

# The Chapel of St John the Baptist in the Church of São Roque

**THE COMMISSION, THE BUILDING, THE COLLECTIONS**

Edited by TERESA LEONOR M. VALE

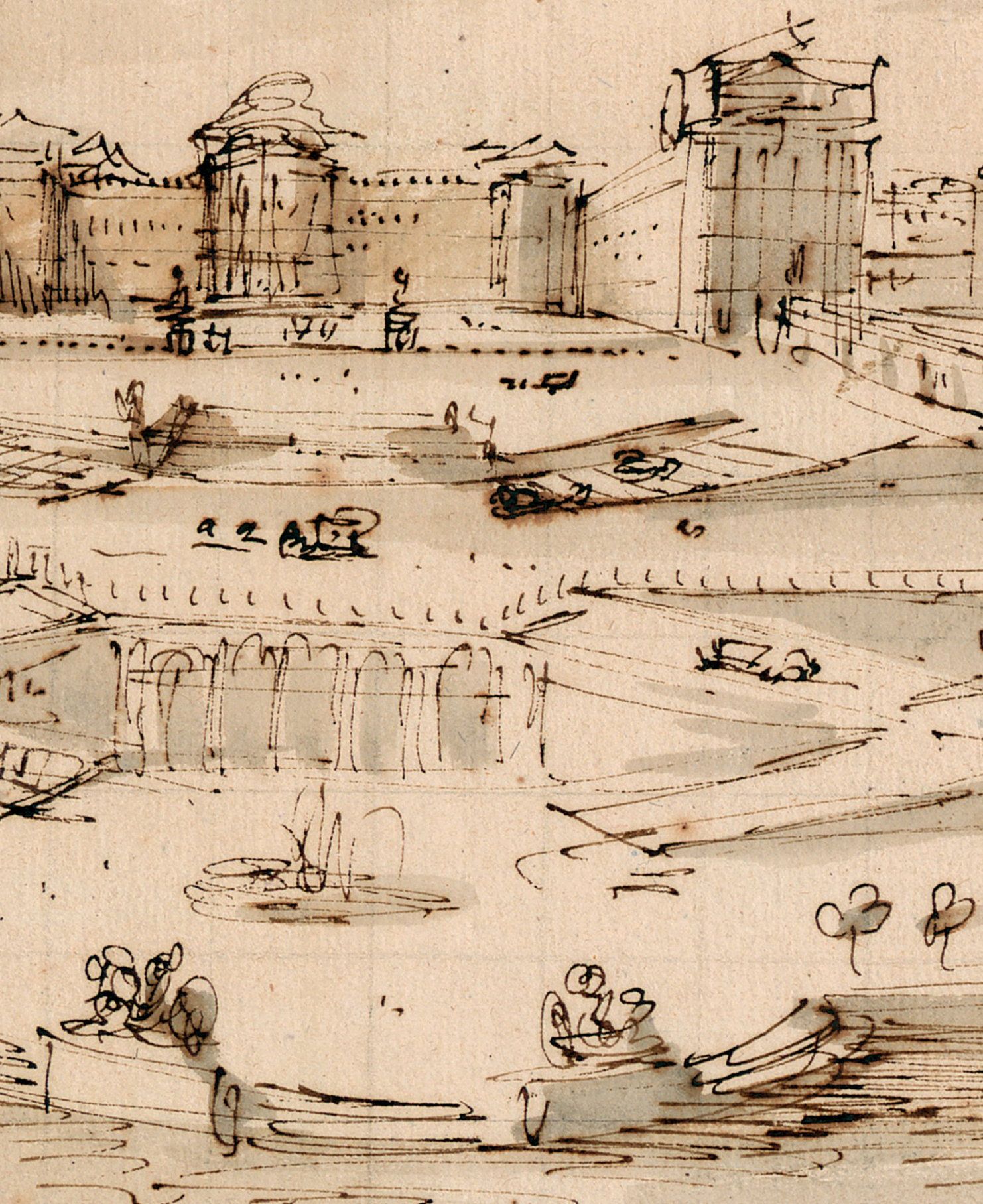
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PART I  
THE COMMISSION

# A chapel for the king of Portugal: the controversial history of a truly prodigious commission

**António Filipe Pimentel**

## 1. History, legend and historiography

The story of the Chapel of St John the Baptist began in 1742 with the following message, sent to the Portuguese ambassador in Rome: ‘His Majesty desires that a design be made as soon as may be, by the finest architect, who is presently to be found in Rome’<sup>1</sup> and culminated in 1747 when the work itself was shipped, together with its treasure.<sup>2</sup> It was recognised at an early date that this was an artistic ensemble of unquestionable value,<sup>3</sup> but despite that its history was soon obscured by legend based on the references contained in Brother Cláudio da Conceição’s *Gabinete Histórico* (Cabinet of Historical Curiosities) dating from the early nineteenth century.

According to Brother Cláudio, when the monarch visited the old Jesuit church (fig. 1) he is said to have noticed the contrast between the luxury displayed in most of the chapels and the impoverished appearance of that dedicated to St John the

pp. 14–15  
Sketch for the Royal Palace  
and Patriarchal Church of  
Lisbon  
Filippo Juvarra, 1719  
(See fig. 5)



**Fig. 1**  
Church of São Roque  
(general view)





**Fig. 2**  
**Allegory of King John V**  
**(St John the Baptist)**  
 Charles de Rochefort  
 (engrav.), Pierre-Antoine  
 Quillard (inv.) [author  
 of original drawing], engrav.  
 Lisbon, 1732  
 Etching, black and white  
 Biblioteca Nacional de  
 Portugal [National Library  
 of Portugal], Lisbon  
 (ref. E.693A)

Baptist. As this was his own patron saint, the king apparently decided to take it under his direct care and protection. Once the relevant maquette had been made and approved, the design was executed, assembled and consecrated in Rome, with a mass celebrated in the chapel by the pope himself. It was then dismantled and sent to Portugal, where it was erected on the site intended for it and unveiled to the public for the first time in 1751 – too late for John V, who had died almost six months before (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup>

The chapel has excited admiration ever since, not only for its inimitable luxury and the mastery of its execution<sup>5</sup> but because it is prized as a ‘creation unique in the context of Portuguese art’,<sup>6</sup> ‘a monument that foreshadows Neoclassicism’<sup>7</sup> or even a

thoroughgoing illustration of the aesthetic clash between Portugal’s conservative, traditional baroque style and the reforming, classicising principles that dominated artistic creation in Rome at that time.<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, in fact, the Chapel of St John the Baptist has once more come to receive renewed critical attention.

## 2. Politics, diplomacy and devotion

The pious account given by Brother Cláudio, however, does not stand up to critical reading. It contains numerous controversial elements, none more so than the one that constitutes the very bedrock of the narrative: the fact that the chapel was supposedly dedicated to the monarch’s patron saint.<sup>9</sup> This was hardly going to escape the notice of the chapel’s first great historian, Sousa Viterbo, and it is in fact quite clear from the documentation that the chapel was dedicated to the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> Given this, it seems clear that associating the chapel with the king’s miraculous namesake was the result of a royal decree and done with a view to enhancing the king’s prestige – much as his grandfather Manuel I had set out to do two centuries earlier.<sup>11</sup>

In fact this metaphorical allusion to the sovereign was to form part of a deliberate process of exalting royalty itself, of which the architectural design of the chancel of the Royal Basilica of Mafra<sup>12</sup> (figs 3 and 4) also constituted a fundamental stage. With this in mind we must therefore view the complex process of constructing this sumptuous chapel, and the choices made in doing so, in a different light.

One fact, nonetheless, seems beyond question today: the traditional insistence that this was a ‘creation unique in the context of Portuguese art’<sup>13</sup> is wrong. In reality, the chapel was part of a larger undertaking at the epicentre of the symbolic and ideological system under the reign of John V: the Patriarchal Basilica established in 1716 and centred on the royal chapel in the palace of Ribeira. What is known today of this



great undertaking demands – in the light of their aesthetic similarity<sup>14</sup> and the vastly greater scale of the latter – that the Chapel of St John the Baptist be recognised as constituting an appendix or subordinate phase<sup>15</sup> of the Patriarchal Basilica.

The first patriarch of Lisbon himself, Tomás de Almeida – an admitted intellectual disciple of the Jesuit fathers<sup>16</sup> – sought to recreate in Lisbon the same ceremonial link as that established in Rome between Il Gesù (the central church of the Jesuit Order) and the Papal Basilica, an initiative of obvious significance given the ideological context in which he consecrated his own Lisbon jurisdiction under the epithet of the ‘Rome of the West’.

The commissions involved in both projects combined both political and liturgical business dealings, running in parallel in the Eternal City via the same diplomatic channels and addressed to the same circle of artists. And they were intended for the same purpose: for the Patriarchal Basilica project, under the direction of João Frederico Ludovice.<sup>17</sup> Nicola Salvi and Luigi Vanvitelli, the Roman architects who designed the chapel, were also responsible for the commissions intended for the patriarchate; here too the process was marked by the same repeated episodes of

**Fig. 3**  
Royal Palace of Mafra  
(View of the façade)





**Fig. 4**  
High altar of the Royal  
Basilica of Mafra

criticism and refusal of designs sent from Rome that were characteristic of the process of work on the chapel: a very particular ‘dialogue in design’ between Lisbon and the Papal city.<sup>18</sup>

The choice of Rome for this commission was doubtless influenced by its centre-stage position in international diplomacy, particularly with regard to the Catholic powers. From the very first this city played a central role in the efforts invested abroad in terms of diplomacy under the Aviz or Johannine dynasty and, consequently, in diplomacy in artistic spheres as well. This investment was reflected in the importation of works of art and of artists involved in domestic projects, which were swiftly and unequivocally positioned as a tool of national affirmation and propaganda.<sup>19</sup> Relationships – and the resulting tensions – of a strictly political and diplomatic nature were thus inextricably intertwined with more specifically cultural and artistic relations.<sup>20</sup>

It is no coincidence that the triple commission (the Patriarchal Basilica, the Chapel of St John the Baptist and its treasure<sup>21</sup>) was

set in motion at the time when the Portuguese sovereigns were granted the title of *Majestade Fidelíssima* (Most Faithful Majesty), and, particularly, just when rumours were spreading of a worsening decline in the income of the Portuguese Crown – rumours that it was becoming necessary to nip in the bud in Rome, the central forum of international diplomacy.

In this context, it is very likely that the decision to commission this fabulous chapel from the same workshops and with the same scheduling and administrative oversight as the impressive aesthetic reform of the Patriarchal Basilica, did indeed constitute a *programa anexo*, an appendix or subordinate scheme intended to reinforce the political and diplomatic effect so ardently desired by the government of John V: that of equipping the Lisbon court with a liturgical setting to match their ambitions, and at the same time to provide international affirmation of the status of the Portuguese Crown, aiming to make such a display of unlimited financial capacity as to dispel all doubt.

This, then, is the historical context – the intersection of interests and events – against whose backdrop an explanation can be found not only for the unique,

complex and indeed quarrelsome process that surrounded the chapel's execution in Lisbon and in Rome, but also for the fact that this little 'Capella de Mosaico, o melhor que fosse possível' (chapel of mosaic, the best that may be possible) was transformed into an axis about which a veritable constellation of treasures, of gold, silver, jewellery, vestments and liturgical accoutrements, comprised 'one of the most important museums of the Italian decorative arts of the age'.<sup>22</sup>

### **3. From the Patriarchal Basilica to the Royal Chapel of St John the Baptist**

For the reasons referred to above, it is important to trace the process whereby the royal chapel was transformed during the later elevation of the church to collegiate status in 1710 and to Patriarchal Basilica in 1716, together with the great transformation that was to culminate in 1746 in its re-consecration.

In a country where social status was measured by ecclesiastical standards, in fact, the spectacle of the court – whose actors had to perform their role in a physical setting that was itself without any grandiose proportions – could not resist appropriating liturgical pomp for its own benefit in a process that was facilitated by the obvious affinities between religious and courtly ceremony.<sup>23</sup> The staging of great religious ceremonies would thus enable the monarch to conduct the daily life of the court in brilliant style, without having to make too many concessions to the aristocracy – while at the same time ensuring the allegiance of a church flattered by its royal connection even as it was increasingly subordinated to royalist policies.

Indeed, it was in the dramatic context of the restoration of independence in 1640, and the Gallicanist theories that agitated the French Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the possibility was first raised in Portugal of organising the national ecclesiastical hierarchy in a way that was administratively independent of Rome's pastoral authority. The intention was to place the Portuguese Church under the authority of a patriarch, subordinate to the Apostolic See only in matters of dogma and moral questions.<sup>24</sup> Half a century later, the issue arose again – now in the context of reinforcing the absolute authority of the monarch. The Patriarchal Basilica was established in the royal chapel of the palace of Ribeira and placed under the authority of the patriarch, effectively endowing the new capital city of West Lisbon with the religious apparatus of a miniature version of the Vatican.<sup>25</sup> The years just prior to this had not been particularly conducive to grandiose endeavours, however. Portuguese involvement in the Spanish War of Succession and all the attendant economic difficulties and social instability this brought in its wake had created permanent obstacles to the monarch's cherished re-building plans, and it is probable that the reforms carried out suffered from a lack of coordination imposed by the circumstances.

This process proved beneficial to the concurrent project of works at the convent of Mafra built under Ludovice's direction: the project was launched in the years in which the religious status of the royal chapel was elevated, and by 1721–22



the convent underwent a radical reconfiguration, quadrupling the built-up area to create an unusual synthesis of royal palace, royal basilica, a pantheon for the monarchical dynasty, a convent, college and library. Here, the very architecture of royal power as John V was to shape it was realised in concrete form, embracing both secular and ecclesiastical elements in a harmonic and original synthesis.<sup>26</sup>

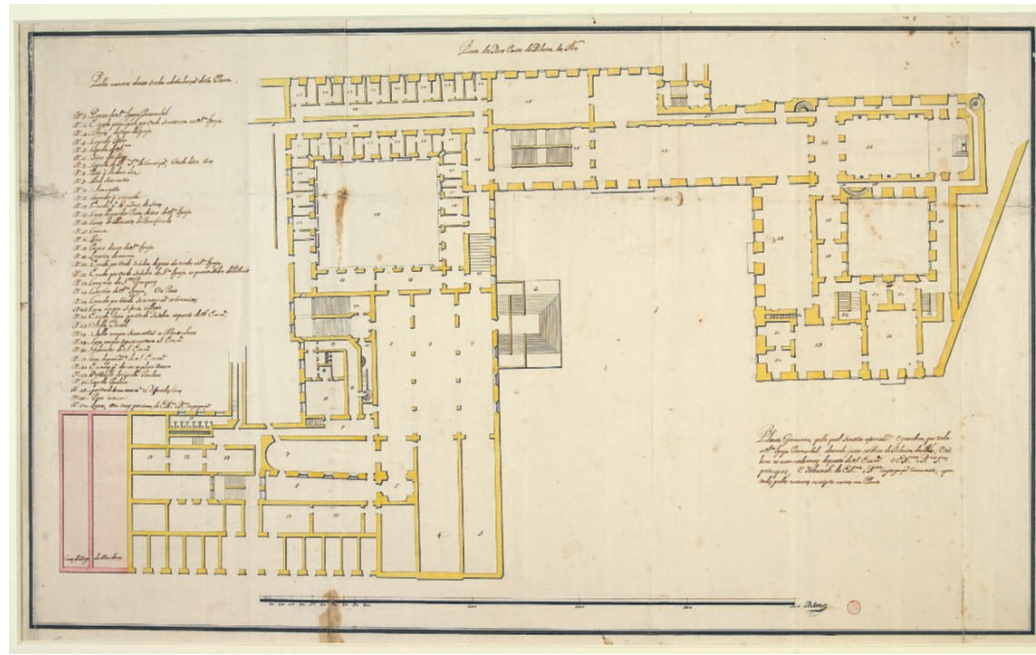
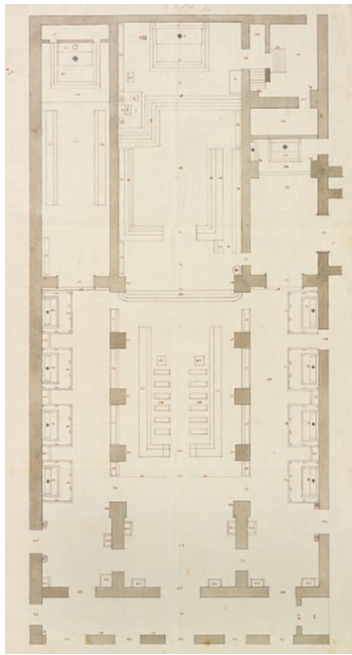
After the failure of Filippo Juvarra's plans for a sumptuous royal residence to be erected on the Tagus – designed with high theatricality, surrounded by magnificent gardens and encompassing, in a single architectural complex, both the patriarchal see and the residence of the metropolitan prelate – the monarch returned his attentions to the palace of Ribeira. Here, in the years that followed, the reforms took on new life and energy, drawing between 1728 and 1732 on the collaboration of another Italian architect: Antonio Canevari (fig. 5).<sup>27</sup>

In 1729 Mafra would once again occupy the sovereign's attention with the aim of proceeding, in October of the following year, to its consecration. Once this had been achieved, however, the frenzy of building work on this great monument ebbed and, little by little, the palace of Ribeira – which was, after all, the true centre of political life and served to represent the country – once again became the focus of the king's energies. Until the end of his reign, the royal residence on the Largo da Patriarcal continued to be embellished with new additions, culminating in 1749 with the apartments of the princess of Beira and her sisters (overseen by Ludovice alone after Antonio Canevari returned to Rome in the middle of 1732).

The two floors that offer a record of the patriarchal building project – the only surviving testimony of the extensive remodelling carried out in this area of the palace (figs 6 and 7)<sup>28</sup> – show that the body of the old church would have remained

**Fig. 5**  
Sketch for the Royal  
Palace and Patriarchal  
Church of Lisbon  
Filippo Juvarra, 1719  
Pen-and-ink drawing  
in brown ink,  
pencil quadriculation  
Palazzo Madama – Museo  
Civico d'Arte Antica  
[Civic Museum of Ancient  
Art], Turin (inv. 1859/DS,  
vol. 1, f. 96, dr. 157)





essentially unscathed. The projects of work carried out in 1712 and 1713 focused mainly on the chancel, making it possible to incorporate neighbouring buildings and extend the complex of the Patriarchal Basilica. The chancel was extended so far during the first phase of these works that it reached exactly the same length as the nave. The Evangile or ‘gospel side’ chapel on the left was dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament, and the one on the opposite side to the Holy Family; the latter extended only halfway back, leaving room in the rear for the *casa do tesouro* or treasury.

Perpendicular to this and opening directly onto it was the exceptionally rich Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, round which there extended a veritable labyrinth of annexes and sacristies and so on. Here there stood, resplendent, a magnificent statue in silver of the Virgin, commissioned from Giovanni Battista Maini in 1744 in accordance with detailed plans drawn up by Ludovice and dispatched by the king’s secretary, Father João Baptista Carbone.<sup>29</sup> At the opposite end of the church, three doors led to the palace by way of a gallery running round the Chapel Courtyard, and to the apartments of the metropolitan prelate, which were reached by a long staircase. On the Epistle (right-hand) side, another staircase<sup>30</sup> led from the nave to this courtyard on the ground-floor level and to other rooms and annexes on the upper level. The nave on the Evangile or gospel (left-hand) side, in its turn, opened onto the outside by way of the famous staircase of five flights leading to where the new atrium – which in 1719 was still being built – now stood like a vast, modern square; the Patriarchal church square was thus transformed by this access route into the dynamic nucleus of a programme of urban design that sought to bring a whole amalgam of disparate constructions together in an aesthetically coherent project (fig. 8).

**Fig. 6**  
Floor plan of the Patriarchal Basilica (post. 1755)  
Drawing in Indian ink, grey wash  
Biblioteca da Ajuda [‘Assistance’ Library], Lisbon (Ms. 54-XI-38, docs 17 and 17b)

**Fig. 7**  
Floor plan of the First Patriarchal Church  
c. 1775 (?)  
Drawing in Indian ink, washes  
Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal [National Library of Portugal], Lisbon (D. 13R)



**Fig. 8**  
 Ruins of Patriarchal  
 [Church] Square after  
 the Earthquake of 1755  
 Jacques-Philippe Le Bas  
 (engrav.), Miguel Tibério  
 Pedegache Brandão Ivo (dr.),  
 1757  
 Watercolour engraving  
 Museu da Cidade  
 [City Museum], Lisbon  
 (inv. RC. GRA. 0441)



As part of a renewed investment of both money and effort on the architectural and urban development front, the Royal Basilica underwent a systematic cycle of aesthetic renovation that was symbolically crowned by the re-consecration of 1746. To this end a methodical operation was undertaken to send in excess of 320 packing-cases from Rome containing paintings, sculptures, vestments, tapestries, silverware, books and decorative metalwork for the Chapel of São Roque; there were also samples of various types of stone – though the earliest consignments included wooden replicas on a 1:1 scale for the three altars for the basilica of São Pedro.<sup>31</sup> In the event, the hopes of extending the building or erecting a new one were dashed; the renovation of the Patriarchal Basilica focused entirely on systematically transforming its interior, which was fabulously enriched and embellished with regalia and accoutrements obtained from the Eternal City.<sup>32</sup>

The decision to use Roman labour (always working within the guidelines sent from Lisbon) expressed a conscious wish to adopt this method of achieving the most effective outward reflection of the art of the Portuguese court.

Just as in the Chapel of St John the Baptist, tensions arose – most particularly with regard to the involvement of Luigi Vanvitelli in the plans for the new baptistery in the royal chapel,<sup>33</sup> because this crucial element lay at the very heart of the entire project of works and Ludovice, in his role as overall coordinator, jealously reserved for himself the task of defining its conceptual aesthetic and sense of plasticity, determining the architectural direction of the entire undertaking.<sup>34</sup>

Careful analysis of the commissioning of the Chapel of St John the Baptist thus casts an objective light not only on the establishment of this extraordinary enterprise, but also on that of the Patriarchal Basilica, revealing the coherence and indivisibility of the two. ■

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d'ALMEIDA, *A Capella de S. João Baptista erecta na igreja de S. Roque*, Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 1997, p. 105 (1st edition 1900).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> José-Augusto FRANÇA, *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*, Lisbon, Bertrand, 1987, p. 49 (1st edition 1983).

<sup>4</sup> Frei Cláudio da CONCEIÇÃO, *Gabinete Histórico*, vol. XI, Lisbon, Impressão Régia [Royal Press], 1827, pp. 38–42.

<sup>5</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d'ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Maria João Madeira RODRIGUES, *A Capela de S. João Baptista e as suas colecções*, Lisbon, Inapa, 1988, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> José-Augusto FRANÇA, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>8</sup> Paulo Varela GOMES, *A Cultura Arquitectónica e Artística em Portugal no Século XVIII*, Lisbon, Editorial Caminho, 1988, pp. 97 ff.; *idem*, *A Confissão de Cyrillo*, Lisbon, Hiena, 1992, pp. 101 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Frei Cláudio da CONCEIÇÃO, *op. cit.*, vol. XI, pp. 38–42.

<sup>10</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d'ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, p. 12 and note 1, referring to vol. 2 of the work by Father Baltazar Teles, *Chronica da Companhia de Jesus* (pp. 124 ff.), which contains information on the original chapel, its dedication to the Holy Spirit and its founders, who had a crypt or ossuary there.

<sup>11</sup> Paulo PEREIRA, *A Obra Silvestre e a Esfera do Rei, iconologia da arquitectura manuelina na Grande Extremadura*, Coimbra, 1990, especially chs. 3 and 4; Paulo PEREIRA, 'A simbólica manuelina. Razão, celebração, segredo', in *História da Arte Portuguesa*, vol. II, Lisbon, Círculo de Leitores, 1995, pp. 128–36.

<sup>12</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, *Arquitectura e Poder. O Real Edifício de Mafra*, Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 2002, p. 180; *idem*, 'Real Basílica de Mafra: salão de trono e panteão de reis', in *Boletim Cultural*, 93, Mafra, Câmara Municipal [Town Hall], Feb., 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Maria João Madeira RODRIGUES, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, 'Uma jóia em forma de templo: a Capela de São João Baptista', in *Oceanos*, no. 43, Lisbon, Jul./Sept., 2000, pp. 148–63.

<sup>15</sup> Marie-Thérèse MANDROUX-FRANÇA, 'La Patriarchale du Roi Jean V de Portugal', in *Colóquio-Artes*, 2nd series, no. 83, Lisbon, 1989, pp. 34–43; Marie-Thérèse MANDROUX-FRANÇA, 'A Patriarcal do Rei D. João V de Portugal', in *Triunfo do Barroco*, Lisbon, Fundação das Descobertas, 1993, pp. 39–53; Marie-Thérèse MANDROUX-FRANÇA, 'La Patriarcale del Re Giovanni V da Portogallo', in Sandra Vasco ROCCA, Gabriele BORGHINI (dir.), *Giovanni V di Portogallo e la Cultura Romana del suo Tempo (1707–1750)*, Rome, Edizioni Àrgos, 1995, pp. 81–92.

<sup>16</sup> cf. António Filipe PIMENTEL, 'D. Tomás de Almeida (1716–1754)', in C.A. Moreira Carlos AZEVEDO (coord.), *Os Patriarcas de Lisboa*, Lisbon, Centro Cultural do Patriarcado – Aletheia Editores, 2009, pp. 7–22.

<sup>17</sup> Marie-Thérèse MANDROUX-FRANÇA, 'A Patriarcal do Rei D. João V de Portugal', *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 46 ff.

<sup>19</sup> With regard to the significance and extent of the Portuguese Crown's relations with the Eternal City in the first half of the eighteenth century, see the excellent account provided by the above-mentioned work *Giovanni V de Portogallo e la Cultura Romana del suo Tempo*.

<sup>20</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, 'António Canevari e a Arcádia Romana: subsídios para o estudo das relações artísticas Lisboa/Roma no reinado de D. João V', in Teresa Leonor M. VALE (coord.), *Lisboa Barroca e o Barroco de Lisboa*, Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 2007, pp. 31–38.

<sup>21</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, 'Nobre, séria e rica: a encomenda da capela lisboeta de São João Baptista em São Roque e a controvérsia Barroco versus Classicismo', in Sónia Gomes PEREIRA (org.), *Anais do VI Colóquio Luso-Brasileiro de História da Arte*, vol. I, Rio de Janeiro, unnumbered, 2004, p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> José-Augusto FRANÇA, *op. cit.*, p. 49.



- <sup>23</sup> Norbert ELIAS, *A sociedade de corte* [Court Society], Lisbon, Estampa, 1987, p. 92, note 1; Jacques LEVRON, *La vie quotidienne à la cour de Versailles aux XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*, 3rd edition, Poitiers-Ligugé, Hachette, 1986, p. 65; Emilio OROZCO DÍAZ, *El teatro y la teatralidad del Barroco*, Barcelona, Planeta, 1969, pp. 101–2.
- <sup>24</sup> Luís Reis TORGAL, *Ideologia política e teoria do Estado na Restauração*, vol. I, Coimbra, Biblioteca Geral da Universidade, 1981, p. 255, note 1.
- <sup>25</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, *Arquitectura e Poder*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
- <sup>26</sup> See *ibid.* pp. 141, 154–55, 176–88, and António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘O Real Edifício’, in António Filipe PIMENTEL (coord.), *A Encomenda Prodigiosa. Da Patriarcal à Capela Real de St John the Baptist* (exhibition catalogue), Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga [National Museum of Ancient Art] – Museu de São Roque – Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2013, pp. 60–61.
- <sup>27</sup> cf. António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘António Canevari e a Torre da Universidade de Coimbra’, *Artistas e artífices e a sua mobilidade no mundo de expressão portuguesa*, Actas [Minutes], VII Colóquio Luso-Brasileiro de História da Arte, Oporto, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2005, pp. 49–58; António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘De Lisboa ao Caia: em torno do programa político e artístico da Troca das Princesas’, in Teresa Leonor M. VALE, Maria João Pacheco FERREIRA and Sílvia FERREIRA (coord.), *Lisboa e a Festa: celebrações religiosas e civis na cidade medieval e moderna*, Actas [Minutes], Colóquio de História e de História da Arte [History and History of Art Colloquium], Lisbon, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa [Lisbon City Hall], 2009, pp. 65–84.
- <sup>28</sup> cf. António Filipe PIMENTEL (coord.), *A Encomenda Prodigiosa. Da Patriarcal à Capela Real de S. João Baptista*, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–95.
- <sup>29</sup> Teresa Leonor M. VALE, ‘A estátua de Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Patriarcal de Lisboa e a eleição de modelos pictóricos para obras de escultura num texto de João Frederico Ludovice’, *Artis*, Revista do Instituto de História da Arte da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa [Journal of the Institute of History in the Lisbon Faculty of Letters], nos. 7–8 (2009), pp. 317–32, and Teresa Leonor M. VALE, ‘Di bronzo e d’argento: sculture del Settecento italiano nella magnifica Patriarcale di Lisbona’, in *Arte Cristiana. Rivista Internazionale di Storia dell’Arte e di Arti Liturgiche* [Christian Art. International Review of the History of Art and of the Liturgical Arts], Milan, Year 100, no. 868, Jan.–Feb. 2012, p. 57–66.
- <sup>30</sup> *Elogio fúnebre e histórico do muito alto ... Rei de Portugal, o Senhor D. João V* Lisbon, Regia Officina Sylviana, e da Academia Real, 1750, pp. 96–97.
- <sup>31</sup> Teresa Leonor M. VALE, ‘Roma em Lisboa: as artes decorativas no contexto das obras de arte enviadas da cidade pontifícia para a capital portuguesa no reinado de D. João V’, *Revista de Artes Decorativas* [Review of Decorative Arts], Universidade Católica Portuguesa [Catholic University of Portugal], no. 5, Oporto, 2011, pp. 57–78; Teresa Leonor M. VALE, ‘Ainda Roma em Lisboa: as réplicas de altares da basílica de S. Pedro do Vaticano, enviadas para a capital portuguesa entre 1741 e 1745’, in Maria João Pacheco FERREIRA, Pedro FLOR, Teresa Leonor M. VALE (coord.), *Lisboa e os Estrangeiros | Lisboa dos Estrangeiros antes do Terramoto de 1755. Actas do Colóquio*, Lisbon, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa [Lisbon City Hall], 2013 (in press).
- <sup>32</sup> cf. Marie-Thérèse MANDROUX-FRANÇA, ‘Progetto di candelabro con le armi patriarcali’ in *Giovanni V di Portogallo*, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Sandra Costa SALDANHA, ‘Os apóstolos em prata para a Patriarcal de Lisboa: modelos de ourivesaria dos escultores José de Almeida (1708–1770) e Joaquim Machado de Castro (1729–1822)’, *Revista de Artes Decorativas* [Review of Decorative Arts], Oporto, Universidade Católica Portuguesa [Catholic University of Portugal], no. 2, 2008, pp. 45–62; Teresa Leonor M. VALE, ‘Roman baroque silver for the patriarchate of Lisbon’, in *Burlington Magazine*, vol. CLV, no. 1.323, Jun. 2013, pp. 384–89.
- <sup>33</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘Luigi Vanvitelli (1700–1773). Pia Batismal’, in António Filipe PIMENTEL (coord.), *A Encomenda Prodigiosa. Da Patriarcal à Capela Real de S. João Baptista*, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–13.
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. José-Augusto FRANÇA, *op. cit.*, p. 49.









PART II  
THE CHAPEL OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST









## 1. ARCHITECTURE

# The Royal Chapel of St John the Baptist: a ‘dialogue in design’ between Lisbon and Rome

**António Filipe Pimentel**

## **1. The many forms of a singular commission**

Once having grasped the complexity of the designs – aesthetic, symbolic, political and diplomatic – that were to govern the realisation of the Royal Chapel of St John the Baptist, it is important to go back and look at the commission’s strict administrative process that began with a message sent on 26 October 1742 by Father João Baptista Carbone to Commander Manuel Pereira de Sampaio, the Portuguese ambassador in Rome.<sup>1</sup> The pious account of Brother Claudio da Conceição must also be taken as a primary source, even though it is already at some distance from the facts it reports.

The latter in fact states that the king had ordered measurements to be taken ‘by his architects’ and sent to Rome with a view to having a chapel made there: ‘huma Capella de Mosaico, o melhor que fosse possível’ (a chapel of mosaic, the best that may be possible).<sup>2</sup>

Together with his message, Carbone sent plans and elevations. In the contents of the order itself there was written clarification to the effect that ‘fica na liberdade do mesmo architecto usar de toda a casta de mármoreis mais raros e vistosos, assim dos antigos como dos modernos ... tendo amplo arbítrio de ornar tudo o mais nobremente e do melhor gosto que lhe fôr possível’ (let the architect himself be free to use every rank and order of the rarest and most strikingly flamboyant kinds of marble, both the ancient and the modern ... having free rein to adorn the whole the most nobly and in the finest taste that he may)<sup>3</sup> – and yet it was recognised from the first that the king was directly involved in the process of commissioning the chapel,<sup>4</sup> with all the repercussions that this was to have with regard to aesthetic choices.

The artistic commission sent to Rome thus involved the production of an ensemble work (the chapel) which was addressed to the ‘best architect, who is presently to be found in Rome’. The choice fell on a partnership consisting of Nicola Salvi (1699–1751) and Luigi Vanvitelli (1700–73).<sup>5</sup>

A disciple of Antonio Canevari<sup>6</sup> and a leading light in Roman aesthetics, at this time Salvi was absorbed in completing his celebrated masterpiece, the Trevi Fountain.<sup>7</sup> This may have brought him into contact with Luigi Vanvitelli, whom Benedict XIV had just put in charge of the *Fabbrica di San Pietro*<sup>8</sup> – the workshop complex at St Peter’s which oversaw the construction and maintenance of the

**pp. 26–27**  
Decoration of the altar  
table (frontal)  
Antonio Arrighi  
Gilded metal  
(See fig. 50)

**pp. 28–29**  
View of the Chapel of  
St John the Baptist (detail)  
(See fig. 112)



building and its treasures – as both architects had entered the competitions for the fountain and for the façade of the basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano (St John Lateran).<sup>9</sup>

Ambassador Manuel Pereira de Sampaio's chosen architect(s) were to be offered both this commission and that of the baptistery of the Patriarchal Basilica. Historiographical analysis has now established Vanvitelli's authorial role,<sup>10</sup> but the documentation shows that payments were made to both artists<sup>11</sup> and the words of João Frederico Ludovice, their interlocutor in Lisbon, also testify to this.<sup>12</sup>

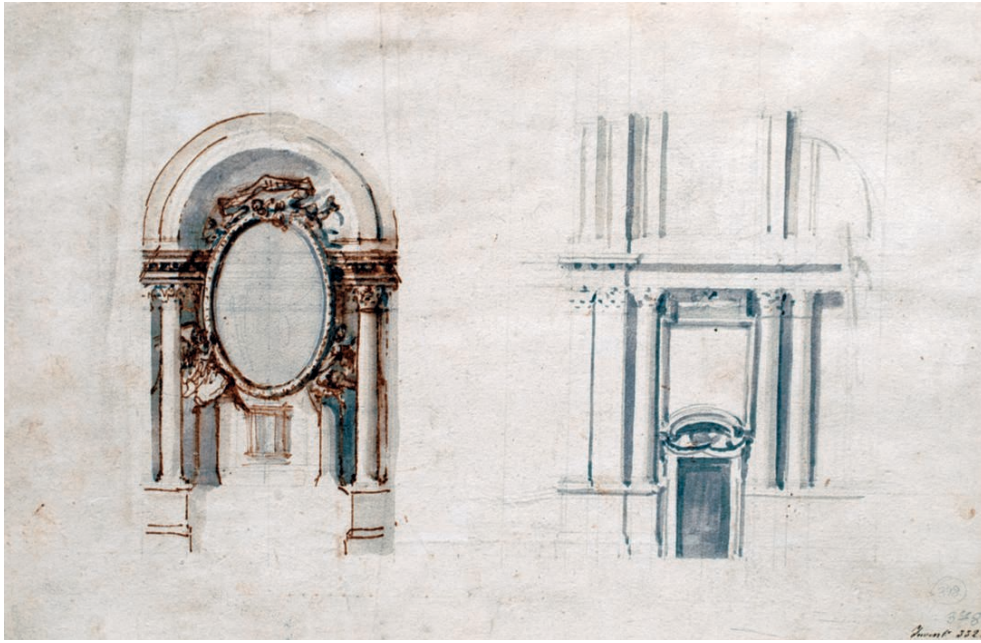
Nonetheless, the (quite natural) obligation laid down in Carbone's message – that the project had to be submitted for the monarch's prior approval – was to introduce a powerfully destabilising factor in the form of the king's artistic adviser, Ludovice. And it was not long before the project became embroiled in complications.

## 2. A (blazing) debate in design

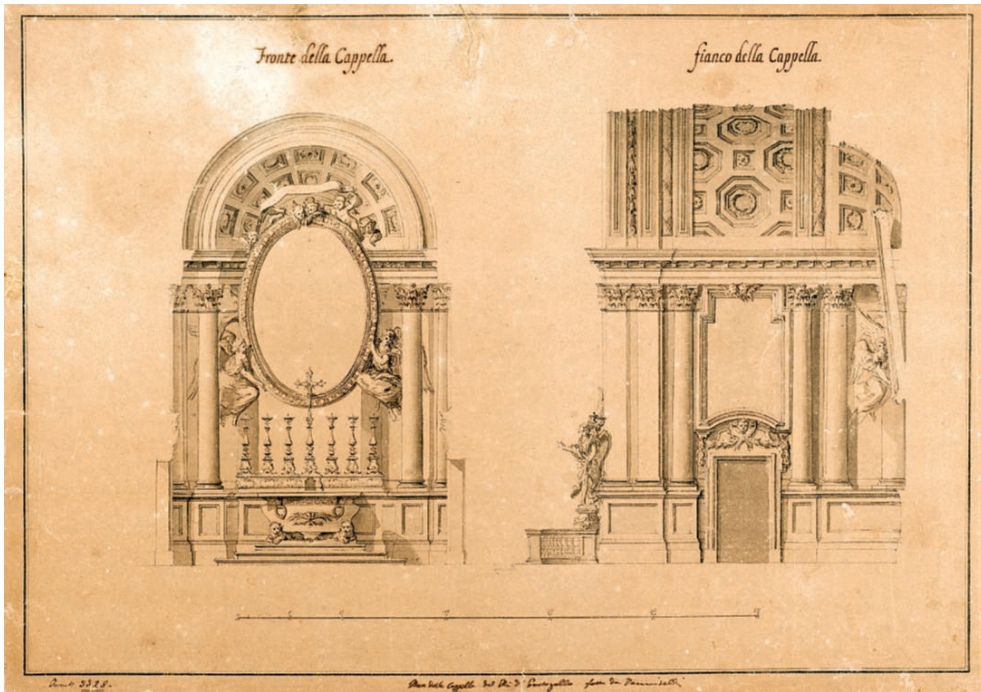
The outlines that are known to us today – three drawings and a preliminary sketch, preserved in the Museum of San Martino in Naples and in the library of the Royal Palace of Caserta respectively (figs 9–12) – reveal an architecture strongly influenced by the Roman Baroque of Borromini, with sculpture taking on an explicitly dramatic role after the manner of Bernini.

In fact, the chapel was to be designed starting with a round or Roman arch (which already existed and therefore had to be accommodated) guarded by angel-candelabra with flying robes and flanked by hollow Corinthian pilasters at whose apex an armillary sphere was displayed, held up by fluttering *putti*, beneath the royal crown and a mantel of ermine from which hung festoons or garlands. The interior was to be composed of a rectangular space ending in a shallow recess that projected to form a frame around the altarpiece, and covered over with a vaulted ceiling of octagonal coffering. In this design the altarpiece or retablo was seen emerging between densely clustered archivolt aligned with the two Corinthian pilasters that formed the intrados of the side arch and the half-columns that flanked the doorways leading onto the adjacent chapels on either side. On the side doors there were to be panels intended for the *Annunciation* and *Pentecost*, with an Ionic entablature running all round the top (without any frieze).

Within the area of the recess, amply highlighted by the placement of another side arch and also adorned with a coffering motif – though here the coffering is quadrangular in shape and arranged radially – the pilasters were to be repeated at the back; against these there would stand out four false or non-load-bearing columns arranged in an almost regular formation to frame the altarpiece. The altarpiece itself, which partially covers the central columns, was to be composed of a slightly tilted, elliptical panel crowned with cherubim and *putti* bearing a phylactery and dramatically supported by two angels posed as if carrying it: a motif that



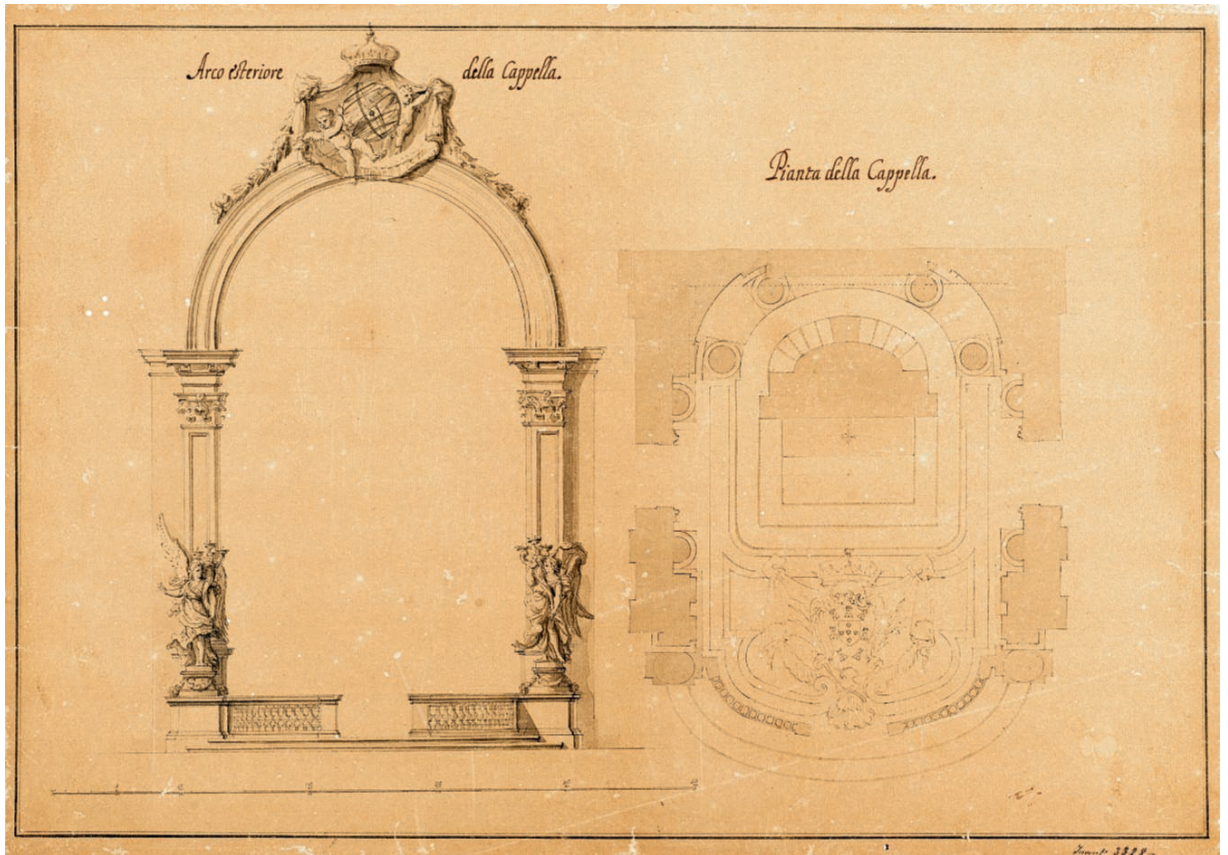
**Fig. 9**  
 Chapel of St John the Baptist for the Church of São Roque. View of the altar and section  
 Luigi Vanvitelli,  
 1st project, 1742  
 Drawing in brown ink, grey watercolour  
 Palazzo Reale [Royal Palace], Caserta, Campania  
 (no. 378 D, inv. 1951/52)



**Fig. 10**  
 Chapel of St John the Baptist for the Church of São Roque. Transverse and longitudinal sections  
 Luigi Vanvitelli,  
 1st project, 1742  
 Drawing in pencil and ink, watercolour  
 Museo Nazionale di San Martino [National Museum of San Martino], Naples  
 (inv. 3328/2)

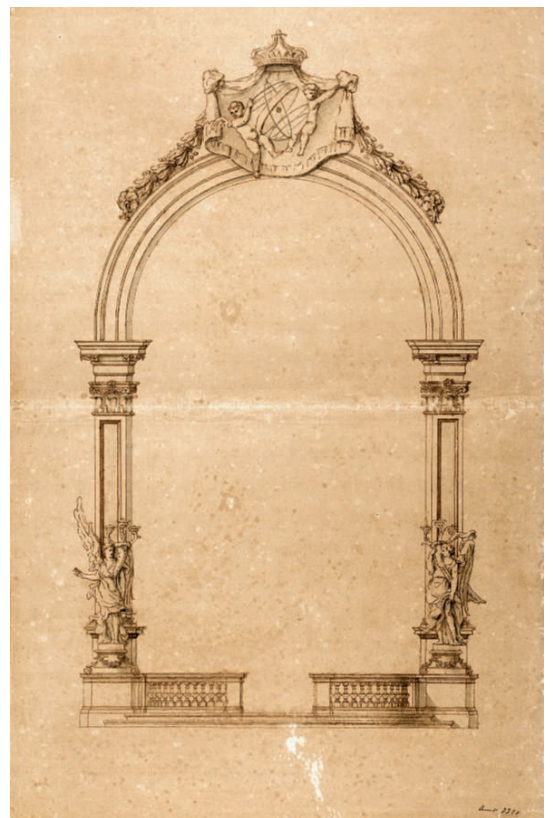
Borromini had designed for the apex of the main façade of the Roman Church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane and which was in fact later made into an altarpiece. The altar table, comprised of an urn resting on two lions and styled to suggest antiquity, introduced an almost dissonant note, while the royal escutcheon stood out on the paved floor. The chapel was to be enclosed by a convex balustrade reached by ascending two steps. Obtaining approval for this design was to prove no easy matter.





**Fig. 11**  
Chapel of St John the Baptist for the Church of São Roque. Outer arch and plan  
Luigi Vanvitelli,  
1st project, 1742  
Drawing in pencil and ink, watercolour  
Museo Nazionale di San Martino [National Museum of San Martino],  
Naples (inv. 3328/1)

**Fig. 12**  
Chapel of St John the Baptist for the Church of São Roque. Outer arch  
Luigi Vanvitelli,  
1st project, 1742  
Drawing in pencil and ink, watercolour  
Museo Nazionale di San Martino [National Museum of San Martino],  
Naples (inv. 3328/4)



Indeed, a month and a half after the arrival of the Roman drawings, on 8 February 1743, Carbone returned them – now accompanied by criticisms and corrections drawn up in Lisbon, comprising an extensive memorandum which listed a series of amendments arising from the drawings. Attention was drawn to the fact that the chapel was a royal building, which demanded alterations to the cyma (an S-shaped decorative moulding), the altarpiece, the royal arms, the ceiling, the front façade of the outer arch, the altar, the predella (altar platform) and the tabernacle for displaying the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>13</sup>

Another memorandum, this time addressed to Agostino Masucci, was distinguished in sharp contrast to the above by the approval calmly granted to the painter's proposals.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter dated the seventh of the following April, Sampaio replied that 'the architects raised several questions about the instructions that came to me';<sup>15</sup> the ambassador dispatched this message to Lisbon, and on 28 July Carbone in turn sent him the reply<sup>16</sup> from the court architect with the suggestion that 'caprichos pittorescos, que não são admissíveis em huma Capella que se manda fazer de architecttura nobre, séria e rica' (picturesque caprices, which are not admissible in a chapel that is ordered to be made with architecture that is noble, serious and rich) should be excluded, and enjoining that the memoranda be adhered to (fig. 13).<sup>17</sup>

On 1 August, Sampaio wrote that the order was 'repartida por infinitos Artífices, segundo as matérias de que ella consta' (divided between an infinite number of craftsmen, according to the materials of which it is composed) and, on 31 August, he continued in the same tone, reporting that 'Na Capella ... se trabalha com muita diligencia, tendo-se adiantado de sorte, que concorre bastante gente por conta da curiosidade do Paiz, e Sua Santidade me intimou o querer vel-a antes que se embarque' (In the chapel ... work proceeds very diligently and has advanced so much that many people come flocking from across the country out of curiosity, and His Holiness has indicated to me that he wishes to see it before it is embarked).<sup>18</sup>

In the face, therefore, of criticisms and corrections that were merely literary, the work is thought to have continued and run over for many months, reaching such a point that Sampaio regularly increased the cost. The preamble was followed by minute instructions on every constituent part of this small but sumptuous temple, right down to the smallest detail: from the vaulted ceiling, whose archivolts were to

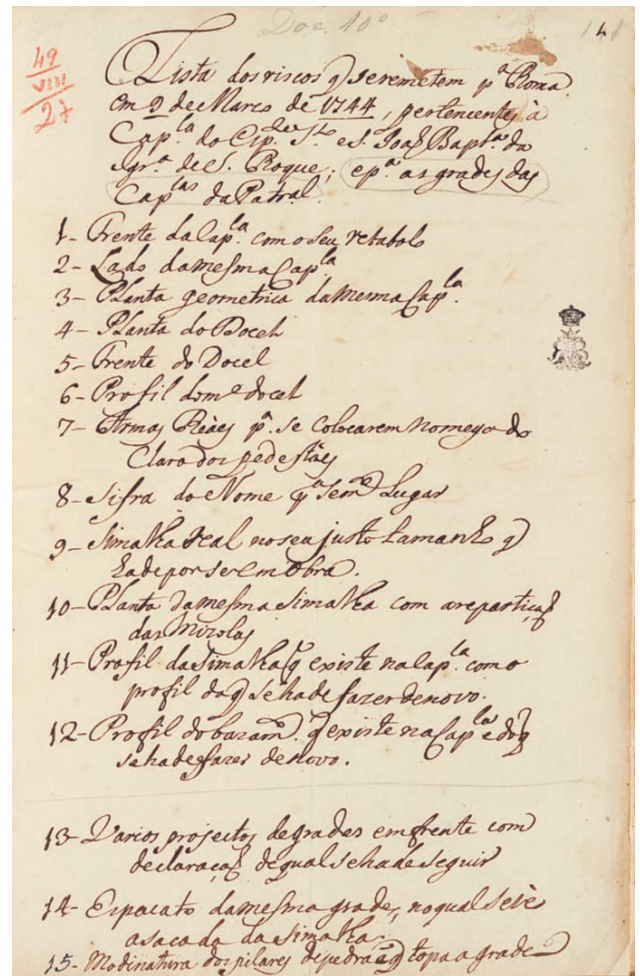
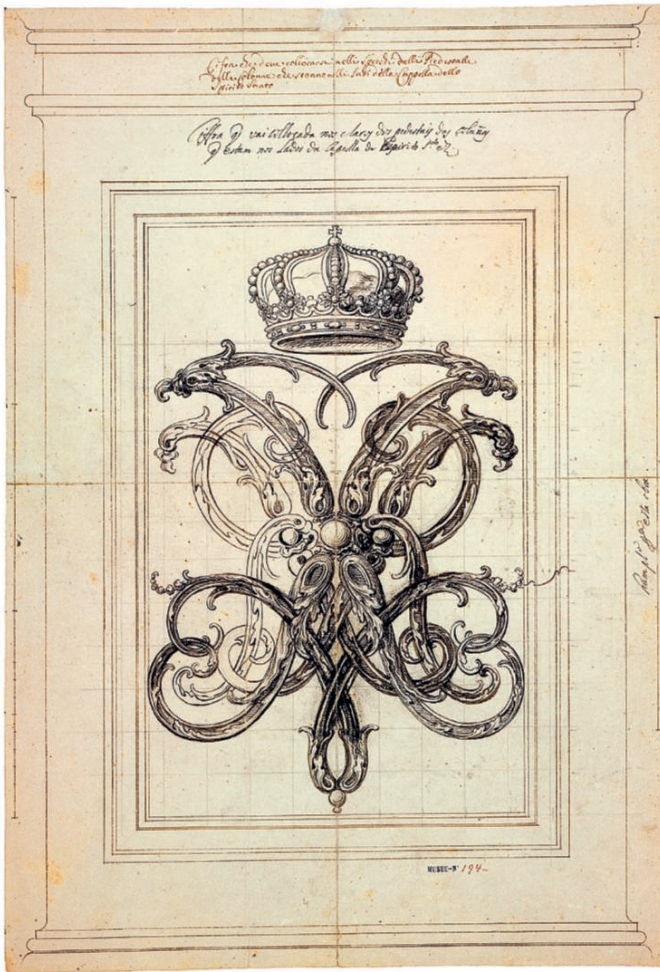


Fig. 13  
List of designs drawn  
for the project by João  
Frederico Ludovice for  
the Chapel of St John  
the Baptist (roll)  
Biblioteca da Ajuda  
[‘Assistance’ Library],  
Lisbon (Ms. 49-VIII-27,  
f. 141)





**Fig. 14**  
Study of the royal monogram  
for the Chapel of St John the Baptist  
João Frederico Ludovice, 1744  
Drawing in black pencil, pen and watercolour wash  
in black and grey  
Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga [National Museum of Ancient  
Art], Lisbon (inv. 194 Des. [Drawings])



**Fig. 15**  
Study for the Portuguese royal escutcheon  
for the Chapel of St John the Baptist  
João Frederico Ludovice, 1744  
Drawing in pen, ink, black pencil, India ink wash  
Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga [National Museum  
of Ancient Art], Lisbon (inv. 195 Des. [Drawings])

follow the order of the pillars and columns, in light-coloured marble, with festoons or garlands of gilded brass; to the lunettes that it should have on either side; to the entablature and its ornamentation to the altarpiece and its frontispiece, the side doors, the footing and finally, to the royal arms and cyphers.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, on 9 March, there followed the complete drawings of the chapel showing the plan, the front and side elevations and the royal escutcheon and monogram (figs 14 and 15), together with the design of the cyma, with the plan and profile of the footing. On the same day there followed yet more detailed instructions on the structure of various elements of the chapel, such as corbels for the cruets to hold

**Fig. 16** (overleaf)  
Capital  
Francesco Giardini  
Gilded metal











wine and water, confessionals, the gates of the balustrade and side doors, lamps and so on.<sup>20</sup>

The arrival in Rome of these papers and the drawings that accompanied them, at a time when – according to the ambassador – work on the chapel was already so far advanced ‘de sorte, que ... Sua Santidade me intimou o querer ve-la antes que se embarque’ (such that ... His Holiness intimated to me that he wished to see it before it is embarked) must have come as a bombshell. Immediately, then, on 12 April, Sampaio wrote to Lisbon acknowledging receipt of the papers and testifying to the surprise they had caused;<sup>21</sup> at the same time he did not fail to send the Roman architects’ response to the alterations and instructions issued by the Lisbon architect.

If these papers, the schedule and their respective drawings drawn up in Lisbon caused astonishment in Rome, the impact of the response (now lost, but which apparently ‘filled twelve sheets of paper’<sup>22</sup>) was no less great. An answer was not long in coming, and was expressed in terms of such vehemence as to call for explanation from Father Carbone.<sup>23</sup> The reply consists of a long and well-grounded dissertation in defence of the *centinado*; that is to say, the use of a curved line set against a straight line, specifically understood as the theoretical basis of this arrangement’s compositional potential – at least in the sense in which it has been interpreted.<sup>24</sup>

But the truth is that we are entirely ignorant of the statements contained in the 12 pages of Vanvitelli’s manifesto, whose loss leaves us in the dark with regard to the actual question to which Ludovice was responding.

### 3. One (master)piece and three authors

Whatever the facts, it remains inescapable that somewhere between the drawings being sent to Lisbon in December 1742 and the final work there was a metamorphosis, brought about by applying the instructions sent from Lisbon and, above all, the drawings that accompanied them. This is the only way to understand the execution of the two successive models.<sup>25</sup>

Ludovice’s decisions were imposed by means of drawings on the entirety of Vanvitelli’s project: the exterior elevation (whose design and appearance were to be completely changed by eliminating the Corinthian pilasters, the angel-candelabras and the convex balustrade) as well as the apex (where the royal escutcheon flanked by angels was to replace Vanvitelli’s proposed panoply with the royal mantle extended above an armillary sphere held up by guardian spirits). It is interesting to compare the shield with the design moulded in bronze intended to be applied on the sides of the altar, and the way the arch is interrupted at the base of the shield by the curlicues of its corresponding frame. Other changes included the distribution of pilasters and columns (and the number of flutes on each) in the internal elevations; the entablature, which was Corinthian, imposed in its entirety, and the decoration of its corresponding frieze; and the structure and

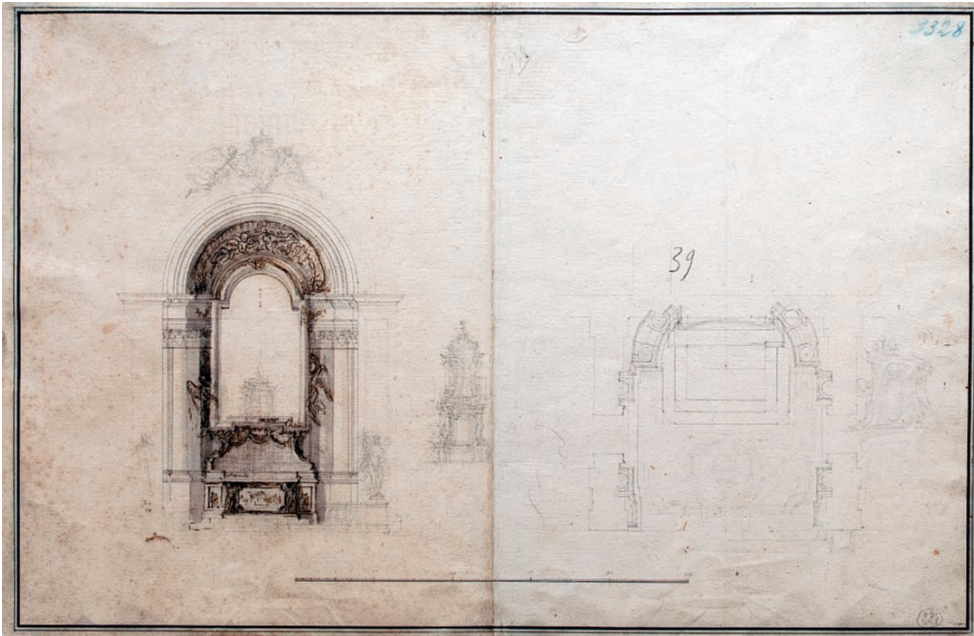


decoration of the vaulted ceiling, with its lunettes set in the protuberant part of the side panels, to give ‘matéria para se enriquecer’ (matter for enrichment). This must have referred to the ovate bas-reliefs carved by Carlo Marchionni and Bernardino Ludovisi, as there could be no other lunettes in a vaulted ceiling necessarily without openings. Other changes included the mouldings framing the panels ‘de bronze com bellos labores dourados’ (of bronze, with beautiful gilded working) and the adoption of gilded bronze for the column capitals and bases; the structure of the altar and its corresponding altarpiece (attached to the wall, with its rectilinear panel topped with a semicircle – a design that Ludovice had published in Portugal – flanked by four columns and with a sculpture centred on the apex); the steps of the altar; the decision to eliminate the royal escutcheon on the paved floor and to replace it, as in the Patriarchal Basilica, with mosaic tables with an armillary sphere and its attributes; and indeed the very design of the royal cypher that was to adorn the chancel, the side doors and, together with the escutcheon, the altar table below the upper edging of the pedestals ‘por piedade e reverencia que o dono tem a tão sagrado lugar’ (out of piety and the reverence that its owner bears to such a holy place)<sup>26</sup> (figs 17 and 18).

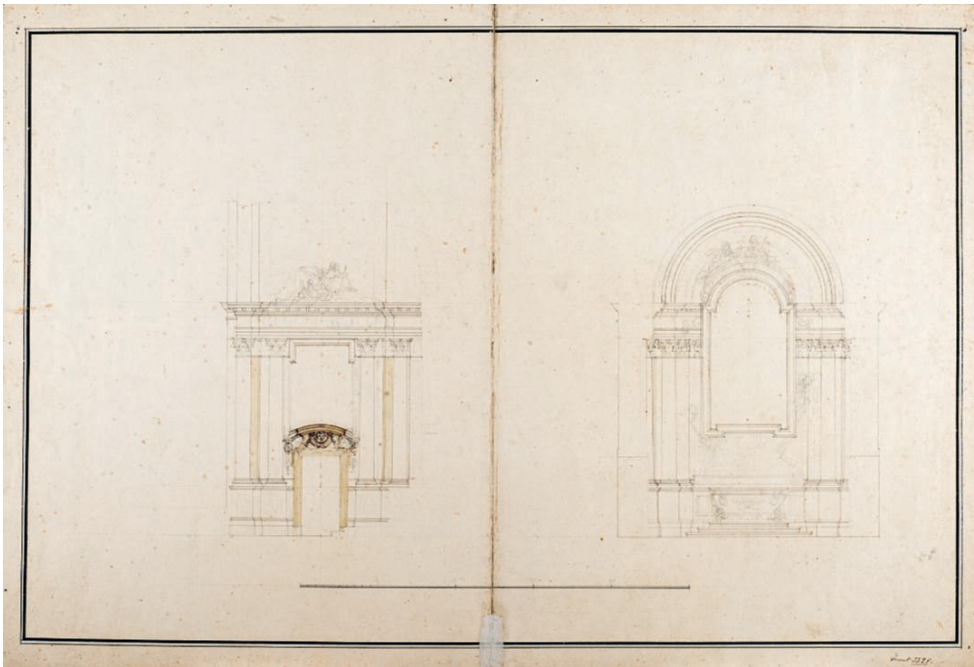
The same is true, furthermore, of the fabulous treasure, which was also clearly the subject of a *dialogue in design* – one of which, however, we have scarcely any surviving record. Yet here too, it will undoubtedly be worth pursuing the trail of the architect-goldsmith Ludovice.<sup>27</sup>

One conclusion can thus be clearly drawn: if the design of the chapel did ultimately take on a classical nature – which has led history to regard it as a turning point in the evolution of Portuguese architecture – this was not something imposed from Rome ‘contra a opinião e o gosto expressos em Lisboa’ (contrary to the opinion and taste expressed in Lisbon).<sup>28</sup> On the contrary, this was in fact at the strong insistence of those in Lisbon who determined the elements that defined the aesthetics of power – however much it might go against the prevailing winds that were blowing in Rome.

Indeed, execution of the Chapel of St John the Baptist can only be understood in relation to that other, parallel project – the remodelling of the Patriarchal Basilica. The obsessive referencing of all things Roman visible in the Johannine aesthetic cannot be separated from the very specific goal of converting this city on the Tagus into the Rome of the West. In fact, having these sumptuous commissions executed in the most prestigious workshops of the Eternal City was an integral part of a foreign policy designed to elevate the image of the Portuguese monarch and his kingdom. This policy was deemed all the more necessary because – at a time when the kingdom was in decline – the king was in fact no longer as fabulously wealthy as he once had been, and the construction costs were rising exponentially.<sup>29</sup> What was intended, then, was to endow the Lisbon court with a religious setting in keeping with its ambitions, in the service of a political programme intended to glorify the Portuguese Crown and involving both the Patriarchal Basilica and the Chapel of St



**Fig. 17**  
 Chapel of St John the Baptist for the Church of São Roque.  
 View and plan  
 Luigi Vanvitelli,  
 2nd project, 1743–44  
 Drawing in pencil and brown ink, brown and white watercolour  
 Palazzo Reale [Royal Palace], Caserta (no. 248, inv. 1951/52)



**Fig. 18**  
 Chapel of St John the Baptist for the Church of São Roque. Longitudinal and transverse sections  
 Luigi Vanvitelli,  
 2nd project, 1743–44  
 Drawing in pencil and ink, watercolour  
 Museo Nazionale di San Martino [National Museum of San Martino], Naples (inv. 3328/3)

John the Baptist, while at the same time making use of the specialised – but above all prestigious, and internationally renowned – labour force that Rome could offer (the fact that Vanvitelli was the architect of St Peter’s would not have been irrelevant in the process of choosing him). The aim was to give the art of John V’s court a visibility beyond the frontiers of Portugal, to which it could scarcely aspire if the project were confined within national borders from its conception to its execution, and at the same time to glorify the Crown as part of a plan to affirm its high status



internationally – a plan that went far beyond these artistic commissions, and placed them at the service of a coherent image of power.

Meanwhile, work on the chapel was progressing. Sampaio conveyed the news to Lisbon that the pope had informed him he ‘wished to consecrate the altar before it departs’<sup>30</sup> and in fact this consecration took place in the Church of Sant’Antonio dei Portoghesi.<sup>31</sup> Everything indicates, however, that only the altar was consecrated on this occasion and in fact the entire chapel was erected and exhibited to public admiration in the Capponi–Cardelli Palace during the course of that month – which was precisely one of the purposes it was intended to fulfil.

Seemingly indestructible, the Chapel of St John the Baptist, together with its treasure, survived even the great Lisbon earthquake; effectively it is a single, unified ensemble based on the intrinsic coherence of the final work, as if born of a single mind to whose brilliance (despite the acknowledgement that is of course due to all the many individuals who contributed to its execution) it ultimately offers the most eloquent and indisputable testimony.<sup>32</sup>

Let us therefore echo the words – no less fair an account for all that their author shrouds it in the haze of legend – of Brother Cláudio da Conceição, the first who sought to set down its history: ‘uma das preciosidades mais raras, não digo só de Portugal, mas do Mundo inteiro’ (one of the rarest treasures, not of Portugal only, say I, but of the whole world).<sup>33</sup> ■

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d’ALMEIDA, *A Capella de S. João Baptista erecta na igreja de S. Roque*, Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 1997, p. 105 (1st edition 1900); see also Pimintel’s text in the present volume: ‘Uma Capela para o Rei de Portugal: história controversa de uma encomenda prodigiosa’, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Frei Cláudio da CONCEIÇÃO, *Gabinete Histórico*, vol. XI, Lisboa, Impressão Régia [Royal Press], 1827, pp. 38–42; see also Pimintel’s text in the present volume: ‘Uma Capela para o Rei de Portugal: história controversa de uma encomenda prodigiosa’, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d’ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Irisalva MOITA, ‘O Aqueduto das Águas Livres e o abastecimento de água a Lisboa’, *D. João V e o abastecimento de água a Lisboa*, vol. I (exhibition catalogue), Lisbon, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa [Lisbon City Hall], 1990, pp. 27–34.

<sup>7</sup> cf. Paolo PORTOGHESI, *Roma Barocca. Storia di una civiltà architettonica*, 2nd edition, Rome, Carlo Bestetti Edizioni d’Arte, 1967, pp. 429–34.

<sup>8</sup> Jörg GARMS, ‘La Cappella di S. Giovanni Battista nella Chiesa di San Rocco a Lisbona’, Sandra Vasco ROCCA and Gabriele BORGHINI (dir.), *Giovanni V di Portogallo (1707–1750) e la cultura romana del suo tempo*, Rome, Àrgos, 1995 pp. 113–14.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Gianfranco SPAGNIESI, ‘Rome et sa culture à l’époque du voyage de Soufflot’, in *Soufflot et l’Architecture des Lumières*, Actas [Minutes], École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, 2001, pp. 43–44.

<sup>10</sup> cf. Jörg GARMS, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–14 and António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘Uma jóia em forma de templo: a Capela de São João Baptista’, in *Oceanos*, no. 43, Lisbon, July/September, 2000, p. 149.

<sup>11</sup> The documents in the Ajuda (‘Assistance’) Library do indeed specifically confirm a payment of 100 scudi romani or Roman escudos, in December 1742, ‘à Nicola Salvi Architetto e suo compagno Vanvitelli per li disegni fatti per la Cappella dello Spirito Santo, e S. Giovanni Battista’ (to Nicola Salvi, architect, and his companion Vanvitelli for the designs made for the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, and St John the Baptist) (Ms. 49-IX-22, f. 114); once more payments were made to both of them jointly, on 3 December 1744, 30 August 1745 and 22 December 1746, of 100, 200 and 120 escudos respectively (Ms. 46-XIII-9, f. 126); there were separate payments of 100 escudos made to each of the two architects in July 1745 (Ms. 49-IX-31, f. 119). On the other hand, Salvi’s name appears alone on payments such as one of 386 escudos, on 15 July 1746, regarding the marble festoons for the vaulted ceiling of the chapel (Ms. 49-VIII-15, doc. 247), and another, the following December, concerning the work of the designers involved in making the maquette (Ms. 49-VIII-15, doc. 459). That would appear to shed light on his central role in the general overseeing and coordination of the commission, explaining the description of Vanvitelli as *suo compagno*, his companion (note that this does not contradict the latter’s authorship of the surviving drawings; Vanvitelli performed a similar role in the *Fabbrica di San Pietro*). Such a situation was understandable in the context of a work site of such complexity.

<sup>12</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d’ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>13</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d’ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 112.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 132.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 112–13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 134.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 115–16.

<sup>20</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘Uma jóia em forma de templo: a Capela de São João Baptista’ ..., p. 154.

<sup>21</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d’ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–37.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 120.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> cf. Paulo Varela GOMES, *A Cultura Arquitectónica e Artística em Portugal no Século XVIII*, Lisbon, Editorial Caminho, 1988, pp. 97 and ff; Paulo Varela GOMES, *A Confissão de Cyrillo*, Lisbon, Hiena, 1992, pp. 101 and ff.

<sup>25</sup> António Filipe PIMENTEL, ‘Giuseppe Palms, Giuseppe Fochetti, Giuseppe Voyet e Genaro Nocoletti. Modelo para a Capela de São João Batista’, in António Filipe PIMENTEL (coord.), *A Encomenda Prodígiosa. Da Patriarcal à Capela Real de S. João Baptista*, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–29.

<sup>26</sup> Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d’ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>27</sup> The royal architect also sent minutely detailed ‘instructions and advisories’ to Rome concerning the items in gold, silver and jewellery – so detailed, in fact, that his role was close to being that of co-author. This is the case, in particular, for an extraordinary life-size statue of the *Virgin* (*Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*), modelled by Giovanni Battista Maini, about which Carbone wrote on 25 September 1744, ‘here is a very long instruction indeed’ (B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-41, f. 93v; see also Teresa Leonor M. VALE, ‘Di bronzo e d’argento: sculture del Settecento italiano nella magnifica Patriarcale di Lisbona’, in *Arte Cristiana. Rivista Internazionale di Storia dell’Arte e di Arti Liturgiche*, 100, no. 868, Jan.–Feb. 2012, pp. 59–62) and other references expressing astonishment, such as one, also addressed to Ambassador Sampaio, which the Jesuit included on 23 April 1745 when he wrote: ‘I consign to Your Excellency the enclosed packet, which contains some advisory note on the cross of the altar of the new chapel, so that Your Excellency may have it executed by the craftsman, to whom the said work is committed’ (B.A., Ms. 49-VIII-41, f. 177).

<sup>28</sup> Paulo Varela GOMES, *A Cultura Arquitectónica*, *op. cit.*, p. 98. There is, however, a clear development in the author’s position in his approach to this question, which can be seen between this ground-breaking essay – in which he maintains that the positions adopted in Lisbon were irrelevant to the final work, affirming that



Ludovice's text 'reveals from the first, from its very heading, that there was nothing to be done because Salvi and Vanvitelli had already gone ahead with their work' (p. 99) – and the argument he makes in his other (no less innovative) essay *A Confissão de Cyrillo*, in which he states that the chapel 'represents a de facto compromise between the ideas expressed in Rome and the demands of Lisbon', and seeks to draw up a balance sheet between the contributions made by Ludovice and those of the Roman architect(s) (pp. 91–98).

<sup>29</sup> It is well established, in fact, that the cost of the chapel commission reached exorbitant levels compared with initial estimates. Indeed, in a letter from Carbone to Sampaio dated 3 June 1747, he states that 'Of these commissions, no care was ever taken here that they should cost so much, since Frederico himself, who gave the instructions, understood that the whole work of the chapel would cost some half a million.' He returned to the subject on 27 June, saying, 'For Frederico, who was in Rome and saw the famous Chapel of São Ignacio, that cost 100,000 escudos, ruled that ours would cost no more than 200 thousand' (Francisco Marques de Sousa VITERBO and R. Vicente d'ALMEIDA, *op. cit.*, p. 13, note 1).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 138.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 139.

<sup>32</sup> Robert C. SMITH, 'João Frederico Ludovice, an eighteenth century architect in Portugal', in *Art Bulletin*, vol. XVIII, 3, 1936, p. 362.

<sup>33</sup> Frei Cláudio da CONCEIÇÃO, *op. cit.*, vol. IX, pp. 53–54.