

*International Congress dedicated to the work of Bolognese artists in Portugal from  
16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century*

*Bologna 30 November – 1 December 2015*

*University of Bologna - Centro Studi sul Rinascimento – Fondazione Carisbo – École  
Pratique des Hautes Études – Sorbonne, Paris*

## **Giovanni Carlo Bibbiena, the “Real Barraca” and the old palace of Ajuda**

**Maria Isabel Braga Abecasis – Direção Geral do Livro, dos Arquivos e das  
Bibliotecas**

**Torre do Tombo - Lisboa**



**Giovanni Carlo Sicino Galli Bibiena (1717-1760) was born in Bologna in a famous family of Italian architects and scenographers.**

**In 1752 Bibiena was hired by the Portuguese king Joseph I. He came to Portugal with his wife Isabel Bercaria and his son Giovanni Crisostomo.**

**The Portuguese king Joseph I wished to implement in Portugal a sort of Italian opera, and Bibiena was committed to put this idea into practice.**

**Bibiena himself selected some artists to work at pictorial and scenography areas, and hired several Roman artists to work at the Portuguese royal opera, among them was the Italian opera composer, David Perez.**





As soon as he arrived in Lisbon, in the beginning of 1752, he was ordered to design three theaters. This is an image of the stage of “Ópera do Tejo” on its opening day on the 31 March 1755 with the opera “Alexander in India”



*Architetto del Teatro, Inventore, e Pittor delle Scene*

*Il Signor Gio: Carlo Sicinio Galli Bibbiena di Bologna.*

**ALESSANDRO**  
**NELL' INDIE,**  
**DRAMMA PER MUSICA**  
DA RAPPRESENTARSI NEL GRAN TEATRO  
NUOVAMENTE ERETTO ALLA REAL CORTE  
DI LISBONA,  
*Nella Primavera dell' anno MDCCLV.*  
PER FESTEggiARE  
IL FELICISSIMO GIORNO NATALIZIO  
DI SUA MAESTÀ FEDELISSIMA  
**D. MARIA ANNA**  
**VITTORIA**  
Regina di Portogallo, Algarve, &c. &c. &c.  
PER COMANDO  
DELLA SACRA REAL MAESTÀ  
**DEL RE FEDELISSIMO**  
**NOSTRO SIGNORE.**

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*LA POESIA DEL DRAMMA*  
E' del Celebre Sig:<sup>r</sup> Ab:<sup>o</sup> Pietro Metastasio, Romano,  
Poeta Cesareo, &c.

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*LA LICENZA*  
E' del Sig:<sup>r</sup> Giuseppe Bonechy, Fiorentino,  
Poeta di Sua Maestà Fedelissima, et in attual Servizio delle Corti  
di Vienna, e di Pietroburgo.

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*LA MUSICA*  
E' del Sig:<sup>r</sup> David Perez, Napolitano,  
Maestro di S. A. R. la Signora Principessa del Brasile, e delle Signore  
Infante di Portogallo.

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**LISBONA,**  
Nella Regia Stamperia SYLVIANA, e dell' Accademia Reale.  
MDCCLV.



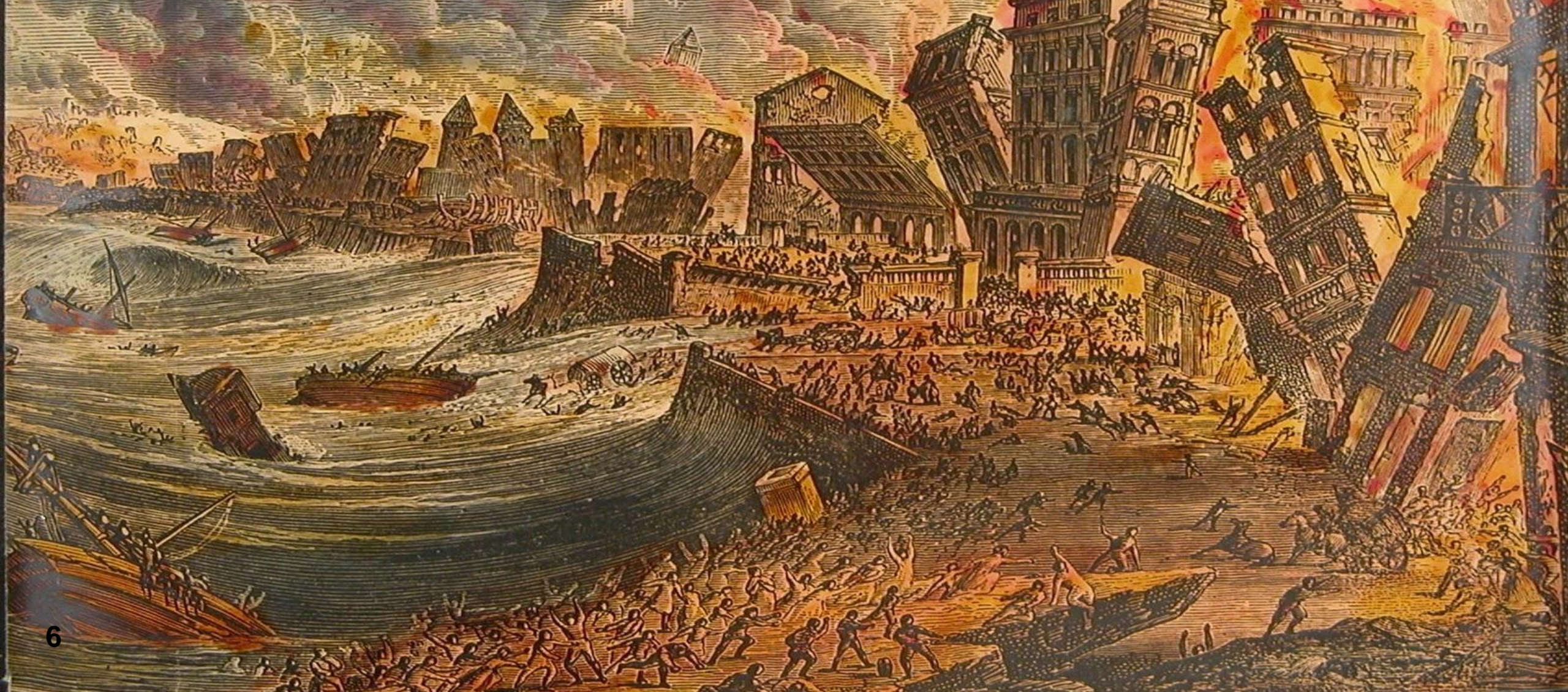
**February 1755: 2nd marriage of Bibiena with the portuguese, born in Brasil, Rosa Maria de Jesus. A lot of people attended the marriage, among them the witness João Pedro Ludovici who superintended a lot of the royal constructions**

**Church  
of Santa  
Catarina  
do  
Monte  
Sinai**





**But in that very same year of 1755, a very dramatic event was going to change the life of Bibiena and his Italian colleagues, who worked for the Portuguese royal court: the terrible earthquake which destroyed Lisbon on the first of November 1755**





**In the aftermath of the terrible event, several colleagues of Bibiena were dismissed, no longer needed in Lisbon.**

**There were other priorities at the time. Ballet dancers, musicians, painters and scenographers returned to Italy.**

**For example on November 10th 1755, 9 days after the earthquake, Opera House Dancers, Vice-Domini, Alover, Morino, Nevi and Michel, were given a passport to return to Italy.**



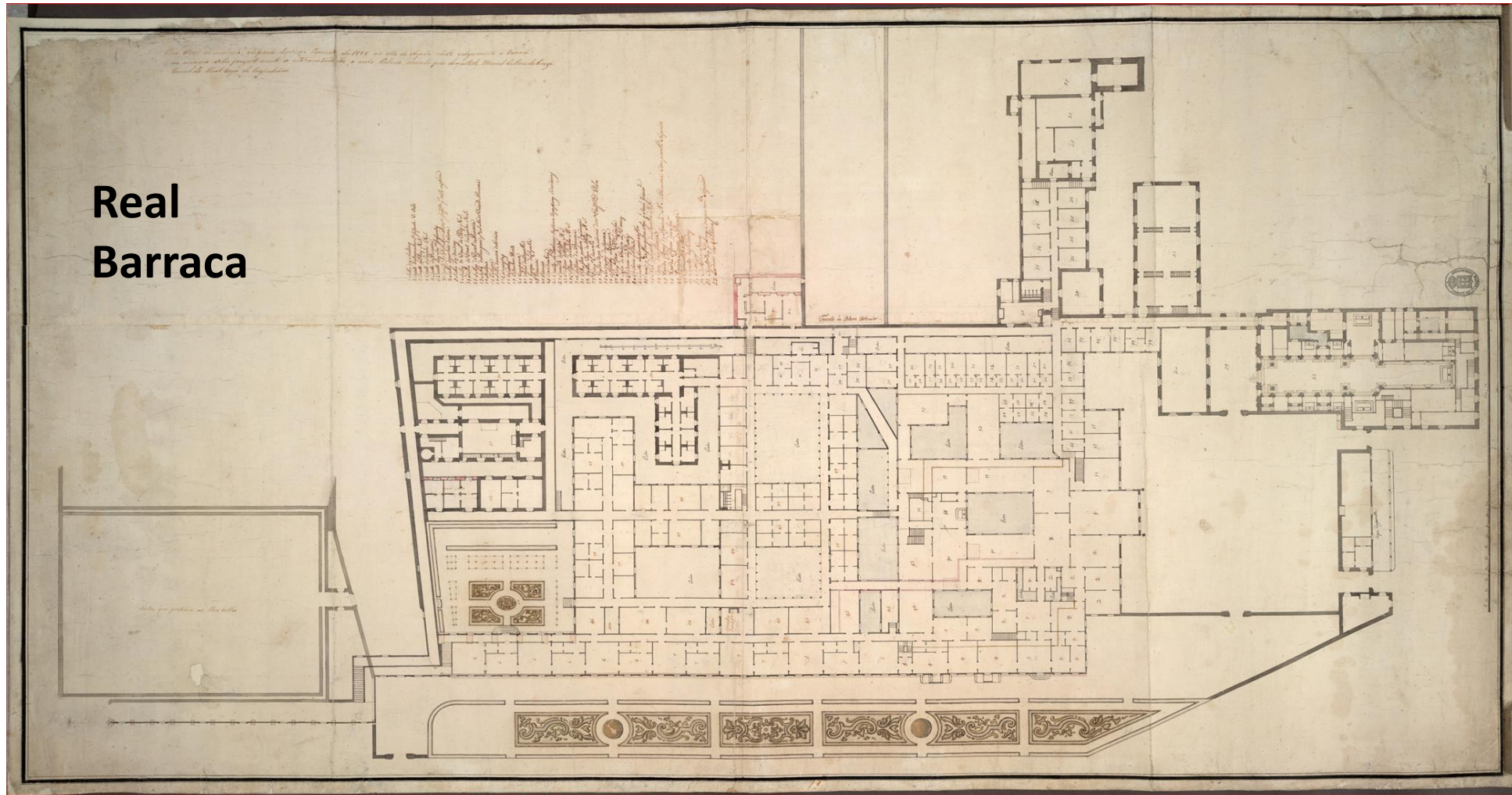


**But Bibiena stayed. On 12 november 1755 he wrote to his brother saying he was worried about “what would happen in the future”.**

**However, after a few months, Bibiena was already involved in a new project**

**This project would be known as the Portuguese “Real Barraca”  
A huge barrack made of wood and brick, that would be the residence of the Portuguese royal family for the next forty years.**

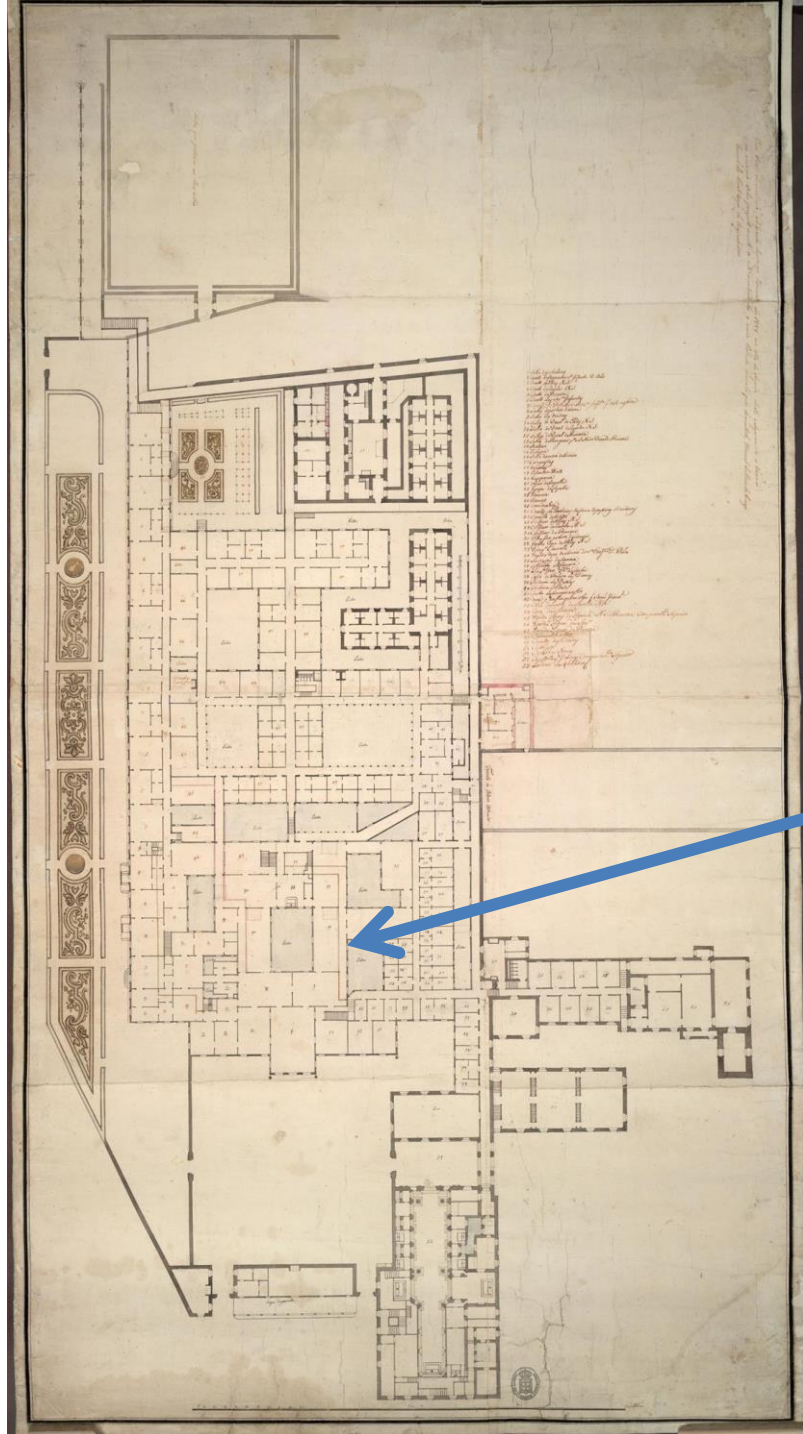
**Real  
Barraca**





**Terrified by the earthquake, king Joseph I no longer wanted to live in houses made of stone.**

**The plan of the Real Barraca, designed by Bibiena, illustrates the location of several rooms, location which, in spite of the several works carried out later for a considerable period, would probably remain unchanged for some rooms of common use: Courtrooms (10, 11), Oratory (14) and others**

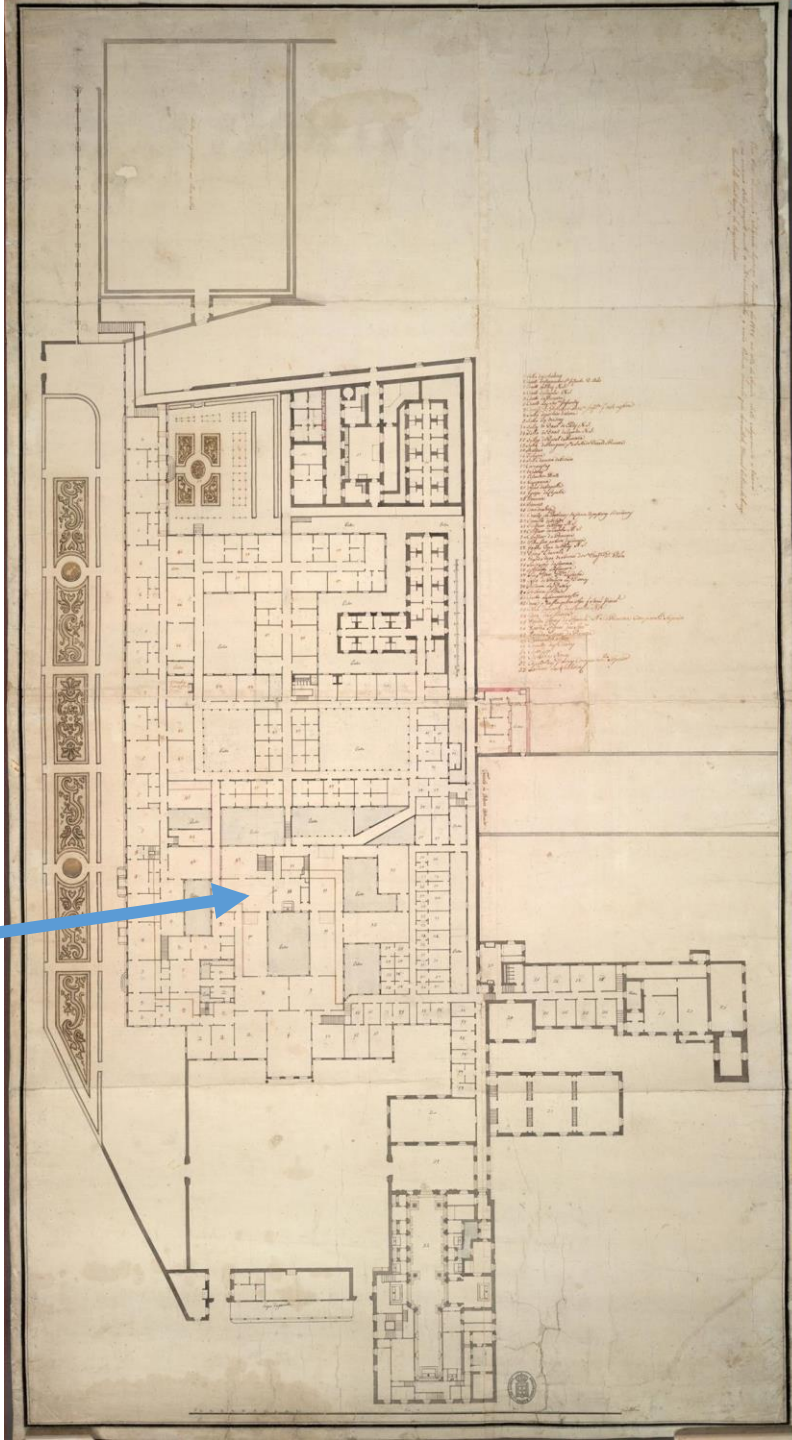


**11 –  
Queen  
Mariana  
Vitoria  
courtroom**





**10 – King José I  
courtroom**



**The courtrooms of the royal family, areas of glamour and power, were covered by crimson clothes and tapestries, and were located in the central area of the palace**



**These tapestries, created according to Goya drawings, later decorated the Real Barraca.  
This one “The lunch” evokes the Madrid quotidian of that time**

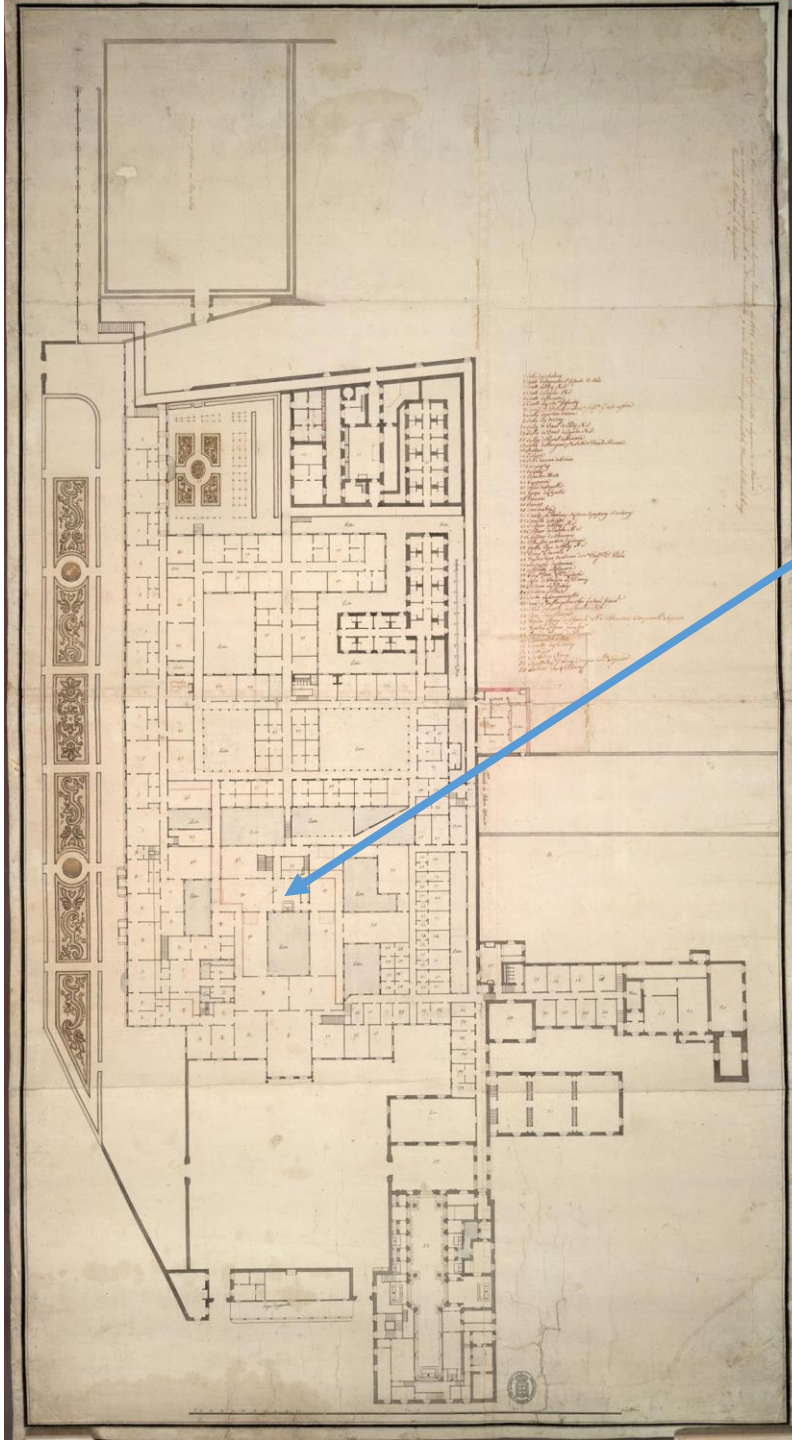




**The oratory, area of prayer, also located in the central area, was also covered in crimson damask, velvet and golden stripe**



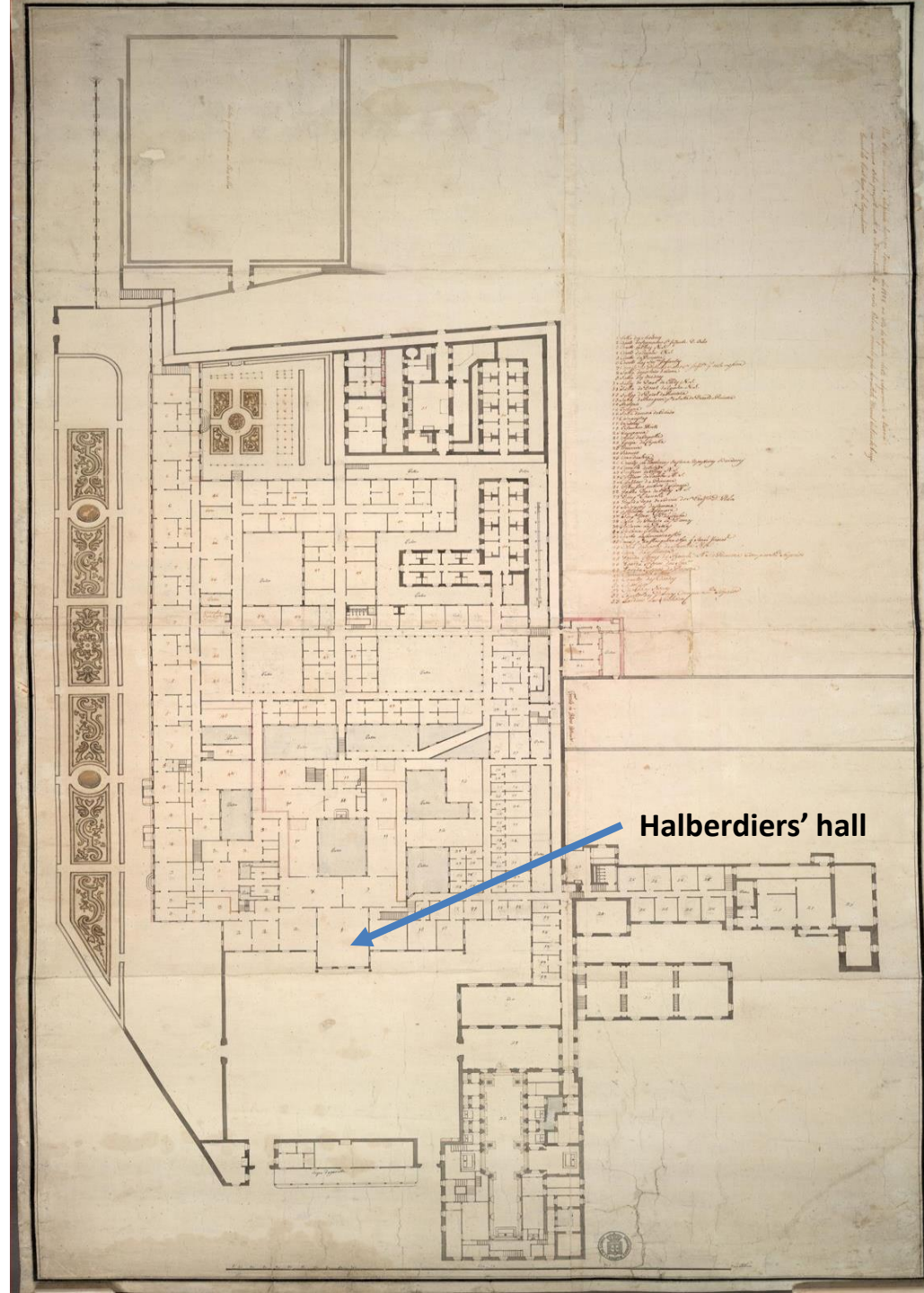




**14 - Oratory**

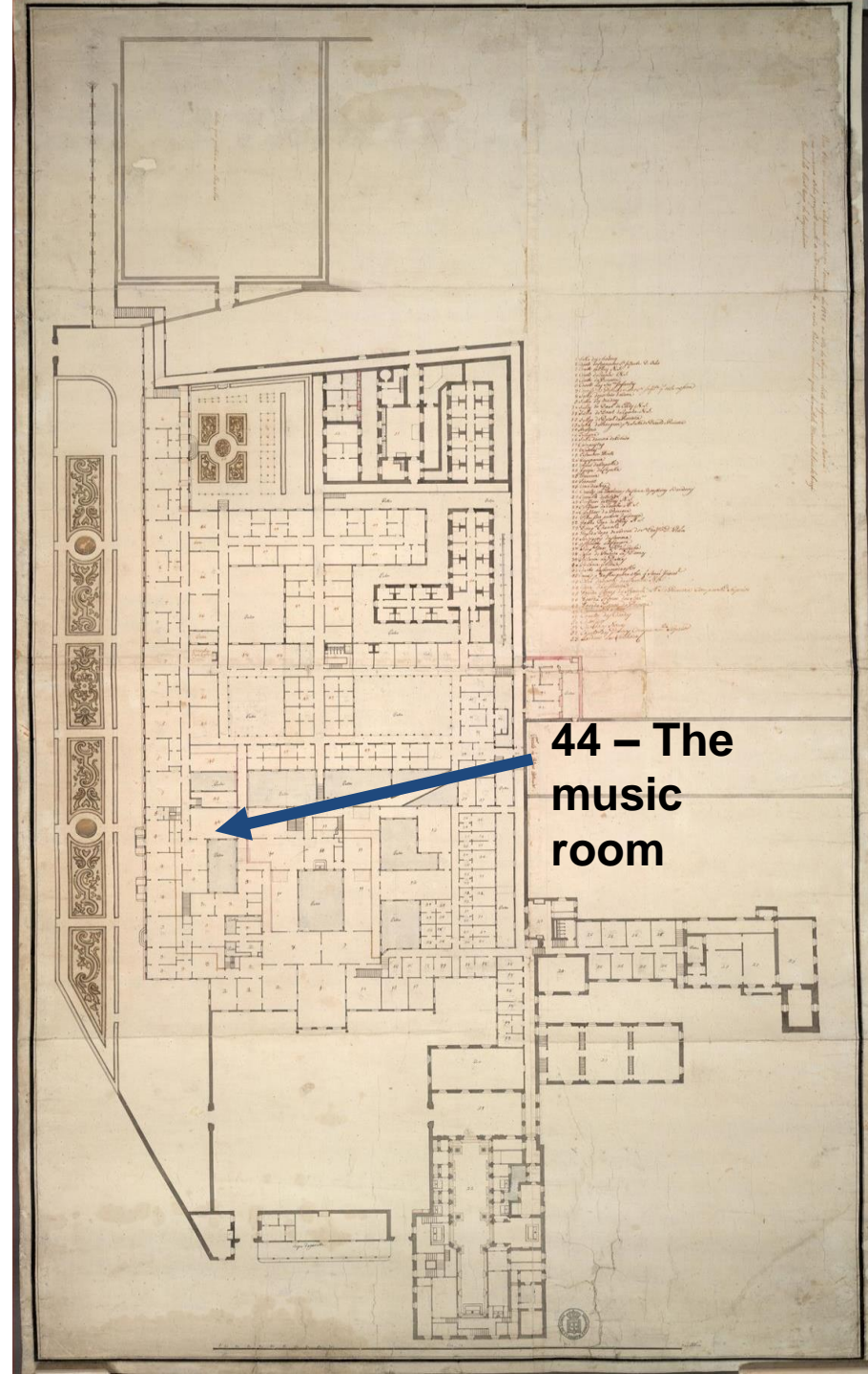


Protecting the palace and the royal family, the halberdiers, dressed in red and blue, were present in several ceremonies : “the halberdiers formed aisles in the same room where the marine officers attended me” says the French ambassador, Marquis de Bombelles, reporting a visit to the Portuguese royal court at the Real Barraca.



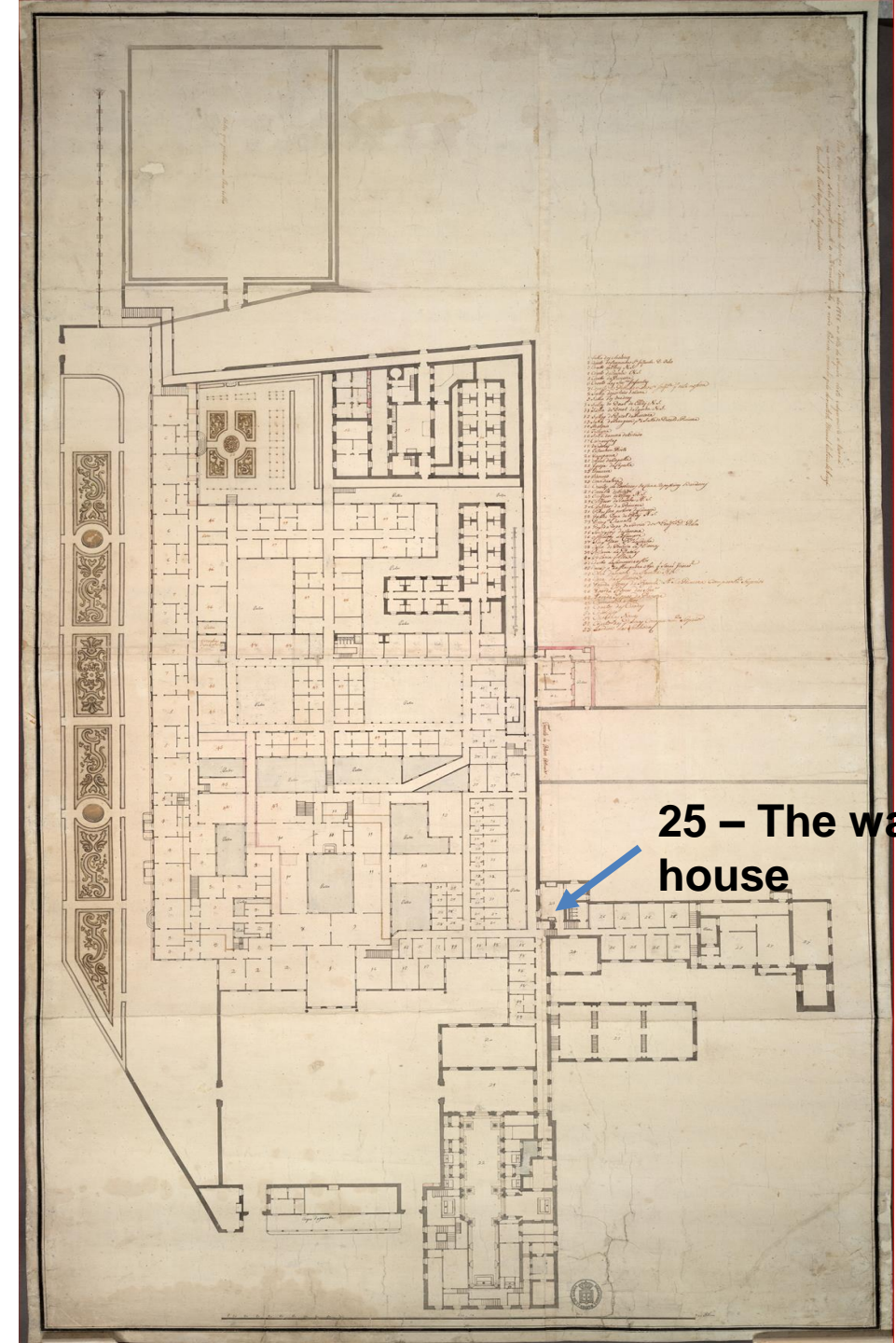


Close to the central area of the palace the music room was the place where the royal family enjoyed one of its preferred pleasures





The candles were necessary in everyday routine and also in the lighting of the musical performance's characters and scenographies to give a contrast of the light and the shade.



25 - The wax house



**According to Bibiena's letter, written in 1757 to the Italian earl Cesar Alberto Malvasia, regarding the project of the palace Malvasia, he praises the perfect connection and adjustment of this palace to the pre-existing surrounding zones.**

**Likewise Bibiena would adapt and articulate the design of the Real Barraca in Lisbon to the surrounding zones**



He would connect the Real Barraca to the pre existing "Paço Velho" a palace acquired in the beginning of the eighteenth century by King John V, father of king Joseph I.

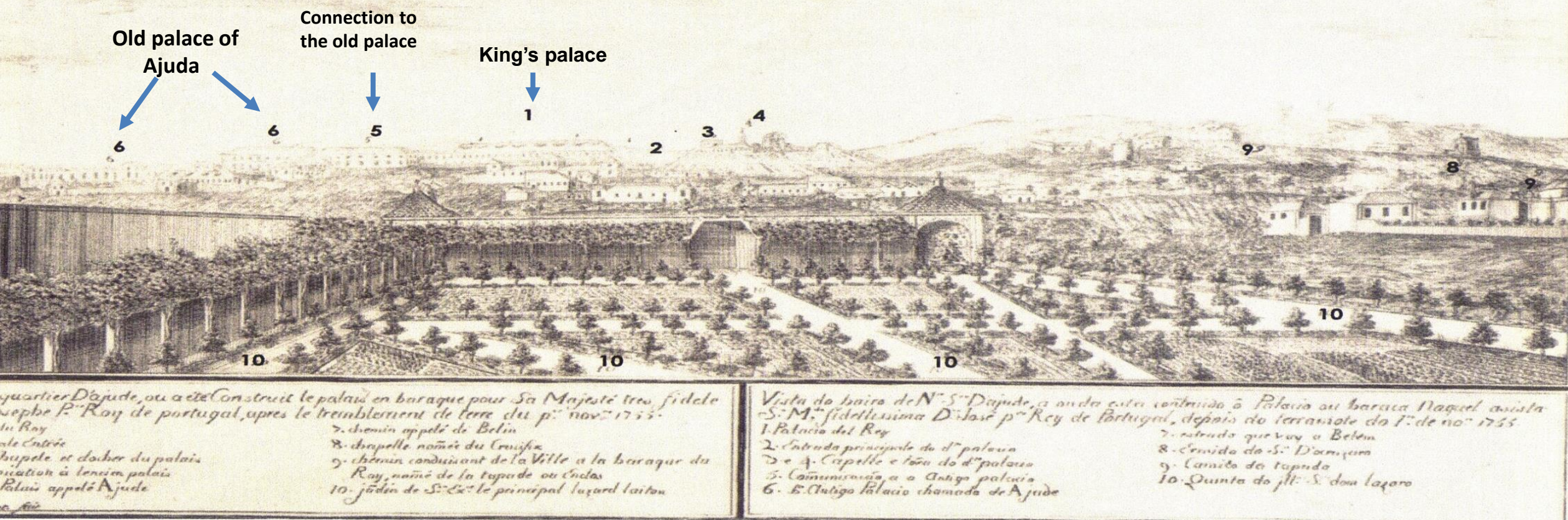
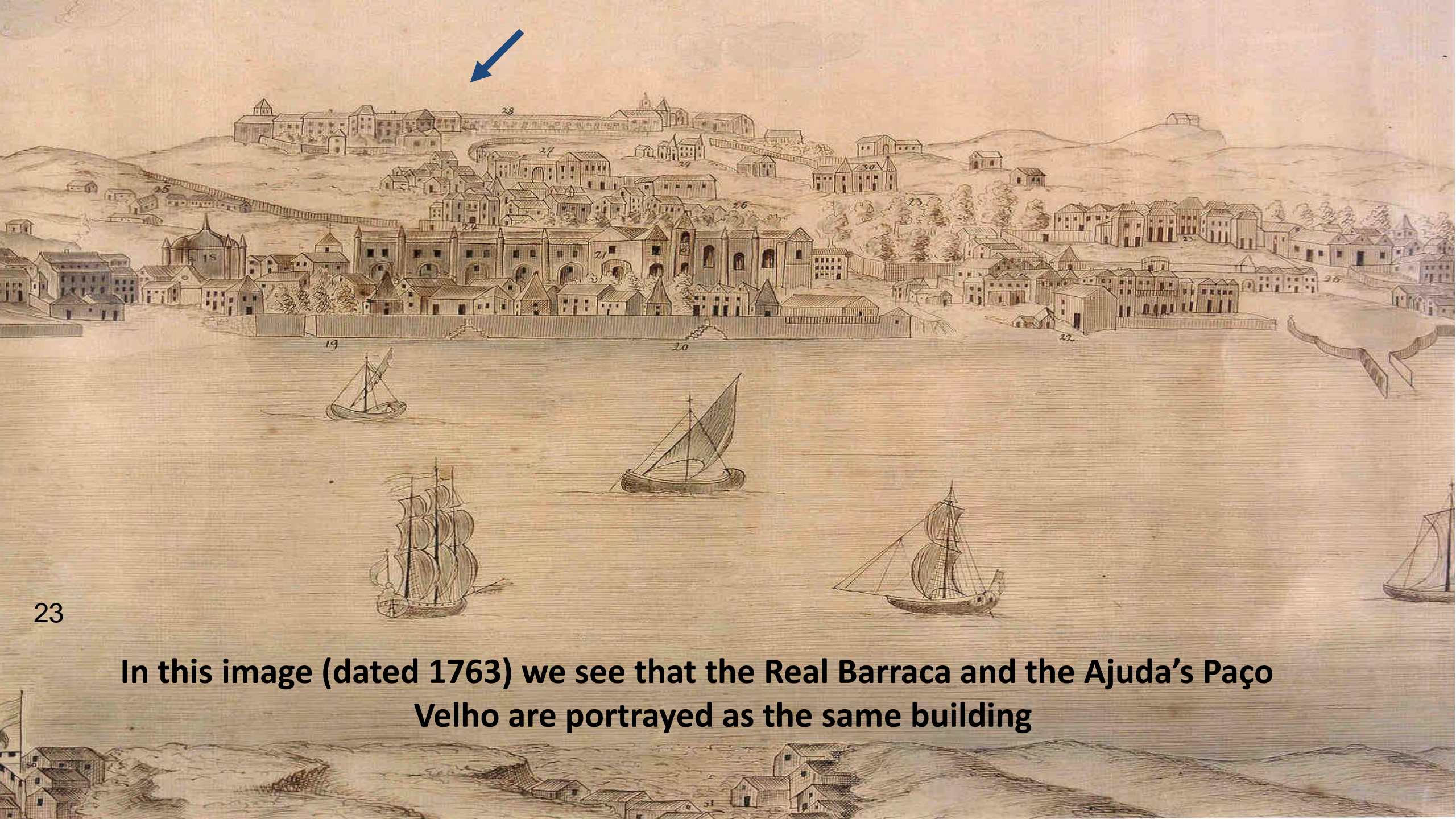


Imagem 7 Vista do Bairro de Nossa Senhora da Ajuda onde se está construindo o Palácio ou a Barraca na qual assiste S.M. Fidelíssima D. José I Rei de Portugal, depois do terramoto do 1º de Novembro de 1755

- 1 Palácio do Rei
- 2 Entrada principal do dito palácio
- 3 e 4 Capela e torre do dito palácio
- 5 Comunicação ao antigo palácio
- 6 Antigo palácio chamado de Ajuda
- 7 Estrada que vai a Belém
- 8 Ermida da Senhora do Cruzeiro
- 9 Caminho da Tapada
- 10 Quinta do ILL. S. Dom Lázaro

Neighborhood of Ajuda where is being built the king's Joseph the first 's barrack, after the earthquake





23

**In this image (dated 1763) we see that the Real Barraca and the Ajuda's Paço Velho are portrayed as the same building**



**The old palace's connection to the Real Barraca would last until after the burning of the barrack in 1794, and would remain for over a century connecting the new Ajuda Palace to the old Paço Velho.**

**The new Ajuda Palace was initiated two years after the fire, and replaced the barrack, being built at approximately the same location.**



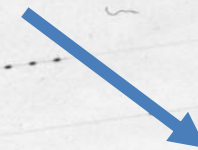
Here is the archway, which connected the actual Ajuda palace to these 2 buildings (which were very likely outbuildings of the Real Barraca) and to the Paço Velho. This photo was taken in 1939

Paço Velho

Very likely outbuildings of the Real Barraca

Archway

Actual Ajuda Palace



**Here is a photo of the same archway, which was destroyed in the 20th century, in the decade of 1950**



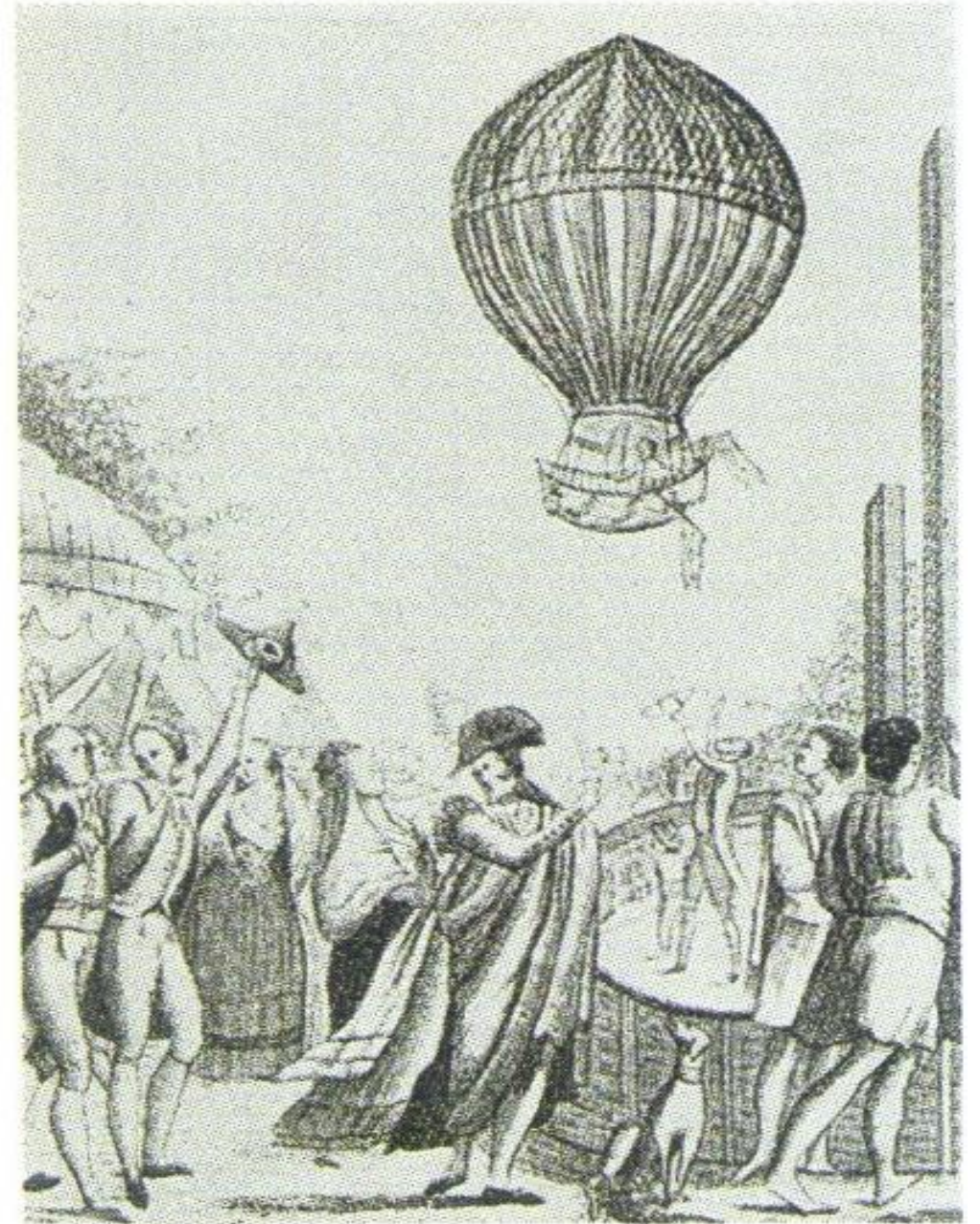




**Since the construction of the “Real Barraca”, the “Paço Velho” was considered its “accessory”. Where, later, the Botanical Garden and the Natural History Museum would be created, for the princes’ studies and education.**

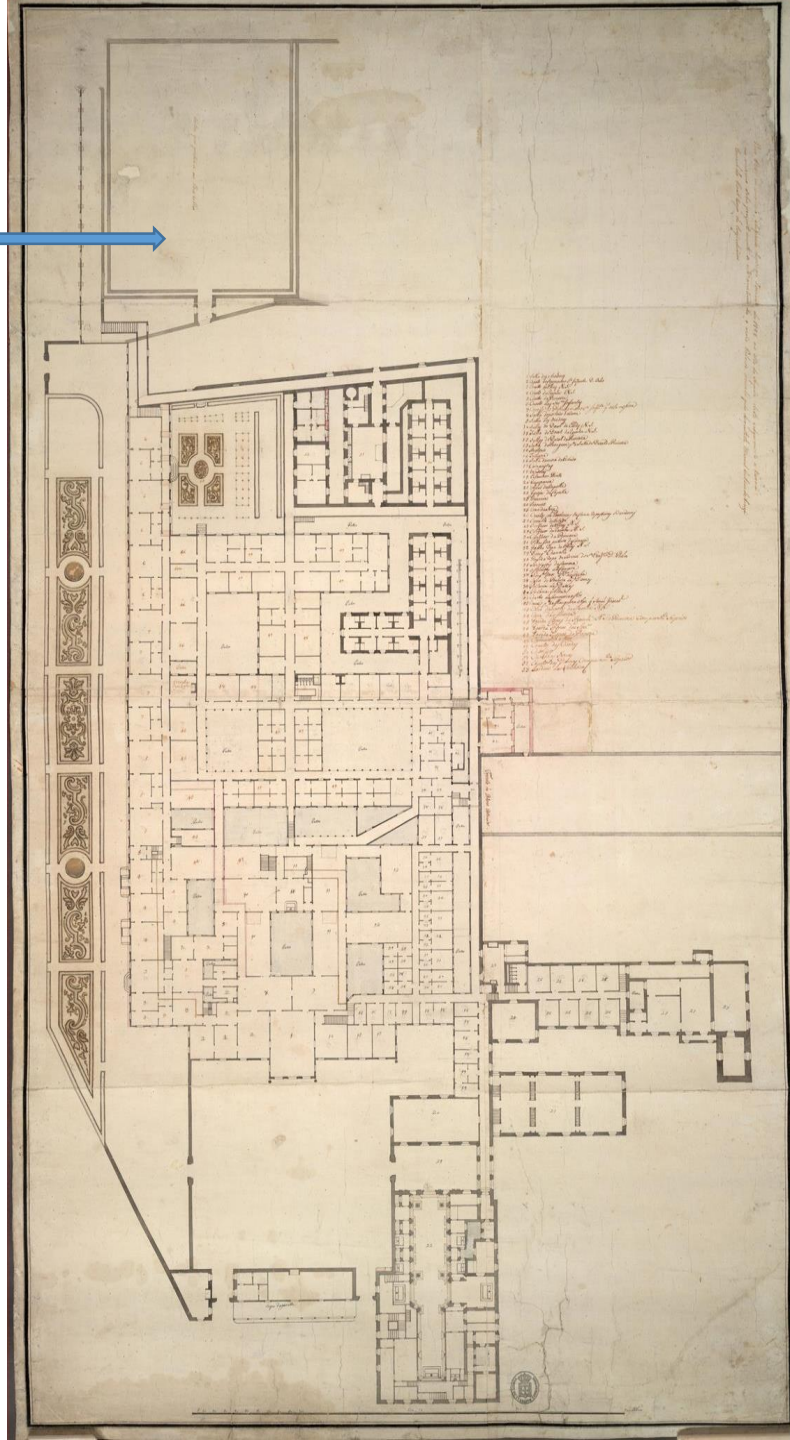


**In that same Botanical Garden, aerostatic machines would be launched, on two separate occasions, in front of an enthusiastic royal family, and other observers.**





**Courtyard belonging  
to Paço Velho**



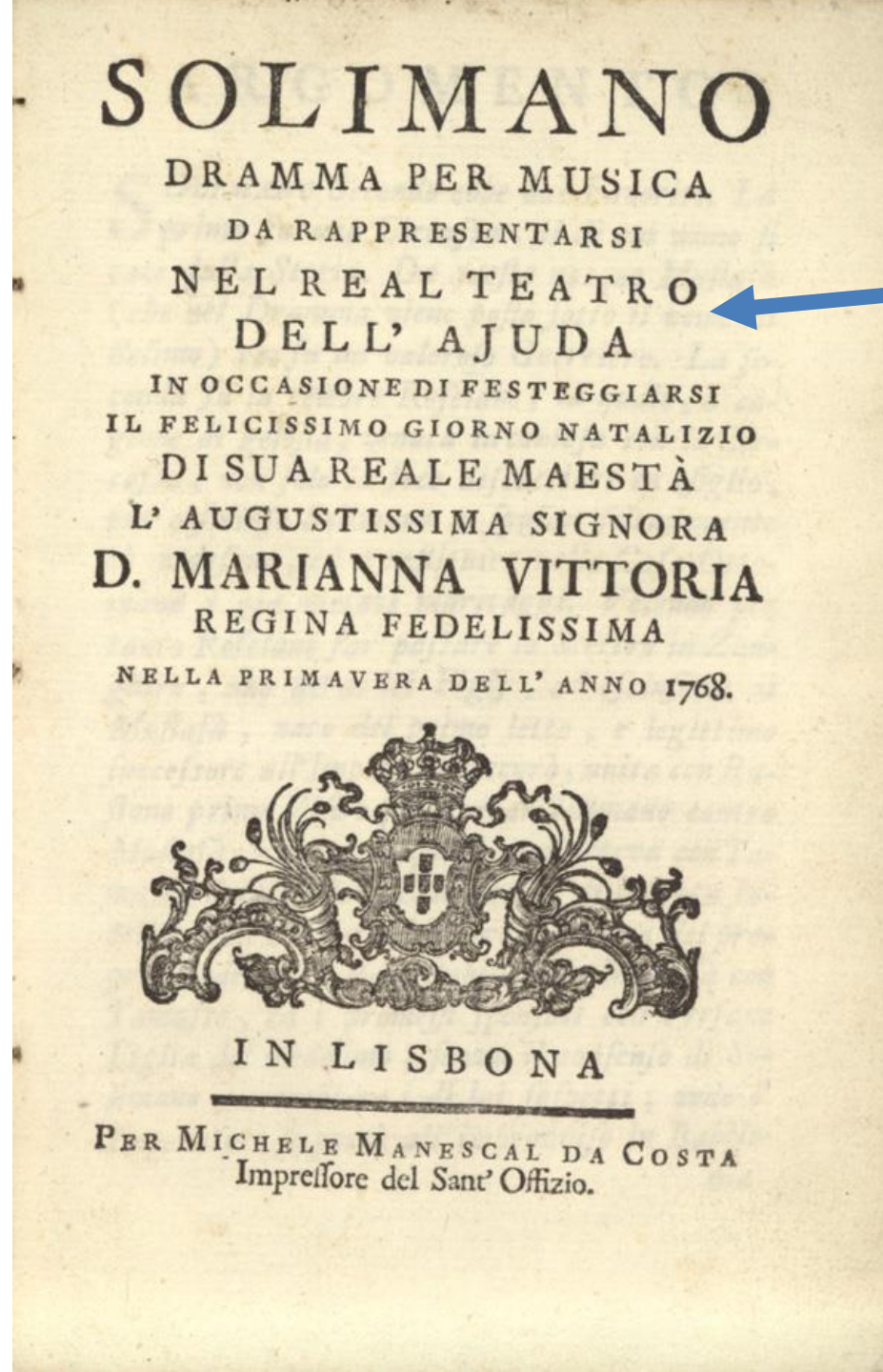
**In Bibiena's plan of the  
Real Barraca we can see  
a courtyard called  
"Courtyard which  
belongs to Paço Velho"  
which also illustrates the  
Bibiena's idea to adapt  
and articulate the  
barrack to the pre-  
existent surrounding  
zones**

**Archaeological researches demonstrate that the Real Barraca was narrower and longer than the actual Ajuda Palace.**

**The actual Ajuda Palace's eastward facade was receded in relation to the Real Barraca**



The “Pátio da Ópera” was another courtyard of the “Paço Velho” where the “Teatro Real da Ajuda” was built, also known at the time as “Opera house”



**Here took place the musical performances so appreciated by the royal family. For example operas like *Vicende de la Sorte*, *Solimano*, *Faetonte*, *Alexandre na Índia* and others .**

**The “Teatro Real da Ajuda”(a small theater with a large stage) was constantly being covered and striped of clothes and tapestries, as one can verify in the Royal House’s financial records: “dismantling the Opera House to send the clothes and curtains to Salvaterra” “setting the Opera House for the birthday of infante D. João” “setting the box for the prince due to the measless of infante D. João” .**

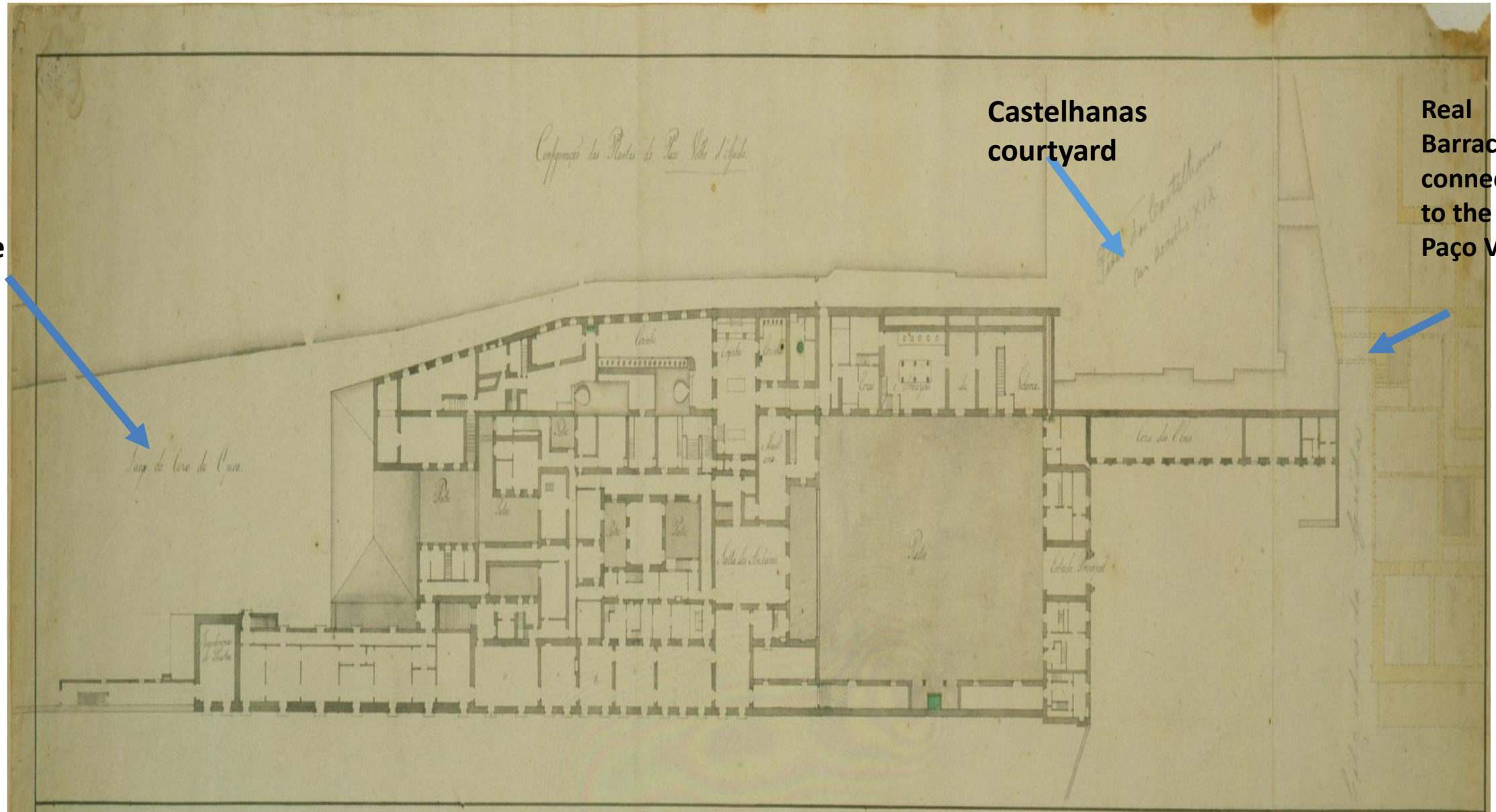


Here is a plan of Paço Velho in the 18th century. We can see the “Opera house square” on the left and the Real Barraca connection to the Paço Velho on the right. The “Castelhanas courtyard” marked in the picture indicated the place where the Spanish ladies of queen Mariana Vitória, wife of king José I, were housed

Opera house square

Castelhanas courtyard

Real Barraca connection to the Paço Velho

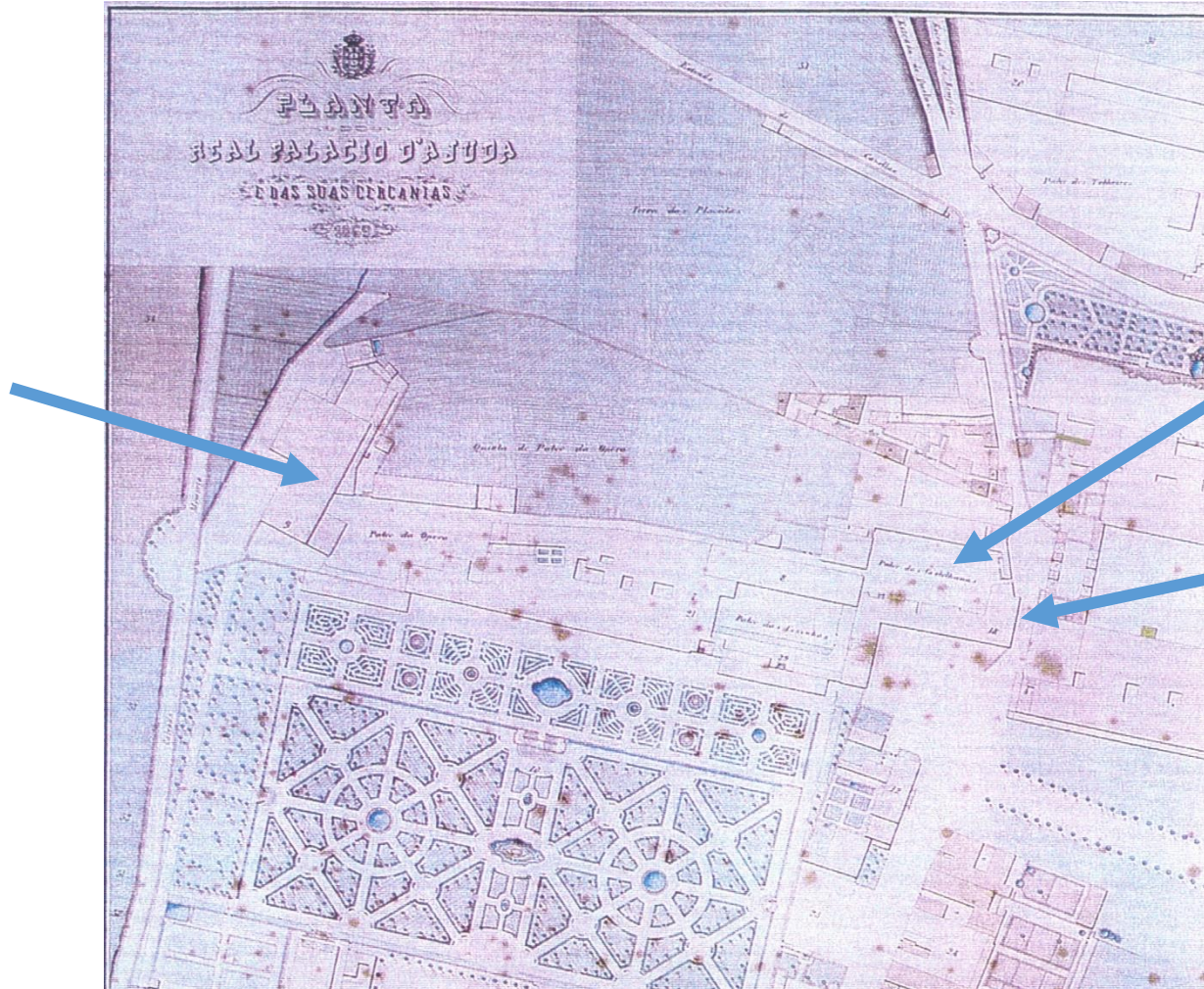


**Like all the sections of the Paço Velho, the Teatro Real da Ajuda didn't burn in the fire of 1794 which destroyed almost all of the Real Barraca**



Here is a section of a 19th century map of the new Ajuda Palace and its surroundings. The “Teatro Real da Ajuda ” is marked in the picture as well as the “Castelhanas courtyard”

Ajuda theater



Castelhanas courtyard

Ajuda Palace connection to the Paço Velho

**In the 19th century the “Teatro Real da Ajuda” was gradually decaying. In 1870 it was portrayed as “An old building belonging to the Royal Palace, nowadays in ruins”**

**Nowadays the Opera Courtyard is occupied by military factories, but its name is still remembered by one sign placed on a wall.**

**Except for this sign, nothing else seems to remember the old theater**





**This is  
the Patio  
da Ópera  
nowadays**

**Very close to the  
Real Barraca was  
located the Royal  
Chapel, also  
designed by Bibiena**



**Royal  
Chapel**



The Royal Chapel was connected to the Real Barraca by a gallery which had in the late 1750 decade slide glasses held on by braids with tassels in crimson twine.

On some celebrations, like prince or princess baptisms, this gallery was occupied by musicians.

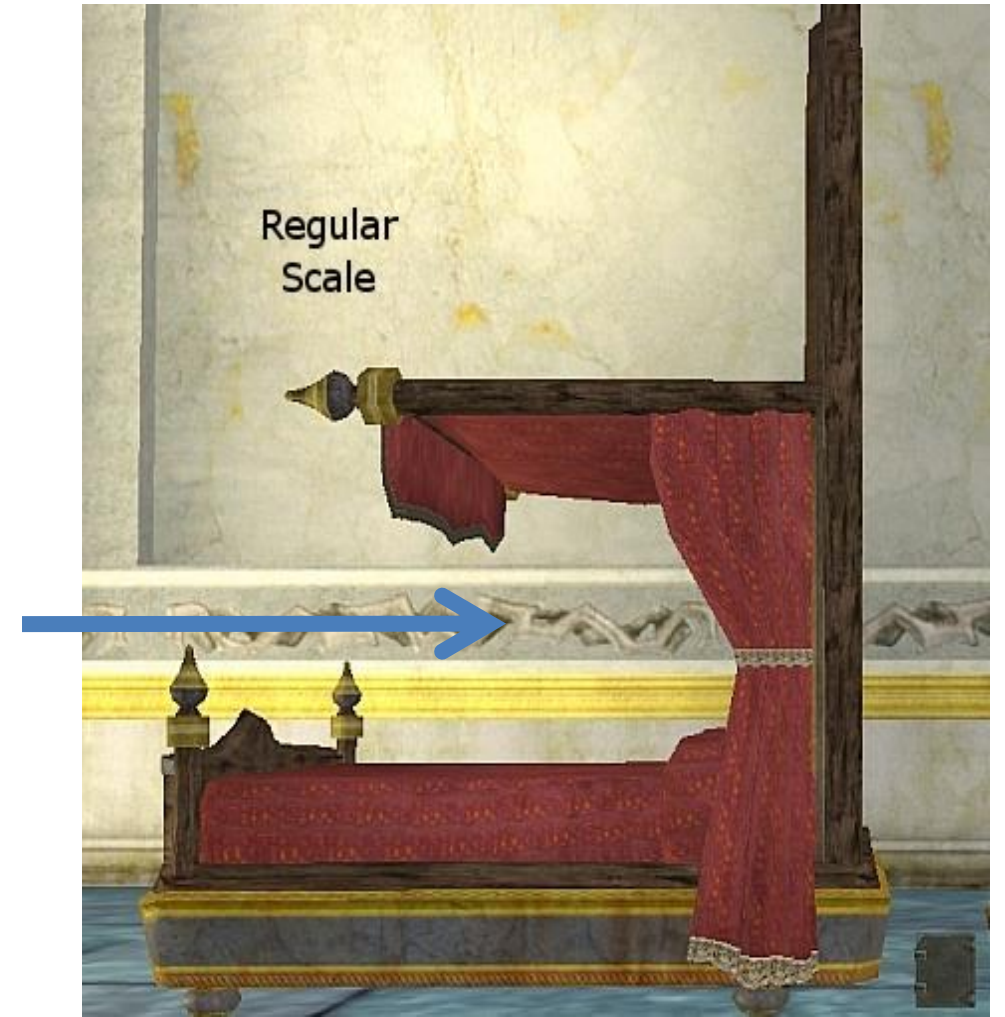
“I have never heard and probably I will never hear again such great and touching music ” says William Beckford the famous English author who visited Portugal in the final of the eighteenth century.



**A testimony of 1761 describes several interior areas of the royal chapel: the baptistery, located on the right after the entry of the church where was installed the canopy bed occupied by the nurse at the baptism of prince D. José, grandson of king José I.**

**The long ceremony demanded the presence of the nurse. Like many others pieces of furniture the bed was all covered in crimson damask, the plafond included. Two more beds were prepared for the nurse. One in the Saint Christ Chapel, and another at the tribune which was located on a upper level.**

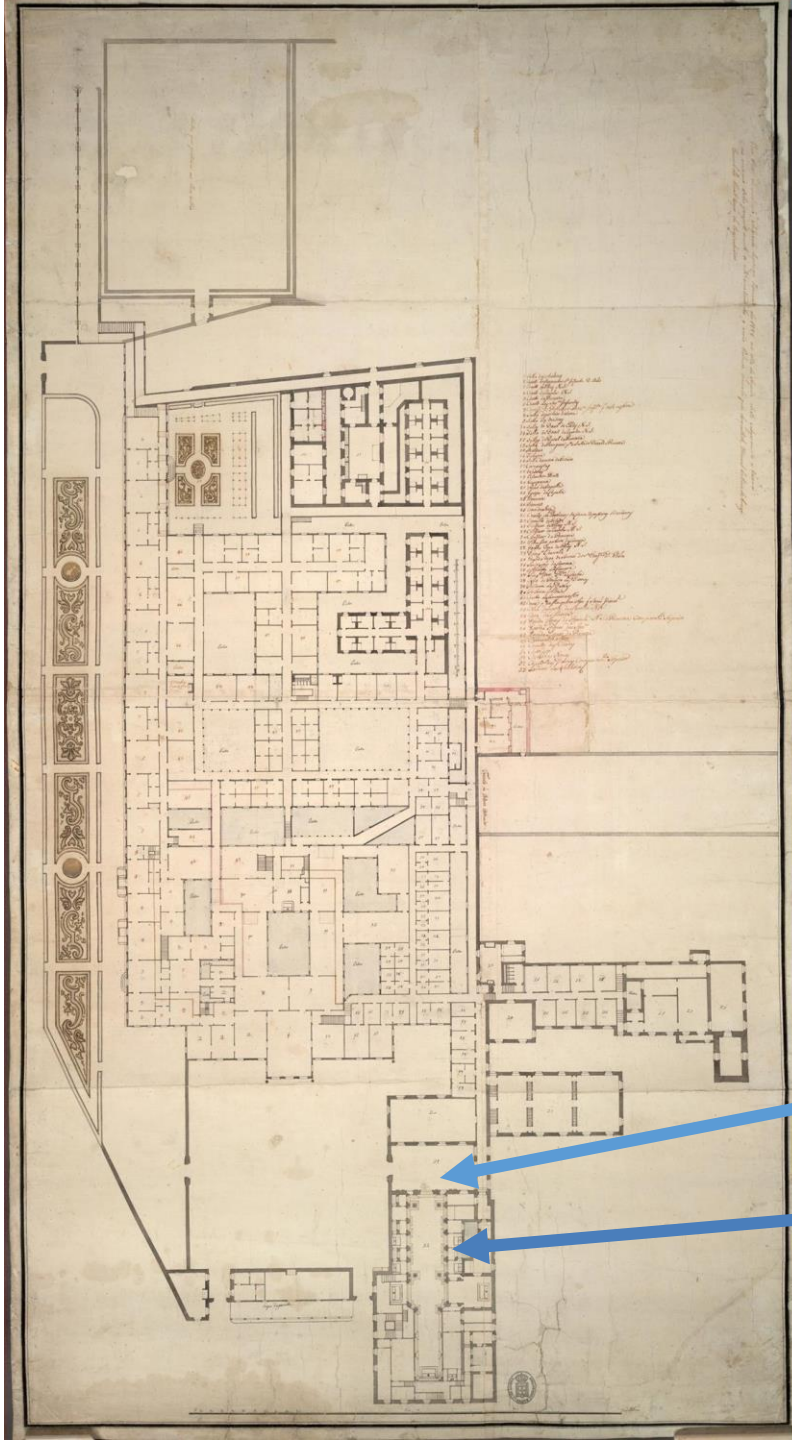
Canopy bed





**The king sat on a throne covered in crimson damask and golden stripe**



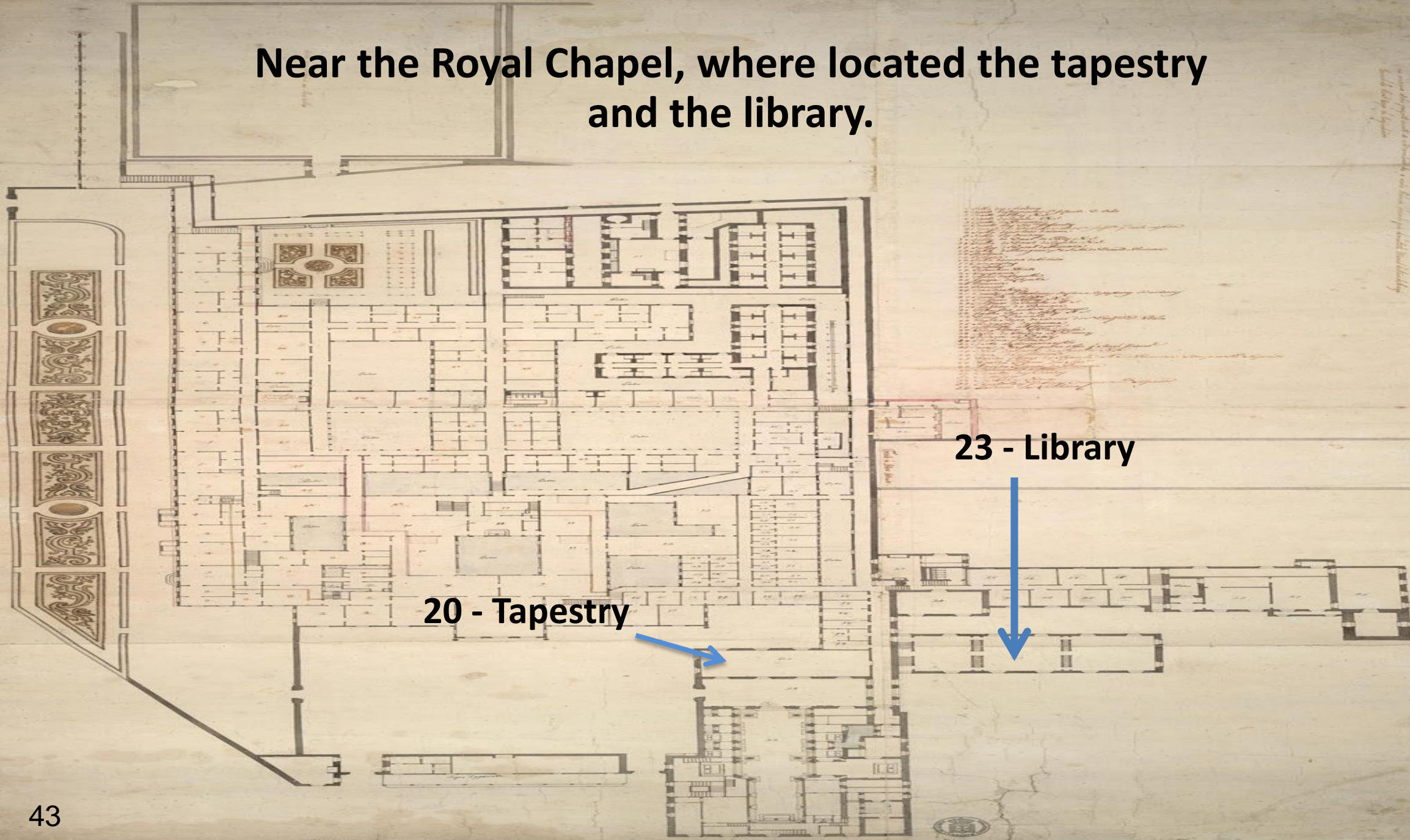


**21 - Churchyard**

**22 - The Royal Chapel**



Near the Royal Chapel, where located the tapestry and the library.

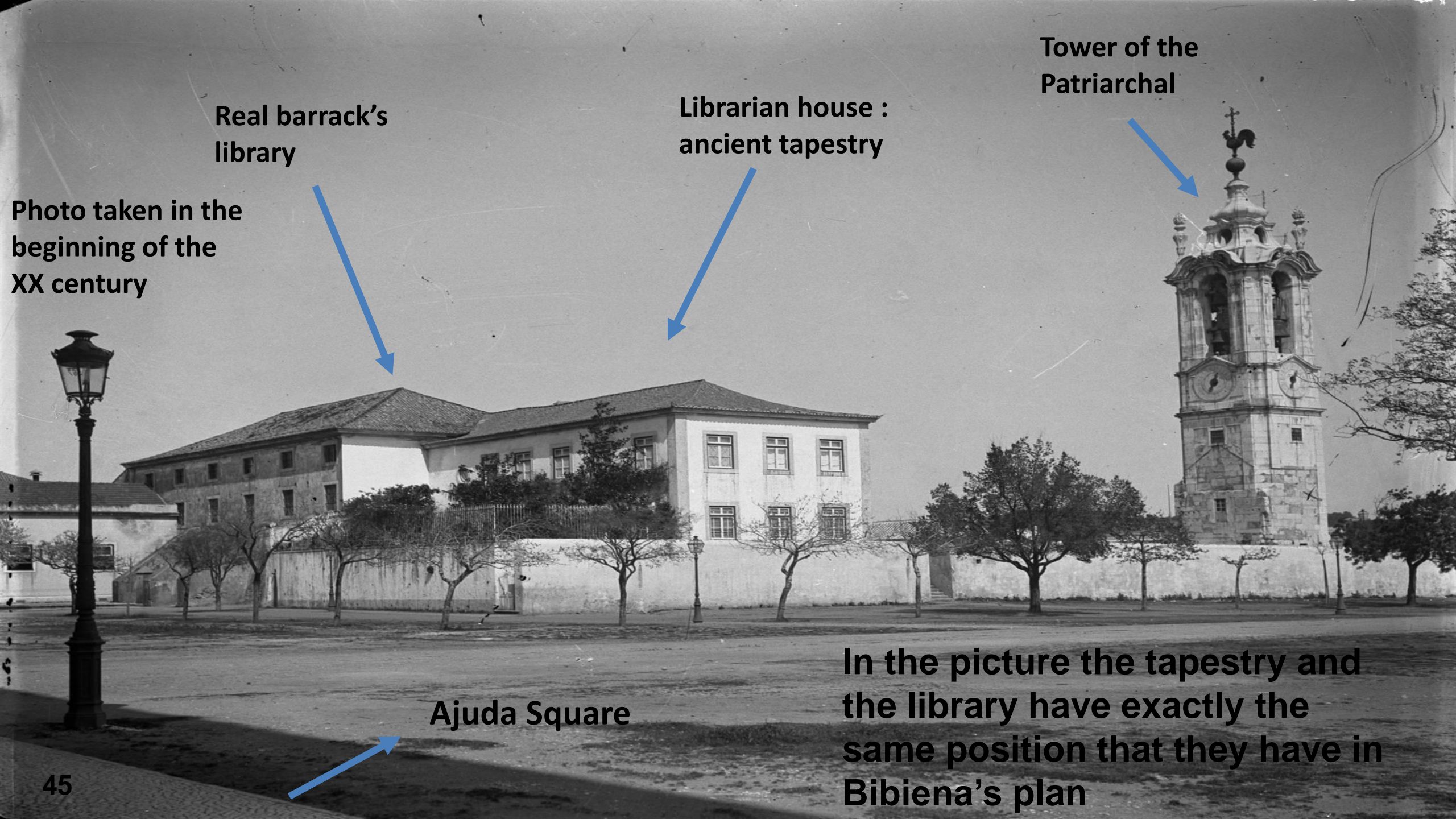


20 - Tapestry

23 - Library

**Near the Royal Chapel was built a tower in wood which would be later (1792) replaced by another in stone. In 1792 with the setting-up of the Patriarchal Chapel a lot of works took place which remake the Royal Chapel. The Patriarchal Chapel no longer exists but the tower in stone is still in place as we can see in the next picture**





**Real barrack's library**

**Librarian house : ancient tapestry**

**Tower of the Patriarchal**

**Photo taken in the beginning of the XX century**

**Ajuda Square**

**In the picture the tapestry and the library have exactly the same position that they have in Bibiena's plan**



**The Royal Chapel, the tapestry and the library were located in an upper level towards the Real Barraca and this situation remained with the actual Ajuda palace**

**Ajuda  
Palace –  
Late XIX  
century**

**The librarian 's house  
(ancient tapestry)**

**The library**





**On 23rd of September 1760 Bibiena was made supernumerary architect of palace constructions. He was rewarded for his work by king Joseph I: “...He has served well and loyaly... “**

**Bibiena died, suddenly, two months later, on the 20th November 1760, at the young age of 43.**

**What remains of his work at Ajuda?**

**The Real Barraca was burnt on 1794.**

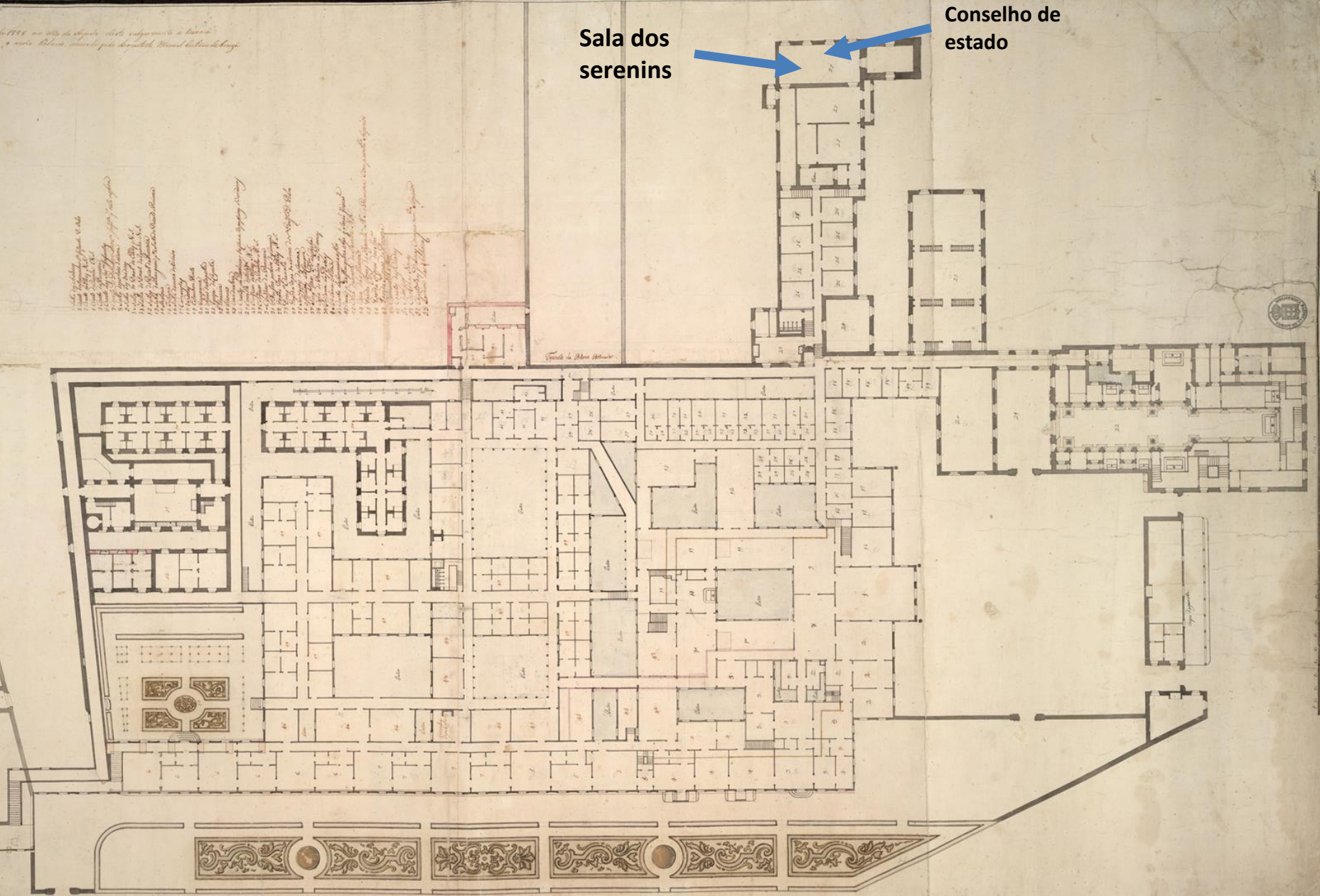
**The Royal Ajuda Theater no longer exists.**

**The chapel and the library, which survived the fire, were destroyed on 1843 and 1917, respectively**



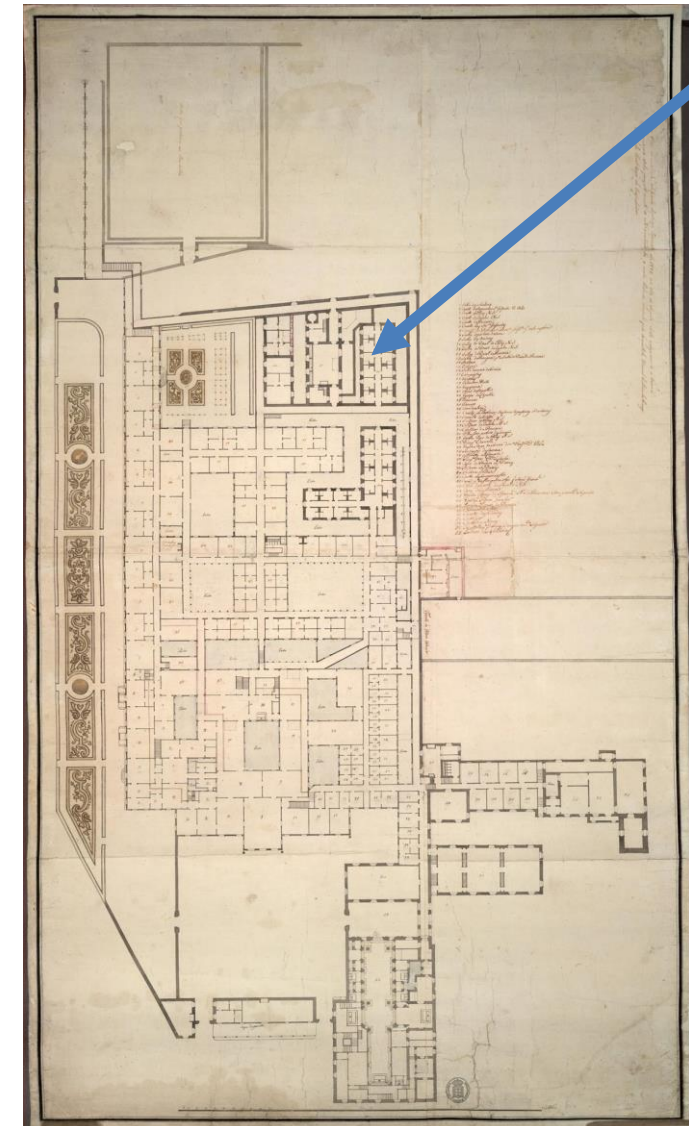
At Ajuda still remains today:

The “Sala dos Serenins” built after Bibiena’s death, in a room called the “Conselho do Estado” which was part of Bibiena’s original project.





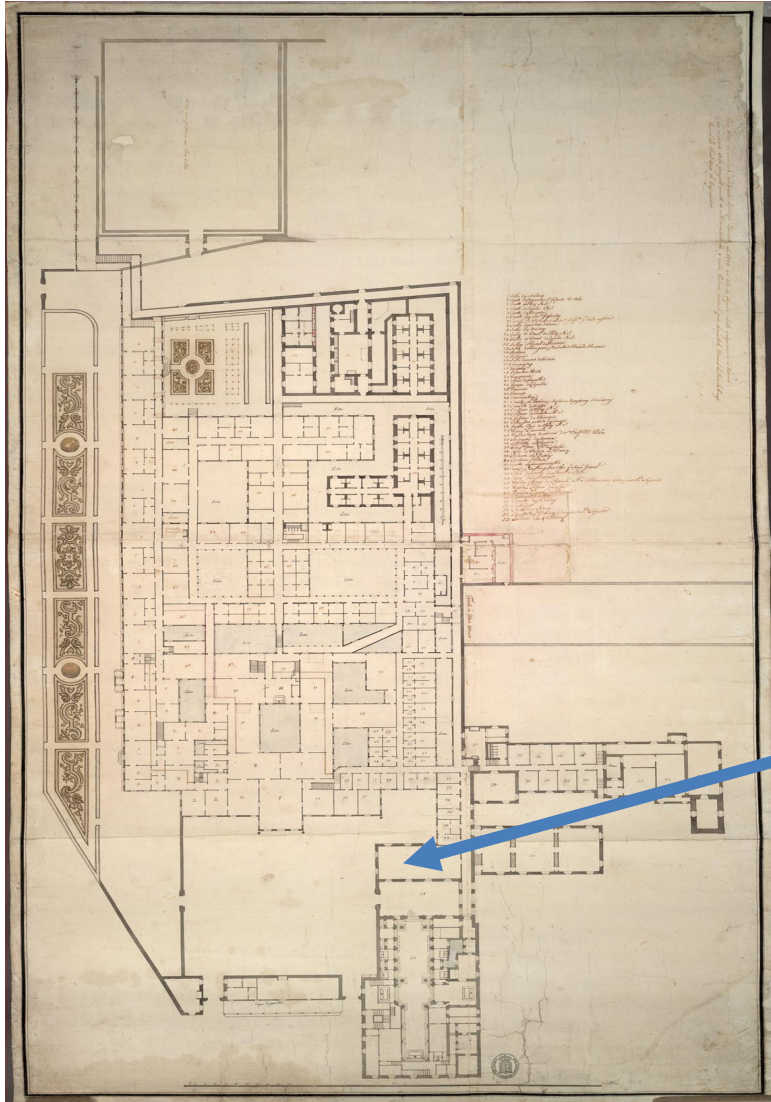
Although in ruins, what looks to have been the early kitchens of the Real Barraca still remains standing



Kitchens



And the ancient tapestry, where were located the ornaments and clothes which decorate the Real Barraca in a baroque scenery. The tapestry was later the house of the librarian and is today the *Lar de St<sup>a</sup> Isabel da Casa Pia de Lisboa*



Tapestry



**Not related to the Real Barraca, but still at Ajuda, stands “Igreja da Memória” (initially a project of Bibiena, which was later modified). The “Igreja da Memória”, whose first stone was cast on 3rd of September 1760, was built by order of king José I, in gratitude for having escaped a murder attempt.**





**Thank you**

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