

The Two Historical Organs of the Main Chapel of Porto Cathedral

1727-1733

P.E. Lourenço da Conceição

The task of building the two organs in the main chapel of Porto Cathedral was assigned to P.E. Lourenço da Conceição, with the work being carried out between 1727 and 1733.

According to the existing documentation, the organ master was paid 588,000 réis for his work, with payments made from February 22, 1727, to May 16, 1733.

The beautiful cases of these organs were crafted by the renowned Porto carver, Luís Pereira da Costa, who, for his work, received 225,000 réis between November 5, 1727, and January 20, 1728. The work was done by contract, though it is unclear whether this amount corresponds to the total agreed price. The first payment voucher is dated March 4, 1727, with the master carver receiving 135,000 réis the following day “as a deposit for the work he took on for the construction of two cases for the two organs of the main chapel.” The remaining carving and sculpture work on the choir stalls or balconies was done “by the day.”

1738

Repair and Enlargement of One of the Organs by Teodósio Hember

In 1738, one of the organs was repaired and enlarged by the organ master Teodósio Hember. For the work, he received 28,000 réis, paid on May 16, 1738.

Do These Two Organs Endure?

Fortunately, we can still admire the beautiful carving of Luís Pereira da Costa. As for the organs, only the organ on the left side, facing the altar (Gospel side), remains — this is the precious instrument built by P.E. Lourenço da Conceição. The organ on the opposite side, i.e., the right side of those facing the high altar (Epistle side), was rebuilt or replaced in 1869. This is, therefore, an organ from the second half of the 19th century.

The Current Organ on the Right Side (Epistle) of the Main Chapel

1869

António José Dos Santos

Returning to the organ on the right side of the main chapel (Epistle side), this organ was reconstructed or replaced in 1869 by the organ master António José dos Santos. António José dos Santos was a renowned organ builder with a vast body of work, especially in Northern Portugal. Born in Mangualde, he came from a distinguished family of organ builders.

Restoration of the Main Chapel Organs

The two organs in the main chapel were restored and tuned by the Dutch firm Flentrop, based in Zaandam. The delicate and complex repair and tuning work was carried out over two years — 1969 and 1970 — both in the Netherlands and on-site. The costs were funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Specification

Organ on the Gospel side

Short octave keyboard

Compass: C ----- c' c# ----- c''

Pitch: 446,4 Hz

Unequal temperament

Left Hand

Recimbala 4 vozes

Cimbala $\frac{1}{2}$, 4 vozes

Cheio $\frac{1}{2}$, 5 vozes

Dozena

Trompa Real

Dulçaina $\frac{1}{2}$, Horiz.

Fagote $\frac{1}{2}$, Horiz.

Right Hand

Cimbala $\frac{1}{2}$, 4 vozes

Cheio $\frac{1}{2}$, 5 vozes

Quinzena e 19^a

Flautado de 6 aberto

Flautado de 12 aberto

Dulçaina $\frac{1}{2}$, Horiz.

Clarim $\frac{1}{2}$, Horiz.

Organ on the Epistle side

Full octave keyboard

Compass: C ----- c' c#' ----- f''

Pitch: 446,4 Hz

Unequal temperament

Manual II – Great Organ

Left Hand

Cimbala de 5 vozes +

Cheio de 3 vozes +

Clarão de 5 vozes +

Dezanovena e 22^a +

Quinzena +

Flautado de 6 tapado +

Dozena +

Prestão em 6

Flautado Violão

Flauta em 12

Flautado de 12 aberto

Trombeta Real

Fagote – Horiz. +

Right Hand

Cimbala de 5 vozes +

Clarão de 4 vozes +

Cheio de 3 vozes +

Flautado 6 tapado +

Flautim +

Prestão em 6 +

Corneta Real de 6 vozes +

Flauta doce

Voz Humana

Flauta Travessa

Flautado de 12 aberto

Clarim – Horiz. +

Oboé – Horiz. +

+ = Stops that cancel with a toe piston, on a balanced action

Manual I – Echo Organ

Left Hand

Bordão em 12

Flautado 6 tapado

Quinzena

Cheio de 4 vozes

Oboé

Right Hand

Flautado de 12 aberto

Voz Humana

Prestão em 6

Cheio de 5 vozes

Oboé

It has a toe piston to open or close the Echo lid