cities is their plans and its inner organization, directly conditioned by the location of the building – whichever it's in the city center or on an expansion area.

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<sup>1</sup> "De assinalar também que o problema da (...) justeza entre a expressão arquitetónica e o estatuto social do proprietário têm raízes muito profundas na História da Arquitectura (...)" (FERRÃO: 1994, p.241).

"The typological scheme of Barcelona's noble urban house of this period is heir of the Gothic tradition and Catalan Renaissance"<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, this "model" is much engrained and has a very unique design, which is born from the Mediterranean house with the patio and fits the modern city.

As it was said, in Lisbon, the noble house didn't find its own typology, thus it appears quite diverse plans and it will be bigger the distinction between the buildings inside and outside the city walls. In the first case, the plan tends to be less regular and more compact. When it comes to palaces built beyond the perimeter of the medieval wall, the plans tend to spread more on the ground and take many different forms.

In Barcelona, the regular plans tend to draw regular volumes, only interrupted by the noble patio. Again, in Lisbon, the situation is not so linear, and the larger variety of plans will, naturally, signify a greater variety of volumes.

### 3. CHARACTERIZATION OF THE FACADES

#### THE FACADES OF THE TRANSITION BETWEEN THE 17<sup>TH</sup> AND 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

In Barcelona, these facades will get marked by some stiffness, as exemplified by the Dalmases palace. The same critic may be extended to the facades of the same period in Lisbon, which are defined by the severity of their expression, visible, for example, in the Conde de Redondo palace.

Along the length of these facades, in Lisbon, the assumed horizontality line up all the openings according to regular metrics and, in fact, as noted by João Vieira Caldas, "it's the regularity and uniformity of this facades that will distinguish both the noble houses from which they grew up from the later baroque palaces of the *joanino* style"<sup>3</sup>.

#### THE "JOANINO" FACADES

The "joanino" is the period corresponding roughly to the reign of king João V (1707-1750) and, obviously, it only gains expression in the Portuguese buildings. In this period it's greater the relationship between the building and the city and, therefore, the care about the external appearance. Thus, and thinking on the palace of Lavradio, in Campo de Santa Clara, José Sarmiento Matos said that "it's already forgotten the intimacy of the first palaces built earlier in the city"<sup>4</sup>.

In baroque palaces the regularity and symmetry of the facades are a real concern and, from now on, they are designed along an axis that marks its center. The exuberance of these facades is the element that will distinguish them amongst all the other palaces in Lisbon.

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<sup>2</sup> "(...) podem dir que l'esquema tipològic de les cases senyoriais del segle XVII és hereu de la tradició gòtica e renaixentista" (TRIADÓ: 1984, p.22).

<sup>3</sup> "São as fachadas regradas e uniformes destes palácios que os distinguem tanto das casas nobres que os antecederam, ou a partir das quais cresceram, como dos posteriores palácios barrocos joaninos" (CALDAS: 2014).

<sup>4</sup> "Estamos já bem longe do intimismo escondido dos primeiros palácios erguidos na cidade" (MATOS: 1997, p.44).

## THE FACADES OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

In Barcelona, the noble house of this period is characterized by the coexistence of the latest Baroque buildings and those that reflect the neoclassical architecture that was entering the city at the time. The first group preserves the stonework, very particular of the period, seen in the Virreina palace; the other group reflects the influences that came from abroad, mainly seen by the recovery of some classic elements, like it happens in the March palace.

In Lisbon, this period, corresponding to “Reconstrução”, is marked by some eclecticism and simultaneously arises the late-baroque and the neoclassical palaces such as the Manteigueiro and Quintela.

### 3.1. THE MAIN SECTION OF THE FACADE AND THE NOBLE ENTRANCE

Despite the differences in the architecture of these two cities, some parallels can be seen throughout their facades. In the palaces of the transition between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, in none of the cities is noticed the existence of a main section on the facade. In Barcelona there is the intention of pointing out the regularity of the elevations, like it had been happening in Lisbon where, since the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the elevations were adopting "solutions characterized by the symmetry, creating composition axes (...)"<sup>5</sup>.

Indeed, it's curious to verify that in both cities the marking of the central section of the facade still doesn't appear in the first period considered, it will only come in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as reflected in the palace of Lavradio, an example of the Baroque style. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the two cities, the search for symmetry will place the main body of the facade on its center.

Regarding the noble portals, in the first period considered, in the palaces of the centuries transition, "if there are noble portals in the facade, they are the only elements that present a more elaborate and distinctive draw"<sup>6</sup> a valid statement to the city of Lisbon, but also to Barcelona.

In the “joanino” period, the connection between the noble portal and the upper balcony was stated and, indeed, in the palaces of the post-earthquake, this element will continue characterizing and distinguishing this typology and acquire greater dimensions and erudition.

### 3.2. THE NOBLE FLOOR

In all case studies it's mandatory to emphasize the relevance of the noble floor, systematically illuminated by balconies varying, in both cities, its position on the facade. In Barcelona it's bigger the rigidity regarding this aspect and the main floor only occupies the level above the noble portal, the first floor. Actually, in Lisbon, the position of this floor is really flexible.

The main floor gets the most winning expression on the facade. In Barcelona, in the palaces of the transition between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries this level gets more relevance only because of the higher ceiling and because of the bigger balconies. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century palaces, for instance in the palaces of the Rambla, also contribute to the

<sup>5</sup> “Acompanhando as transformações ao nível das planimetrias, os alçados tenderam também para soluções mais marcadas pelas regras da simetria, criando eixos de composição (...)” (FERRÃO: 1994, p.244).

<sup>6</sup> “Os portais, quando existem, são os únicos elementos das fachadas que apresentam um desenho mais elaborado e distintivo” (CALDAS: 2014).

greatest highlight of this floor the decoration of the balcony over the noble portal and the wrought-iron work of his guard. Indeed, in the Lisbon noble house the same resources were adopted and, although they go dissipating over the periods in study, it never ceases to be clear the hierarchy amongst the various levels of the building.

### 3.3. THE OTHER FLOORS

In both cities is similar the number of floors this typology takes, as well as the expression that each one of them gets in the facades. In Barcelona, the facades always include the ground level, noble floor and second floor; the expression of the *entresol* and the attic, is not mandatory in Barcelona. In the Portuguese case there may be more than one secondary level and, as stated above, it can also change the position of the noble floor, one of the leading differences occurring in both cities. As mentioned, while in Barcelona the noble floor stands steadily on the level above the noble portal, in Lisbon, this level is usually separated from the ground floor by, at least, one secondary level.

In both cities the ground level is marked by the presence of the noble portal, flanked by other portals or windows. In Barcelona, in some cases, the basement of the building can hide the presence of the *entresol*, a low floor that only gets expression in the facade in two cases from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Virreina and Sessa palaces. In Lisbon, the presence of this floor – known by *sobreloja* – is only seen in the Manteigueiro palace.

In both cities it's different the treatment of the secondary floor. In Barcelona this level is always above the main floor, and it keeps being illuminated by balconies, even though their dimensions are smaller. In Lisbon it can be adopted either the balconies or the current windows, but it always comes clear the hierarchy between all the floors. In Lisbon, the secondary floor (or floors) tends to put itself under the main floor. If in an initial period this floor was illuminated by simple windows (less expressive), from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, these windows can be decorated with corbels that will connect and support the upper balconies. As stated, in Lisbon, since the "joanino" period the hierarchy between the secondary level and the main floor tends to be reduced, and the windows that illuminated this floor before, can now give rise to balconies, increasing the importance of this level and slightly attenuating the hierarchy on the facade, as exemplified by the Barbacena palace.

### 3.4. DECORATION OF THE FACADES

These facades and their ornamentations aren't only the reflex of the time, but also the way they were built and, although the facades of Barcelona can express greater exuberance or wealth, the architectural quality of the facades of the noble urban house in Lisbon is unquestionable.

#### 4. FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Once transposed the noble portal, the conceptual differences between the noble houses in Barcelona and in Lisbon are seen again. In one way or another, in both cities, there is a relation between the main entrance and the staircase, a set that will be named here by "vestibular space".

The patio of the Barcelona's noble house takes a key role in the design and organization of the entire plan. It tends to be aligned with the center of the facade, in order to ensure the visual communication and symmetry among all these elements, which are the most characterizing and significant in the whole house.

As in the Catalan model, the staircase is developed along two flight of stairs orthogonally disposed, leaning on two sides of the patio. Although it never loses its original character, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is notorious the evolution of the "vestibular space". If in an early stage its stiffness was only contradicted by the lightness given by the staircase and its supporting elements, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, this space gets more monumentality and the patios get more diverse plans.

In Lisbon, once again, the lack of a typological model brings several architectural solutions to the "vestibular space" of the noble house, which can both have a patio, in a slight resemblance to the Barcelona's noble house, or it may be an interior space, completely enclosed.

In the palaces built in Lisbon in the transition between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the main element of the "vestibular space" is a small atrium, sometimes irregular, whose size in the plan is quite variable. Indeed, since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, but with greater expression in the "joanino" period, the patio is gradually replaced by an interior space, and now is bigger the space it takes on the building's plan. Once again, in Lisbon, is very variable the design and development of the main staircase in these houses. Contrasting to what was happening in Barcelona, here is not required the permanent visual communication between the main hall and the staircase, although both of them are always associated.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the staircase takes many different shapes. Its monumentality is not imperative, it depends on the size and the volume that the structure takes in the building's plan. In the "joanina" noble house, and thereafter, the staircase achieves a considerable importance in the building, either by the size or by the decoration that, together, provide real monumentality to the "vestibular space" as it happens in the Lavradio palace. In the later palaces, of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, this monumentality tends to increase, as in the Manteigueiro palace.

Unlike Barcelona, in Lisbon, the position of the staircase in the palace's plan is quite variable. This structure can either lean on some facade, like in the Braço de Prata palace, or it can occupy the center of the building, such as in the Manteigueiro palace.

Both in Barcelona and Lisbon with the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it also comes the need to "reinvent" the "vestibular space" and to give it a greater monumentality, especially to the staircase, whose design gets even more expression. This contrast is notorious in Barcelona, due to the modifications in the ingrained model of the Catalan noble house, but it is even greater in Lisbon, when we compare the "vestibular space" of the 17<sup>th</sup> century houses with the ones of the post-earthquake palaces.

## 4.1. INTERIOR SPACES AND THE NOBLE FLOOR

In the two cities it's clear the direct relation between the composition of the facade and the organization of the internal space, which can be considered an approaching point on their noble houses.

Over the time, with the greater refinement in the design of the facades and the preference for their symmetry, there is an attempt to carry this symmetry into the inner space, especially for the noble rooms in the main facade.

### THE RELATION BETWEEN THE "VESTIBULAR SPACE" AND THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The "vestibular space" of Barcelona's noble house is crucial to the organization of the whole interior space. Indeed, as said above, in Lisbon, the patio (when exists) doesn't acquire such a significant influence on the interior organization of the house. This organization is directly related to the conformation of the house plan. In Lisbon, the elongated plans will correspond to a "linear" distribution, as in the Porto Covo palace where, following the length of the facade, the noble rooms turn back to the main facade and the more private rooms face the garden.

As mentioned, with the entry of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in Lisbon, the vestibule loses some importance in the design and organization of interior space, a situation that will keep going on in every case study of 18<sup>th</sup> century Lisbon.

### FROM THE STAIRCASE TO THE MAIN SALON

The main floor of all this palaces is where we invariably find the richest and the most important spaces of the house. Once again, as the result of the "Catalan model", the internal layout of the Barcelona's noble house follows a very typed scheme, that is slightly modified in each studied building. According to this model, from the top of the staircase, the way to the main salon is drawn by adjoining reception rooms, usually two.

Due to the absence of corridors, rooms follow-on, reducing their independence and privacy, a tendency that is just beginning to be contradicted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, for example, in the Virreina palace, where a "ring" appears around the central patio ensuring the distribution. Also in March palace arises some new features, such as the "sala vaga", an area without a specific function but that, in this case, leads to the main salon.

Actually, in Lisbon, there are countless conceptions of the plan. In most of these palaces, the first room at the top of the staircase gains more dignity, as it happens in the Lavradio palace, where this room gets the quality of a distributor space and ensures the access to the main salon, which is contiguous. In fact, this room doesn't exist in most of the case studies. A common solution is to place the main salon as the first space at the top of the staircase, only crossing a small vestibule, like in the Azurara palace.

### THE OTHER FLOORS

The remaining floors of these buildings have almost the same functions in both cities. While the ground floor hosts, essentially, the stables, the attic was reserved for the bedrooms of employees.

In Barcelona, during the studied period, the secondary floor keeps service functions. In Lisbon, since the "joanino" period, this level gains greater evidence on the facade, which is transposed into the building's interior. From this

period on, this floor also receives some noble spaces, like it happens in the Lavradio palace, where the secondary floor incorporated the library, the dining room and some family bedrooms.

In both cities, the introduction of the corridor will only happen in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, allowing greater independence of each one of the rooms, like in the Virreina and Porto Covo palaces.

Although it isn't a central issue in this study, it was also analyzed the location (or existence) of the dining room and kitchen in the noble urban house of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In both cities, this last space, reserved specifically for this function, only appears by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In Barcelona, the dining room tends to be placed near the noble patio. Next to this room, or close to it, is a small kitchen, associated with a service staircase that communicates with the principal kitchen of the house, normally installed on ground floor. In Lisbon, the dining room can be disposed either facing the street or the garden, on the back of the building.

In none of the case studies can be said that there is a real relation between the location of the dining room, in the noble floor, and the leading kitchen, in the ground floor. However, in every case there is a service staircase, next to these spaces, connecting these two levels.

Regarding to all of the main spaces, in Barcelona, all of them have vaults and their walls are fully painted. In Lisbon this spaces are invariably marked by the typical Portuguese tiles, the ornamental element that most enriches this houses' interiors.

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