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FAMILY ARCHIVES AND
HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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RECONSTRUCTING LOST ARCHIVES. THE CASE OF THE COSTA FAMILY

ABSTRACT: Since the family archives of the various branches of the so-called “Costas com Dom” family no longer exist in full, the aim of this work is to reconstruct them, using previously identified archival fonds beginning at the end of the fifteenth century, through the sixteenth century, until the beginning of the seventeenth century. The aim of this investigation was, therefore, of an historical and archival scope, in a mutual relationship of knowledge. The intention was to study and explain how the “family”, as an organization, produced written documents, organized them in archives, preserved and passed them on to the following generations — understanding the archive as a central and structuring nucleus of the power of the ancien régime’s nobility.

Keywords: family archives; Costa family; reconstruction of lost archives

RESUMO: Como os arquivos familiares dos diversos ramos da família dita “Costas com Dom” não existem actualmente na sua integridade, o objetivo de nosso trabalho foi reconstruí-los, utilizando os fundos arquivísticos disponíveis previamente identificados, começando no final do século XV e continuando, ao longo do século XVI, até os primeiros anos do século XVII. O objetivo da nossa investigação foi, portanto, de âmbito histórico e arquivístico, numa relação mútua de conhecimento. A nossa intenção foi a de estudar e explicar como a organização “família”, para alcançar e reproduzir o seu poder, produz documentos escritos, os organiza em arquivos, os preserva e os passa às gerações seguintes — entendendo o arquivo como núcleo central e estruturante do poder nobre no Antigo Regime.

Palavras-chave: arquivos de família; família Costa; reconstrução de arquivos

The lost archives

The family known as “Costas com Dom”, or “Costas do Armeiro-mor”¹, as they are identified in some nobiliaries (a variation deriving from the heredi-

¹ “Armador-mor” and “Armeiro-mor” indicate the same function and can be translated as “chief armorer” of the king, being the person that, in addition to other functions, “dresses”

tary office that was passed down in one branch of the family), had as patriarch D. Álvaro da Costa (c.1470-1540), royal courtier and *valido* of king Manuel I (1495-1521). From this trunk sprouted two distinct houses by male lineage which, as far as we know, kept their family archives intact until the end of the nineteenth century.

The first of these, the house of the counts of Mesquitela, also known as the house of the *armadores-mores*, descended from two sons of D. Álvaro da Costa, respectively, the firstborn D. Gil Eanes da Costa (1502-1568) and second born D. Duarte da Costa (1504-1579), both branches becoming united through the inter-marriage of their respective heirs in the mid-seventeenth century.

The second distinct house was that of the counts of Soure, the noble title having been granted in 1652 by king João IV to D. Gil Eanes da Costa's great-grandson, D. João de Costa. This house was eventually to become integrated into the house of the marquises of Borba/counts of Redondo at the end of the nineteenth century.

Finally, we shall consider the integration of D. Gil Eanes da Costa's own archive into the archival system of the house of the counts of Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal, following the marriage of his granddaughter, D. Maria da Costa, to D. João de Mascarenhas, lord of Palma, in 1586².

It was following the extinction of entailed estates (*morgadios*), in 1863, that the fate of these archives, as well as that of the archives of the majority of the great noble houses in Portugal, was marked by their more or less rapid disintegration during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As far as we know, the archive of the house of the counts of Mesquitela, following the death of the second count of Mesquitela/duke of Albuquerque, was

the king in his armor, and takes care of the king's weapons (as opposed to a craftsman that makes armor).

² D. João de Mascarenhas and D. Maria da Costa were the parents of D. Nuno de Mascarenhas, first count of Palma. On his death, without progeny, he was succeeded by his nephew, D. João de Mascarenhas, who was made second count of Palma (son, in turn, of the third countess of the Sabugal, D. Beatriz de Meneses). Finally, by the marriage in 1669, of D. Beatriz de Mascarenhas Castelo Branco da Costa, third countess of Palma and fourth countess of Sabugal, to the second count of Óbidos, D. Fernando Martins Mascarenhas, the “trilogy” was completed, explaining why the archive is, in fact, an “archive of archives”. See ANTT (Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo) — “Casa de Santa Iria”, available at <<http://digitarq.dgarq.gov.pt?ID=4164750>>.

divided by his heirs, and largely vanished. Probably the archive of the counts of Soure, incorporated into the archive of the house of Borba/Redondo suffered a similar fate. No longer in the possession of their respective descendants, and with some of their contents now in the hands of public entities, one of my first objectives was to locate these archives³.

Accordingly, this article traces the three abovementioned family lines in an attempt to discover the whereabouts of their respective archives, namely:

- the archive of D. Gil Eanes da Costa, integrated in the house of Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal
- the archive of the house of Soure and
- the archive of the house of the *armadores-mores*

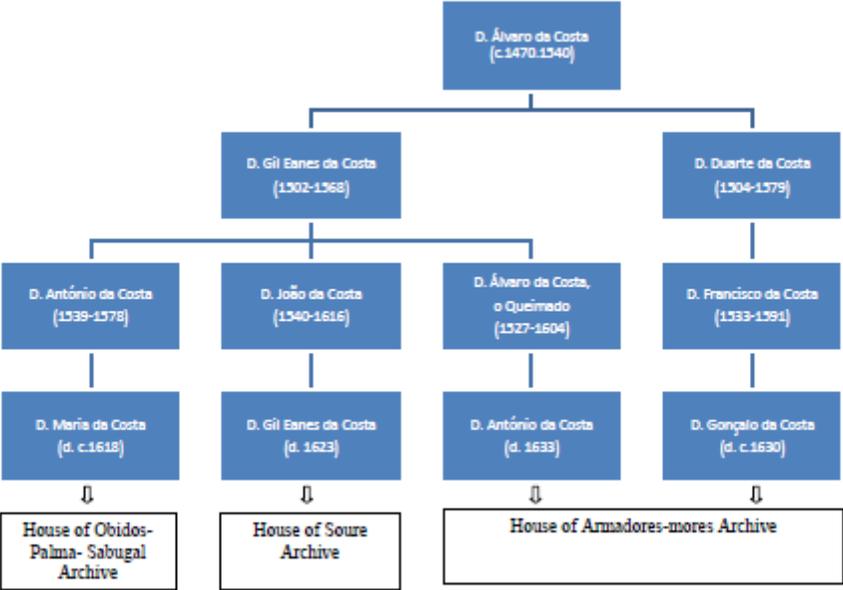


Fig. 1. Genealogical scheme of the Houses descendant D. Álvaro da Costa, producers of Archives

³ This is the case of the documentation integrated in the Adília Mendes collection in the ANTT, and the so-called “Arquivo dos Condes de Redondo”, at the BNP (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal). See MARTINS, 1993: 319.

Archive of the house of the *armadores-mores*

The house of the *armadores-mores* descends, simultaneously, from D. Duarte da Costa, second son of D. Álvaro da Costa, who succeeded his father in the office of *armador-mor*, and from D. Álvaro's firstborn, D. Gil Eanes da Costa, through the marriage, in the mid-seventeenth century, of D. Maria de Noronha (d. 1672), great great-granddaughter of D. Duarte da Costa, to D. Luís da Costa (1626-1681), great-grandson of D. Gil Eanes da Costa.

When, in 1743, the family palace of Porta da Oura was sold to the king by the *armador-mor* D. José da Costa e Sousa (1694-1766), the latter explained that the absence of title deeds was “por cauza de hum insendio que antigamente houve, no tempo dos seus antecessores nas mesmas cazas do Arco do Oiro em que se queymarão muytos titulos e papeis de importancia” (because of a fire that was once, in the time of his predecessors, in the rooms of Porta da Oura, where many titles and papers of importance were burned)⁴. It would appear then that the family archive was stored in the palace of Porta da Oura, built by D. Álvaro da Costa in 1516, until the archive was damaged by fire, probably in 1664⁵. Fire would strike again in 1755, this time in the wake of the great earthquake, once more destroying documents from the archive of the house of the *armadores-mores*. Accordingly, placed in the margin of a register, we find a note concerning a certificate of annuity (for 250,000 *reais*) dated January 1758, which adds: “porquanto o proprio Padrão assima incorporado se lhe consumira no insendio que se seguio ao Terremoto do primeiro de Novembro de 1755” (seeing that the original certificate included above was consumed in the fire which followed the earthquake of the 1st November 1755)⁶.

⁴ ANTT — “Chancelaria de D. João V”, lv. 18, ff. 333v-336v. Arco do Oiro was the name given in the eighteenth century to the sixteenth-century Porta da Oura.

⁵ Frei Apolinário da Conceição, in the course of his discussion of a certain image of Christ kept in the Porta do Ouro, considered to have miraculous properties, refers to the year 1664 and mentions a fire in the palace: “pois neste anno consta, que pegando o fogo nas casas que ficão por cima, que forão dos Armeiros Móres” (because in this year it is said that, fire breaking out in the rooms that are above, belonging to the chief-armorers...). See CONCEIÇÃO, 1750: 440.

⁶ ANTT — “Registo Geral de Mercês, D. João V”, lv. 9, f. 404v.

But despite these vicissitudes, the archive of this branch of the family survived until about the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, with the oldest documentation being that which was produced mainly by the descendants of D. Gil Eanes da Costa's firstborn, D. Álvaro da Costa, the so-called *Queimado* (1527-1604). This archive, through the marriage, in 1669, of the *Queimado's* grandson D. Luís da Costa, to D. Maria de Noronha, great great-granddaughter of D. Duarte da Costa, became part of the archival system of the house of the *armadores-mores*, and was later added to the archive of the Sousa de Macedo family, which became allied to the Costas *armadores-mores* through the marriage of D. José Francisco da Costa (1740-1802) to the viscountess of Mesquitela, D. Maria José de Sousa de Macedo (1755-1816), in 1772.

The only known "inventory" of this archive dates from the end of the eighteenth century, probably from 1773⁷. It is entitled *Lista do que se entrega pelo Armador-Mor de Sua M.^{de} D. Jozé Francisco da Costa e Souza dos papeis que existem no seu Cartorio pertencentes aos quatro Morgados de sua caza, ao S.^{or} Marçal dos Santos, que lhe faz o favor de ser seu Procurador* (List of what is delivered by the chief-armorers of His Majesty, D. José Francisco da Costa e Sousa, of the papers that exist in his archive pertaining to the four entailed estates of his house, to Mr. Marçal dos Santos who does him the favor of being his attorney)⁸ and describes what is in essence the archive of the house of the *armadores-mores* as it was at the end of the eighteenth century: a total of eleven bundles, mostly organized by each entailed estate (*morgadio*) as the title suggests.

During the nineteenth century, the archive grew organically at least until the death, in 1890, of the third count of Mesquitela, and duke of Albuquerque, when the properties of the *morgados*, a system of land-holding by then extinct (since 1863), were distributed among his heirs. One of his brothers, D. António da Costa (1824-1892), retained much of this archive, which he then bequeathed to one of his nieces, as above mentioned⁹.

⁷ In 1773, D. José Francisco da Costa was appointed governor and captain-general of the kingdom of the Algarve, where he was relocated to and remained until 1780.

⁸ APVF — Arquivo Pedro Villa Franca.

⁹ Presently, what remains of the archive of the *armadores-mores*, counts of Mesquitela, is in the possession of two descendants of the family: Pedro Villa Franca, and Luís Sousa de

The house of Soure archive

The archive of the counts of Soure, descendants by male lineage from D. João da Costa (1540-1616), the third son of D. Gil Eanes da Costa, was still intact in the palace of the counts of Redondo, Marquises of Borba, in Santa Marta (Lisbon) in the early twentieth century, where the writer Júlio de Castilho was able to consult it. Sadly, it is now dispersed¹⁰.

This archive, progressively enlarged by marriages and testamentary acquisitions, quite possibly travelled with the family as it occupied a succession of residences (namely the palace of the counts of Soure, in Bairro Alto, and the palace of Monte Agudo, in Penha de França), to finally come to settle in the palace of the counts of Redondo, in Santa Marta, when, due to the extinction of the male line of the house of Soure, on the death, of the seventh count, D. Henrique José da Costa Carvalho Patalim Sousa Lafetá (1798-1838) without legitimate descendants, his house passed on to his sister, D. Maria Luísa (1800-1874), married to the fifteenth count of Redondo, D. José Luís de Gonzaga de Sousa Coutinho Castelo Branco e Meneses (1797-1863).

An inventory of the archive, *Índice do cartório das Excelentíssimas Casas de Soure* (Index of the archive of the illustrious house of Soure), undertaken perhaps in 1862, now in the library of the Banco de Portugal¹¹, describes the archive immediately prior to the extinction of the *morgadios*. It was organized in fifteen plus two bundles, with a total of 657 documents. In the case of the Costa branch of the family, the first and second bundles (“Lisboa”), the sixth bundle (“Morgado da Ilha de São Miguel”), the eighth bundle (“Coleginho”) and the fourteenth and fifteenth bundles (parchments and public-forms of

Macedo, to whom I am very grateful for information provided and for documents loaned. It is in the archive of Luís SPusa de Macedo that the original *Regimento do Armador-mor* is to be found.

¹⁰ Júlio de Castilho, regarding the genealogy of the Costa family, writes: “That which appeared to me to be of most worth was extracted from the *cartapácios genealógicos* (large books of genealogy) and from the very rich *cartório* (register) of the house of Soure, today in charge of the marquis of Borba, who full of good will to be useful to me, unconditionally placed his papers at my disposal” (my translations). See CASTILHO, 1962: 79.

¹¹ This inventory (BBP — FF/M52), was acquired by a collector, Fausto de Figueiredo (1911-1971), and sold to the Banco de Portugal by his heirs in 1972. See LOPES, 2015: 170.

parchments), are those in which I was able to find the description of numerous documents relating to the first four generations of *Costas com Dom*.

The precise fate of the archive remains unclear. As mentioned, Júlio de Castilho was able to consult it in the palace of the counts of Redondo, in Santa Marta, which now belongs to the Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, that acquired it from the family in 1985. Some documents may have been sold, possibly at auction, during the last century, and today a substantial number of documents¹² survive in the Adília Mendes collection in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo¹³, including a list of documents contained in the archive of the house of Soure which was drawn up in about 1802¹⁴. Other lists, such as the inventory already cited, dating from 1862¹⁵, and two more — *Relação dos documentos existentes na Casa de Soure* (List of the documents existing in the house of Soure) and *Livro de toda a fazenda que tem o Exmo. Sr. Conde de Soure* (Book of all the estate belonging to the count of Soure)¹⁶, are now in the library of the Banco de Portugal. It is uncertain if part of the archive may still be in the possession of the family.

The house of Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal archive

This family archive, acquired by the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo in 1995¹⁷, exemplifies the destiny of this type of fonds following the political,

¹² At least 75 documents from the archive of Soure-Redondo/Borba.

¹³ ANTT — *Adília Mendes: Catálogo*. Lisboa, 2014 (ID — L710), available at <<http://antt.dglab.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2008/09/Adilia-Mendes-Catalogo-final.pdf>>.

¹⁴ ANTT— *Adília Mendes*, mç. 4, n° 1, available at <<https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/details?id=4746839>>.

¹⁵ A copy of this inventory belongs now to the archive of the Fundação Eugénio de Almeida, in Évora.

¹⁶ BBP — FF/M61 and BBP — FF/M51.

¹⁷ According to information from the ANTT collections register, the archive was purchased in 1995 at an auction of the firm Palácio do Correio Velho, S.A., available at <<http://digitarq.dgarq.gov.pt/default.aspx?page=regShow&ID=4164750&searchMode=as>>. Lot 300 is thus referred to in the auction catalogue of 8th May: “A remarkable collection of manuscripts, consisting of about 1,570 documents, covering from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which is divided in chronologically dated bundles, comprising dues, inventories of goods, petitions, decrees, pecuniary, estate and

economic, and social changes which took place from the beginning of the nineteenth century and which culminated in the extinction of the *morgadios* in 1863. Thereafter, these archives were no longer able to provide proof of property and privileges, the very function which had been their *raison d'être* and which, for some five centuries, had guaranteed their survival. On the death of the last count of Óbidos, in the mid-twentieth century¹⁸, the archive, which had ceased to be active in the late nineteenth century, came into the possession of his relative, the marquis of Santa Iria, whose heirs, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, began to sell it off (although apparently not all at once, since there are records of sales at different times¹⁹). Nevertheless, most of the fonds (mainly single documents in bundles) entered the Torre do Tombo in the abovementioned purchase.

Although Torre do Tombo holds no previous inventories of this archive, we know of at least two, in the hands of private owners, who have consented to their consultation and digital reproduction²⁰. One is an exhaustive inventory (“catalogue”, in modern parlance) of the documentation preserved in the archive of the house of the counts of Óbidos in 1836. The other is an inventory of the estate of the count of Sabugal, first drawn up in 1588, but kept up to date until 1609, containing a description of the count’s income along with corresponding supporting documentation²¹. These inventories, espe-

property certificates, royal and apostolic certificates, confirmations of titles and properties, donations, etc., both on paper and on parchment, preserving mostly the original seals, in impeccable state of conservation and referring to numerous cities, towns and settlements of the Portuguese mainland and overseas (Azores, Madeira, Brazil and India), territories where the properties of this noble and influential Portuguese family extended, witnessing the important role played throughout our political and social history. It should also be noted that a large part of the documentation presents an attached sheet explaining its content, which greatly enhances it and makes it easier to read”. It ends by noting that “this set consists of twelve (12) bundles of writings chronologically divided”, and summarily describes each bundle.

¹⁸ The last count of Óbidos, D. Miguel Pedro de Melo Assis Mascarenhas, died without descent in Vigeois, France, in 1945.

¹⁹ At least two different auctions conducted by Palácio do Correio Velho, SA, in 1995 (auction of 8th May) and in 2004 (Auction nr 167, of 25th September).

²⁰ I am most grateful to the owners, Tiago Henriques and Jorge Brito e Abreu, for generously facilitating consultation and reproduction.

²¹ Already referred in *Summario* of 1836, f. 207v, under the rubric “Livros” (books), as *Livro das fazendas do Conde D. Duarte de Castello Branco, Meirinho Mor*, with the following note: “Este livro he hum indece dos papeis que continha o cartorio naquelle tempo, e se

cially the former, clearly demonstrate how this type of archive was effectively an “archive of archives”, shaped over generations by marriages, alliances, and related aggregations of property and identity, since nobiliary archives always functioned as reservoirs of genealogical credit and familial historical legitimation²².

The *Summario alfabetico dos documentos existentes no Cartorio da Illma. e Exma. Casa dos Senhores Condes de Palma, Óbidos e Sabugal* (Alphabetic summary of the documents existing in the archive of the illustrious house of the counts of Palma, Óbidos and Sabugal) contains 3,143 entries briefly describing the documents comprising the archive of the house in 1836. The frontispiece informs us that the work was “Principiado pelo P. João Fillipe da Cruz²³ redigio e concluiu Joze Joaquim Mattoso Gago da Camara²⁴ Perito Paleografico no anno de 1836. Com hum Supplemento” (Initiated by Father João Fillipe da Cruz, was written and concluded by Joze Joaquim Mattoso Gago da Câmara, expert in palaeography, in the year 1836. With a supplement). The frontispiece further informs us that the *Summario* was compiled by order of D. Manuel d’Assis Mascarenhas (1778-1839), fifth count of Óbidos, Palma and Sabugal²⁵. The then recent laws of confiscation (*desamortização*) devised by legislator Mouzinho da Silveira (1780-1849) may have contributed to the creation of the *Summario*, although the precise reason for its compilation remains unknown. The documents are described according to 123 different typologies, alphabetically arranged, the entries within each typology

não extrata por estar extratado por miudo o dito cartorio neste Indece”. It was then kept in bundle 79 as book A.

²² See IRANZO MUÑO, 2009: 88.

²³ Father João Filipe da Cruz was an expert palaeographer and author of one of the first manuals of Portuguese diplomacy, *Elementos de Diplomática Portuguesa* (1805), unpublished. See ANTT — “Manuscritos da Livraria”, nr 2193-A; GOMES, 1988; NÓVOA; LEME, 2015: 77-82.

²⁴ In 1823 he was a “diplomats officer” in the Arquivo da Torre do Tombo.

²⁵ In 1806, on the death of his father, D. José de Mascarenhas, fourth Count of Óbidos, Palma and Sabugal, he inherited his house. Born in 1778, he died in 1839, leaving as heir to the house his daughter D. Eugénia Maria d’Assis Mascarenhas, sixth Countess of Óbidos, Palma and Sabugal, who, in 1839, married Pedro Maria Bruno de Sousa Coutinho Monteiro Paim, son of the first marquis of Santa Iria, Luís Roque de Sousa Coutinho Monteiro Paim. It was through this marriage that later, in the middle of the twentieth century, the archive of the house of Óbidos would become property of the marquises of Santa Iria.

being chronologically ordered²⁶. Besides the date and typological classification, the work summarizes the documentation more or less exhaustively, indicating the bundle number and the number of the document inside the bundle.

The documents pertaining to the *morgadio* instituted by D. Gil Eanes da Costa were incorporated in the house of Palma by the marriage, at the end of the sixteenth century, of his granddaughter, D. Maria da Costa, to D. João Mascarenhas, the parents of the first count of Palma and grandparents of the second count (nephew of the first count). Comprising about 200 documents, chronologically spanning the period from the beginning of the fifteenth century up to the end of the sixteenth century, this sub-fonds is particularly important for the study of land ownership in the Santarém region and the early colonization of the Azores.

Methodology: reconstruction of institutional relationship circles. The corpus achieved

One lineage, two branches, three archives with different fates. Each of the three archives survived up to the end of the nineteenth century, one deprived of a substantial amount of its contents by fire, in the mid-seventeenth century and following the 1755 earthquake, but the other two perfectly intact.

As far as the first generations of Costas are concerned, only the sub-fonds integrated in the fonds of the house of Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal has survived until today. The other fonds, the house of *armadores-mores* and the house of Soure, as we have seen, were dispersed and are today identified only through a scant number of documents, presently scattered in various locations.

It was therefore necessary to reconstruct, from documents produced and/or preserved in other archives, what would have been the missing archives, in a chronological framework not extending beyond the first quarter of the seventeenth century, covering the first four generations of the family *Costa com Dom*.

²⁶ See ROSA; HEAD (eds.), 2016: 164-165.

Indeed, much of the documentation that belonged to a family archive could, in theory, be recuperated from the institutions with which, for a variety of reasons, family members interacted. This is clear from a simple analysis of the documentation preserved in surviving archives. With the obvious exception of private correspondence, notes, personal-jottings, memoirs and related documentation produced by family members but not otherwise reproduced or recorded, all other documentation should be recoverable from these institutions. The problem is that, for various reasons, more through neglect than catastrophe, today there is very little left in some of these institutional archives and often what remains is inaccessible either on account of its poor state of conservation (e.g., the notarial registers stored in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo), or frequently because of deficient or non-existent finding aids, preventing the location of documents in a reasonably time-efficient way.

Analysis of surviving family archives shows that much of the documentation preserved in families of the ancien régime is of a notarial nature (legal documents of all types), with the documentation produced by the Crown, although substantial, being in a lesser quantity than that produced by religious institutions.

I therefore assumed that, once the spheres of operation of family-members were identified, civil or religious, official or private, it would be possible to find in its archives part of the documentation produced by this mutual relationship.

So, I began by tracing the profiles of the various family members selected for study from the available genealogies, all relatively late²⁷, and from contemporary chronicles²⁸. These sources were virtually unanimous in showing that, in the public sphere, Álvaro da Costa was the king's *guarda-roupa* (gentleman of the bed chamber), also his *camareiro* (chamberlain), and his *armador-mor* (chief armorer), and was further ambassador to Rome and to the Spanish Court as well as being the *provedor* (principal) of Lisbon's *Misericórdia*. His son Duarte, in addition to being *armador-mor*, like his father, was an

²⁷ ARRAIS, 1934; GAIO, 1992; GÓIS, 2014; LIMA, 1925-1931; FARIA, 1957; MORAIS, 1997-1998; PEDROSA, Manuel Álvares de — *Famílias Genealógicas*, vol 4. Ms. (BA — Cod. Ms. 49-XIII-11); SOUSA, 1735-1749; *TÍTULO da família e apelidos dos Costa*. Ms. (APVF).

²⁸ ANDRADE, 1613; CORREIA, 1992; FRUTUOSO, 1998; GÓIS, 1749; SOUSA, 1844.

alderman and president of the municipality of Lisbon as well as the second governor-general of Brazil. Again, like his father, he was also *provedor* of Lisbon's *Misericórdia*. As for his brother, Gil Eanes, he was ambassador to the court of Carlos V (1516-1558) and *vedor da Fazenda* (minister of finances) to king Sebastião (1557-1578). In the private sphere, all three were linked to various convents/monasteries, in which they established chapels and to which they gave daughters as oblates to the monastic life. They received royal favors, *comendas* (commanderships) and one *alcaidaria-mor* (governorship) and also acquired urban or rural estates in addition to *tenças de juro* (annuities). All three were members of the privy council.

In the ensuing generation, spheres of operation did not change significantly, with the sons of Duarte and Gil Eanes continuing to circulate within the Court, the office of the *vedoria da fazenda* and Lisbon's city council, and also continuing to patronize the same convents/monasteries as their parents.

Thus, in order to attempt the reconstruction of the universe of production and accumulation of information of the first generations of the Costa family, I turned to the institutions that had contact with them, beginning with the institution Crown and its dependents — *Chancelaria régia* (royal chancery), *Casa dos Contos* (house of audits), *Vedoria da Fazenda* (the exchequer), *almoxarifados* (fiscal administrative divisions), *Casa da Suplicação* (supreme court of the kingdom of Portugal), various *juízos*, *provedorias* and *correições* (court judgments and related documents), *Tribunal do Santo Ofício* (inquisition), *Provedoria das Capelas* (register of chapel properties of Lisbon and its administrative area), etc.

For the royal chancery, the task was facilitated by the existence of indexes compiled during the eighteenth century. Unfortunately, the same was not true for documents which can be considered as “relating to function”, concerning the positions of *armador-mor* (chief armorer), *guarda-roupa* (gentleman of the bed chamber), *camareiro* (chamberlain), and the diplomatic missions, which are either non-existent or are now spread over different collections, most of them formed after the earthquake of 1755 which, whilst not completely destroying the Crown archives, substantially disarranged its fonds²⁹.

²⁹ On the Crown archive, see RIBEIRO, 2003, and RIBEIRO, 1998.

Mainly, the collections here concerned are the *Corpo Cronológico*, *Fragmentos*, *Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, *Colecção de Cartas* and even the *Manuscritos da Livraria*, *Colecção São Vicente*, among others.

Most of the numerous *tenças* (annuities) obtained by members of the family, both through purchase and royal favor, were registered in the books of the chancery, where further reference is found to other annuities, the records for which are unknown on account of the loss of the relevant books, this being especially evident for the reign of king Manuel I. Further, in the chancery records we can find references to various deeds for which we know the dates but not the contents due to the loss of the relevant books from the registry offices. Even so, considering that this documentation would have been part of the archive at that time, I considered the information pertinent, as well as some royal *alvarás de lembrança* (certificates of memorandum of royal favor) and acquisitions of property, etc., which can also be found in the records of the chancery.

Since the relationships of family members were not confined to the Crown, I also identified the religious institutions sponsored by them. These religious institutions were, for the first two generations, the Order of Saint Jerome (monastery of São Jerónimo da Penha Longa, Sintra), the Dominicans (convents of Nossa Senhora do Paraíso in Évora, Nossa Senhora da Saudação in Montemor-o-Novo, and Anunciada in Lisbon) and the Cistercians (monasteries of Santa Maria de Almoester, near Santarém, and São Dinis de Odivelas, near Lisbon). Later the Jesuits were also sponsored by family members, three grandchildren of D. Álvaro da Costa having professed in the order. Unfortunately, the monastic/conventual fonds, generally very rich in familial information, lacked adequate finding aids, which made searching very difficult, often leading to disappointing results.

A group of fonds that could provide important information for the reconstruction of the archives of these first generations would be that of the public notaries of Lisbon (a total of eighteen having survived the earthquake of 1755), but unfortunately I was able to access only a tiny portion of these registries for the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century that had not been destroyed either by the great earthquake or through negligence, since only about 20% of the respective notebooks could be consulted

in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, the remaining 80% being “in a poor state of conservation” and without prospect of recovery. Even so, in the few books falling within our chronological range that I was able to consult, I managed to identify a dozen entries concerning various members of the third generation of the family.

Other archival fonds explored were those of the *Misericórdias*, however results were achieved only in the case of the *Misericórdia* of Évora, to which D. Álvaro da Costa had bequeathed a large annuity to be used for charitable works (especially on the marriage of orphans) and nothing in the case of the *Misericórdia* of Lisbon, the archive of which is well known to retain very little documentation dating prior to the eighteenth century.

The Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa also yielded some documentation, not only regarding the duties as alderman and as president of D. Duarte da Costa and his nephew D. Gil Eanes da Costa (1543-1612), but also concerning the palace built by Álvaro da Costa in Porta da Oura, which, being inherited by his son Duarte, remained in this branch of the family until the mid-eighteenth century.

In addition to these Portuguese archival fonds, documentation surviving in Brazil was also examined, principally that concerning D. Duarte da Costa's duties as governor-general. Much of the material pertaining to matters of government was published in the series *Documentos Históricos da Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro*, in which I was able to identify a set of documents produced while D. Duarte was in Brazil, including some letters addressed to him by king João III (1521-1557)³⁰.

Finally, the above mentioned inventories of the archive of the house of Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal, dated 1836, and of the house of Soure, dated 1862, were essential elements in the reconstruction of the documentary production, not only of D. Gil Eanes da Costa and his sons, D. João and D. Gil Eanes, but also of D. Álvaro da Costa himself. These inventories give an overview of the family archives in the mid-nineteenth century, allowing us, through comparison with documentation identified in other fonds, to appreciate the

³⁰ See *Documentos históricos* (1937): 195-404, available at <<http://bndigital.bn.br/acervo-digital/documentos-historicos/094536>>.

fragmentary nature of our vision of these archives which, over the years, were augmented and diminished according to the interests and objectives of each moment.

Conclusion

The study of inventories, combined with the analysis of other records produced and preserved by institutions other than the families, allowed us the reconstruction of archives that no longer exist.

From the described cluster of archival fonds, for the first two generations I was able to gather a total of 407 items, including originals, registrations, transcripts, and simple references. For the four generations under scrutiny, the total number of documents identified was 645.

The greatest contribution to the reconstruction of the documentary production of these four generations came from the “Costa sub-fonds” in the family archive of the house of Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal, presently kept in the Torre do Tombo under the name *Casa de Santa Iria* (house of Santa Iria)³¹. This contribution comprised preserved originals or transcripts and references to documents since disappeared as listed in the inventory of the archive made in 1836, the *Summario alfabetico*. Other family fonds, such as that of *Casa Palmela* and that of *Casa de Abrantes*, provided some items, but above all it was another inventory, that of the archive of the house of Soure, probably written in 1862, that contributed a further 233 documents to the family archives which, together with the 412 from the other fonds mentioned, gave the total of 645 documents produced by the first generations of *Costas com Dom*, that at one point formed the contents of their archives³². The “virtual

³¹ The name of the last owner of the archive bought in 1995 by the Torre do Tombo. In fact, this archive should not be called Casa de Santa Iria but Casa de Óbidos–Palma–Sabugal.

³² I have not included in this total the “accumulated” documentation which is preserved in the “Costa sub-fonds” of the *Casa de Santa Iria* archive that accompanied the properties inherited or acquired by D. Gil Eanes da Costa and his descendants.

archives” thus created enabled the study of the family group’s social history as well as the history of its documentary production³³.

³³ My PhD thesis, discussed in January 2019 and entitled *Costas com Dom: família e arquivo. Séculos XV-XVII*, represents the result of this investigation at: <<https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/65519>>.