





7.

TOWER OF VILAR



 Alameda Torre de Vilar
Vilar do Torno e Alentém
Lousada

 41° 17' 12.082" N
8° 12' 36.906" W

 +351 918 116 488

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 Public Interest Building
1978

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 Yes

The Tower of Vilar, which is about 14 meters high, is located on top of a hill overlooking a fertile and well-irrigated valley. More than a military building, this Tower is a symbol of the manorial power over the territory. It is an estimable legacy of the *domus fortis*, the fortified manorial house of the Vale do Sousa region.

According to the royal inquiries of 1258, “Sancte Marie of Vilar” was a territory held by Gil Martins (1210-?) and his descendants, who belonged to the Ribavizela lineage. In 1367, King Fernando (k. 1367-1383) donated Vilar do Torno, Unhão and Meinedo to Aires Gomes da Silva; there are records showing that the Tower remained in the hands of the same family over the 15th century.

With a rectangular plan, the Tower of Vilar stands on a rocky outcrop that crowns a small hill. The Tower features excellent granitic masonry work, including stonemasons’ initials. The existing structure still stands with the height equivalent to five-storays.

The façades have several embrasures and two rectangular windows; however, none of its wooden structures or secondary elements remained. Yet, we can still see



several levels of protruding corbels that used to support the frameworks of four different floors.

Inside, there are still a few niches that take advantage of the walls' thickness and confirm the residential function of this Tower.

The southeast façade presents a rectangular door on the second floor, which was opened after the original building had been

finished and could be reached through a wooden staircase on the outside.

The fifth and last floor probably corresponded to the *chemin de ronde* that surrounded the top of the walls and which ended with a narrower wall surmounted with merlons, now gone.

The Tower of Vilar was probably built between the second half of the 13th century and the early 14th century.

MANORIAL TOWERS

These manorial towers were predominantly located at the heart of the "honras" [a type of Portuguese administrative division], in fertile valleys with alluvial agricultural lands or in the periphery of such cultivated areas. They are also commonly found in areas close to forests and mountains, particularly in lands that had been more recently cleared for cultivation in order to stay away from more populated or busy areas where, from a manorial standpoint, the will of assertion of the new lineages found greater obstacles due to the ancient families and well-rooted powers that had long been established.

This was the typical location found by the Tower of Vilar, as well as by many other examples: the Tower of the Alcoforados (Paredes) (p. 72), the tower of Pousada (Guimarães), the tower of Dornelas (Braga), the tower of Oriz (Vila Verde), the tower of Giela (Arcos de Valdevez), the tower of Curutelo (Ponte de Lima), the tower of Lourosa do Campo (Arouca) and the tower of Quintela (Vila Real).



DON'T MISS OUT

- 0.7 km: Sanctuary of Aparecida (p. 255)
- 1.2 km: Museum House of Vilar – The Moving Image (p. 255)