



ROTA DO  
ROMÂNICO







ROTA DO  
ROMÂNICO



ATLANTIC OCEAN



Porto

Route of the Romanesque

PORTUGAL

Lisboa

ESPAÑA

Faro

MOROCCO

ALGERIA



FRANCE

ITALIA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

TUNISIA

0 150 300 Km

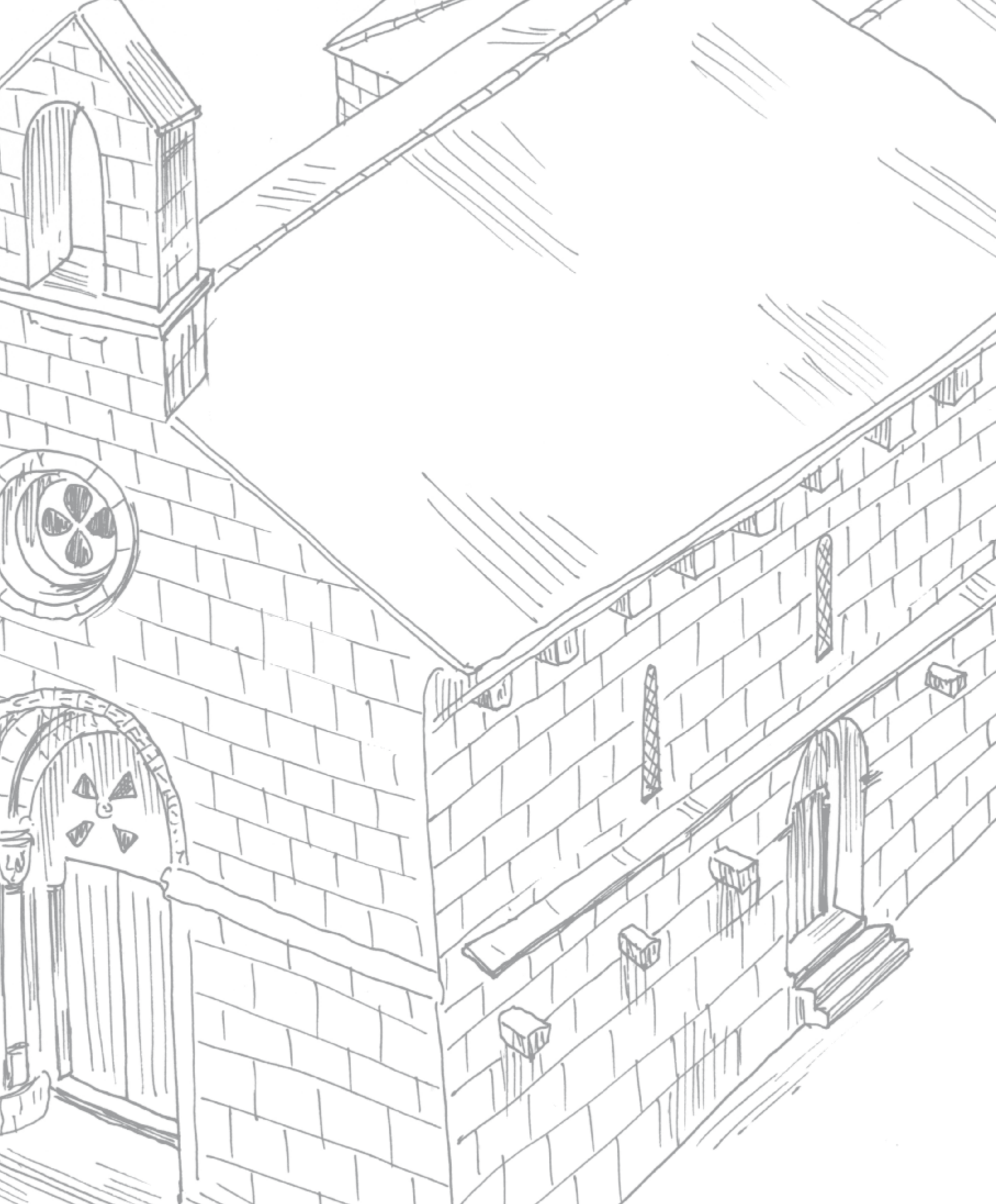






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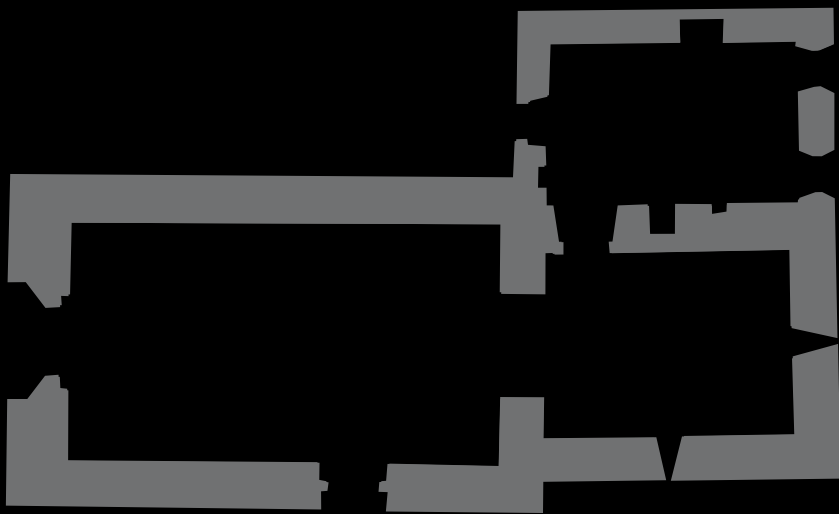




**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
ISIDORE  
OF CANAVESES

MARCO DE CANAVESES

**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
ISIDORE  
OF CANAVESES  
MARCO DE CANAVESES



Plan.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Having integrated the “*julgado*” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Santa Cruz, the parish of Santo Isidoro grew around a cult that became hagio-toponymic, revealing both its venerability and its importance during the progress of local Christianization (or of resistance, in times of occupation). Saint Isidore of Seville was a Hispanic bishop of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and if, as Pierre David refers<sup>1</sup>, the fact of not being a martyr places him as the patron of churches built after the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the presence of this invocation along the banks of the Tâmega, so close to the paths of the Reconquest, is nonetheless revealing<sup>2</sup>.

The transference of Saint Isidore’s mortal remains from Seville to León in 1603 surely stimulated the veneration of such a valuable treasure, spreading the fame of the holy bishop across several northern areas of the Iberian Peninsula (Garcia Rodrigues, 1966: 344). Almost coinciding with the “*translatio*”, there were already news in about the dedication of a cenoby in 1059, in the Vouga valley and another reference from the surroundings of Porto in 1102<sup>3</sup>. For the time being, the first known mention to Saint Isidore of Ribatâmega dates back to 1115, as documented by Domingos Moreira in his work *Elementos onomásticos*. It’s a reference to the “monastery Vilar [...] Sanctum Isidorum of Vilar” (Moreira, 1989-1990: 23). The introduction of the monastic worship way may indicate that the primitive community followed the Visigothic rite and tradition, despite the fact that it was later reformed by the Clunians<sup>4</sup>. But this was an ephemeral situation, since it was no longer mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>5</sup>.

The patron saint also went through a few changes. While there were news echoing in the Middle Ages on the Holy Bishop, the symbol of a temporal power, truth is that the transposition of the erudite devotion from the monastic space to the parish community that grew around it may have meant that the episcopal entity was shaped in order to become more appealing in view of the collective needs. Saint Isidore’s very name lent itself to useful misunderstandings: opposing the intellectual prelate from Seville there was a Castilian farmer born around 1070, whose miracles became famous in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. So, despite the persistence of the image of the Sevillian prelate in the mural pictorial composition of the chevet, it is not

1 “We know that after the 9<sup>th</sup> century there was an increasing habit to dedicate churches to patron saints who hadn’t been martyrs” (David, 1947: 35).

2 The expression is not metaphorical, since, quite close to Santo Isidoro, there are records of one of the many battles between Christians and Muslims which gave rise to the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo (Marco de Canaveses). Running parallel to the Tâmega river was a road that Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida (1968) describes as going down from Caldas de Vizela to Entre-os-Rios (Penafiel). Although we have certain reservations regarding the path of this road and its Roman origin, it seems plausible that along the Tâmega there was, at least, one important road, as proven by the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century charts. The one made by Lourenço Homem da Cunha (1808) highlights the road that, on the right bank went down to the mouth of the Douro, and the *Mapa da província de Entre Douro e Minho*, by Custódio Villasboas (1794-1795), emphasises the connection made along the left bank, from Vila Boa do Bispo to Santa Clara do Torrão (Soeiro, 2009) (see Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas of Canaveses, Marco de Canaveses). In fact, Saint Isidore was located on the route from Amarante to Sobretâmega, where the road turned East, crossing the bridge of Canaveses or towards Penafiel, in the opposite direction.

3 The indications are from Pierre David (1947).

4 As José Mattoso (2002: 98, 105) refers, given the insufficient documentation on this monastery (that the author accepts as being the one in Ribatâmega), it is only possible speculate about this path.

5 In 1168: “sanctum Isidorum of Villar” (Moreira, 1989-1990: 23).



Aerial view.

surprising that, in 1520, the parish is considered as being dedicated to “Santo Ysydro”<sup>6</sup>. It is likely for the homophony to have given rise, at some point, to a few mistakes, opposing the vigilant figure of a distant bishop to that of a farmer among farmers<sup>7</sup>.

However, unlike the majority of the patron saints bound with the Early Middle Ages, the worship of this patron saint does not seem to have raised the fervour and devotions that the men from the Late Middle Ages and from the Modern Period dedicated to the virgin and to certain hagiotherapists. We shall see this further ahead, when we deal with the entities that were venerated within the ecclesial space. Nevertheless, it left a mark within the territory strong enough to prevail in it as a landmark.

12 In fact, although the parish is sometimes called Riba-Tâmega, or Cima-Tâmega, the patron saint has always persisted. However, this nominal instability led the authors to become somewhat confused about its history, a confusion for which the fact that the parish stands not very far from Santo Isidoro de Sanche, municipality of Amarante, has also contributed.

Father António Carvalho da Costa locates it in the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Travanca, in 1706; this was a regular abbey with an income of approximately 250 thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit] (Costa, 1706-1712: 131). Twenty years later, the scholar Francisco Craesbeeck confirms the patronage, saying it was an “ancient and sacred” church, but had no tabernacle. Abbot João de Freitas Peixoto who, in 1758, provides us with a more detailed description of his parish, shows more confidence in his assertions.

It belonged to the archbishopric of Braga and reported, spiritually and ecclesiastically, to the province of Entre-Douro-e-Minho and to the municipality of Santa Cruz do Tâmega, of which the Count of Óbidos was the donee. For secular issues it resorted to Guimarães, since it was part of its “comarca” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division] (Peixoto, 1758).

Within the reorganizing impulse of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the parish became part of the judicial district of Amarante, of the municipality of Marco de Canaveses and of the diocese of Porto, being transferred to its territory in 1882 (Moreira, 1989-1990: 23)<sup>8</sup>.

6 The image of the Holy Bishop was maimed by the crevice that goes through the chevet’s wall. From the original representation it is only possible to see part of the crosier, an element that is quite enough to identify the saint to which it corresponded. However, we should not forget that, whether they were made under the responsibility of the abbot or of the Church’s patron, the commissions intended to decorate the larger chapels were part of erudite schemes for the promotion of nobility or catechization.

7 In the case of Santo Isidoro, despite having no information on the fame of the holy farmer (Saint Ysidro), the parish memoirs of 1758 contribute to document the devotion paid to the Castilian thaumaturge-farmer, at that time. In Gulpilhares (currently near Vila Nova de Gaia) the farming day was celebrated close to the chapel of Saint Isidore, where plenty of people gathered on the day of his pilgrimage (Capela, Matos & Borralheiro, 2009: 321).

8 On the administrative reorganization of Marco de Canaveses, please read Alves & Soeiro (2009).

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

“**A**midst an undulating valley of the region of Entre Douro e Minho, interrupted by meadows and pine forests with a sometimes moist and soft, other times deep and sombre, lush green, we find the small village of Santo Isidoro, which is fairly proud of its parish church, which invokes the same saint. It is a Romanesque temple from the 12<sup>th</sup> century or from the dawn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, of rustic nature but replenished with purity and personality...” (Pamplona, 1976b: 31). It is with these words that Fernando de Pamplona – one of the first authors to take an interest in the Church of Saint Isidore of Canaveses – began his short note on this small Romanesque temple of Ribatãmega in 1976.

Built on the right bank of the Tãmega river, this Church stands out by the fact that its Romanesque-flavoured structure is very well preserved. With a single nave and a rectangular chancel, this is a good example of the repetition of a “module” that we already consider as very typical of our Romanesque architecture, taking into account its simple implementation<sup>9</sup>, which is precisely the result of the juxtaposition of two rectangles or of the “geometric alliance between a rectangle and a semicircle”, including its variations, to use an expression by Manuel Monteiro (1908; 1980: 135).

In fact, except for the Romanesque cathedrals and a few Benedictine monasteries whose churches feature three naves (we may refer the example of Pombeiro, in Felgueiras, or of Paço de Sousa and Travanca, in Penafiel and Amarante, respectively), most of the remaining specimens are characterised by the persistence of a small-sized scale. The old Coimbra cathedral, which, according to many authors, follows the traditional *canon* of the so-called pilgrimage

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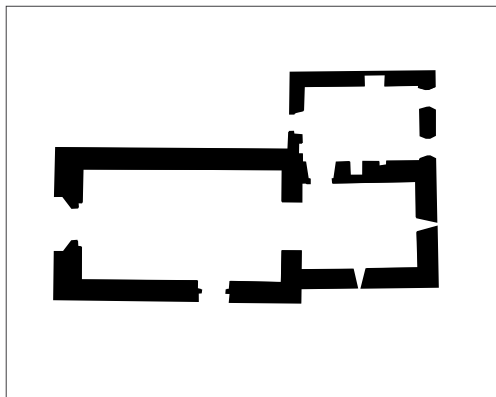


General view.

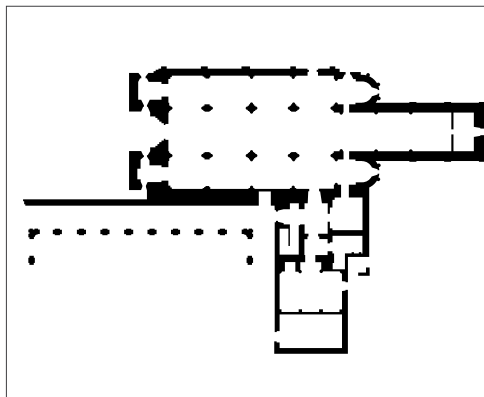
<sup>9</sup> About this subject, please read Botelho (2010: 387-388).



churches with its *triphorium*; the Porto cathedral, which had the only known chevet featuring an ambulatory and radiating chapels in Portugal up till now, or the Braga cathedral, which rivalled with Santiago de Compostela (Spain) for so long, are remarkable exceptions within the Portuguese architectural panorama of the period and show clear foreign influences and artistic movements.



Plan.



Monastery of Pombeiro (Felgueiras). Plan.

Already sensing a vernacularisation of the architecture built within the Portuguese territory during the Romanesque Period, Manuel Monteiro concluded that:

14

“(...) almost all of our rural or inland churches from that period actually feature a plan based on the juxtaposition of two rectangles, which constituted the cheapest and quickest way to build them, and was most convenient to the immediate spreading and consequent settling of the faith within the organism of the nationality that was in its dawn” (Monteiro, 1945: 10).

Besides, another feature that characterises Portuguese Romanesque architecture is precisely its decorative containment. Either due to issues related to the economy of time and means, or as a result of purely technical issues that were associated with the nature of the materials or with the training skills of Romanesque builders, the obvious fact is that Portuguese Romanesque architecture concentrates its sculptural decorative elements in specific areas: in the portals, around openings for lighting purposes, in the modillions that support cornices (usually plain) or in friezes. The containment that characterised the architecture from this period and which, in a certain way, was repeated over the following periods of our architecture, led Reinaldo dos Santos, in his constant search for “the spirit and the essence of Portuguese art, to assert that Portugal always spoke the Romanesque language, since the dawn of its nationality to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>10</sup>.

Saint Isidore of Canaveses is a good example of this widespread idea that a specific moment in the historiography on this subject tried to see in the Portuguese architecture of the Roman-

<sup>10</sup> This subject was discussed in a lecture he gave at the Sociedade Martins Sarmiento (Pina, 1926: 260). For a deeper development of this matter, please read Botelho (2010: 237).



esque Period. However, this architectural specimen naturally stands out for its good state of preservation, as we have mentioned before.

On the main façade, an elaborated portal, composed of three torus-shaped and slightly broken archivolts, shows a surrounding arch made up of billets. In terms of the impost, we see a motif originated in Braga that we also find in other buildings in the Douro basin (such as Tarouquela and Saint Christopher of Nogueira, in Cinfães) or in the Sousa basin (such as Pombeiro, Sousa or Unhão, in Felgueiras) that, in this case, extends itself along the entire façade, like a frieze. Carved in a deep relief, the palmettes from Braga appear in pairs joined by loops<sup>11</sup>. This drawing, of Classical origin, is a result of the palmette's simplification, only depicting its external outline. We find it on the south portal of the Braga cathedral.

The two internal archivolts are supported by columns with capitals, since the external one is resting directly on the walls. The external column to the observer's left is prismatic, while the other three have a plain cylindrical shaft, proving how this model spread across the region of the Tâmega; originated in Coimbra, it was hugely welcomed in the buildings of the Sousa basin. The capitals are all different and show a refined design that combines phytomorphic motifs with others of botanic nature, that were described by Fernando Pamplona as follows: "some have coarse reminiscences of the Corinthian acanthus leaf translated into the granite's harshness, other have geometric stylizations – bent and intertwined curvilinear shapes of botanic inspiration" (Pamplona, 1976b: 31). The somewhat naturalist traits of their shapes – flat and attached to the echinus – tells us about a late Romanesque style that fits into a chronology later than 1250, as several authors have been suggesting (Pamplona, 1976b: 32; Almeida, 1986: 97). The tympanum, resting on a lintel with its corresponding corbels, shows a cross "pattée". Over the portal, a small four-lobed oculus brings light into the nave.

15



West façade. Portal. Capitals and impost.

<sup>11</sup> The wear of the upper edge does not allow us to define whether it was composed of ropes or of loose beads, thus forming motif no. 8 or motif no. 20 from the inventory drawn up by Joaquim de Vasconcelos (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 69-70).









South façade.



South façade. Nave. Corbel.

It is likely that there were porch-like structures on both side façades, a feature corroborated by the existence of corbels set halfway up the corresponding wall faces. If, on the north façade, these are smooth and square, on the opposite façade a few feature ornamental motifs. On the second corbel counting from the main façade, Fernando Pamplona intended to identify a phallic motif, an ornament he considers as being rare and “a reminiscence of the paganism that persisted in a few Medieval temples, following the phallic cult celebrated by the Greek Dionysians in honour of Dionysus and Priapus and in the Roman Bacchanalia that praised Bacchus and Venus” (Pamplona, 1976b: 32).

17

Referring to the representations of the “solitary phallus” within the sexual iconography of the sculpture from the Romanesque Period, the researcher Jaime Nuño González (2006: 211-212) reminds precisely the prophylactic nature that the male sexual organ had for so long, following the path of Roman tradition.

Besides the representation of heroes, the display of nudity also took on a somewhat insolent nature in the Classical world, as shown by certain representations of Bacchus or Silenus. In the Roman period, the representation of the phallus appears with an uncommon profusion, on street intersection, on the corners of houses or, even, as a pendant (Nuño González, 2006: 195-196). Centuries later, in the High Middle Ages, we find iconographic specimens where the representation of the body still adopts essentially Classical shapes. That is what happens in the Romanesque Period and that is the case of the “phallus” represented in Saint Isidore.

On the south façade, the presence of an eave over the corbel level confirms the existence of a porch-like structure on this side of the Church. The side portal would be sheltered under this porch, with an apparently simpler structure than the one of the main portal, pointing us to a later chronology: two slightly broken archivolts with sharp edges fall within the thickness of the wall itself, resting directly on their walls. Were it not for the presence of a tympanum with a hollow cross, identical to the one on the main façade, and we could say that this was a typical example of a portal framed within what has been called as “resistance Romanesque” style. However, the obvious colour difference that exists between the granite in this tympanum and in the remaining ensemble leads us to believe that we stand before a tympanum built on a significantly later period than the one under study; we might even call this period as “neo-Romanesque”, corresponding to a construction date which is extremely hard to specify. We leave this as a possibility.



South façade. Nave. Portal.



South façade. Nave. Corbels.



North façade. Nave. Corbels.

The Church's interior is illuminated by narrow crevices that open up the walls of the nave and the chancel, including also the back wall. In both of the bodies that shape this Church, there are series of corbels, which are more elaborate on the south side, that remind us of the north façade of the monastery of Roriz (Santo Tirso) and of the main façade of Paço de Sousa, despite the fact that, here in Canaveses, these are not supporting any cornice on little arches. On the north side, the corbels are simpler, mostly flat and rectangular, corresponding to a model which is more common in the Tâmega basin.

18 Inside, in addition to the smooth exposed granite wall faces livened up by narrow crevices, there is a simple triumphal arch, slightly broken, without any ornamental elements. But it is on the main chapel's back wall and on the contiguous walls that we find one of the most remarkable elements of this Romanesque building. It is a rich, high-quality mural painting ensemble. We should not forget how easy it was for these buildings to receive mural painting campaigns. Due to the fact that their interior wall faces were flat, in other words, they did not bear any element that would create an obstacle to the practice of mural painting in terms of the depiction of hagiographies of saints or biblical scenes, the Romanesque churches eventually became flexible and appealing buildings for the practice of mural painting in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and, later, for the installation of large-scaled tile sets (we can immediately recall the case of Soalhães, Marco de Canaveses).

Like in Saint Mammes of Vila Verde (Felgueiras)<sup>12</sup>, the mural paintings of Saint Isidore “show us how, sometimes, high-quality artists worked in churches with little architectural pomp, how the commissioner can be decisive in choosing the artists and the pictorial programmes and how wrong can the analyses considering that, in these rural churches, the artistic programmes correspond to peripheral and atavist works, can be” (Rosas, 2008: 365). This opinion also corresponds to the possibility put across by Paula Bessa, which associated the taste shown in the frescoes from Saint Isidore with the impact and influence of Miguel da Silva (1480-1556) in the geographically close urban area of Porto (Bessa, 2008: 328). Luís Urbano Afonso is also of the opinion that this Church of Saint Isidore preserves one of the most interesting mural paintings produced within a Classicist language (Afonso, 2009: 643). Let us consider the following.

<sup>12</sup> For further development on this matter, please read Rosas (2008: 66).





General interior view from the nave.



Chancel. Back wall. Mural painting.

Their discovery was only revealed to the scientific community in 1976. According to the explanations given by Fernando de Pamplona, “when they proceeded with the restoration of the old church, carried out at the expense of the parishioners, while they were removing the white and golden altars from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and cleaning the walls from the plaster covering them in order to expose the granite’s majesty, a few semi-destroyed frescoes appeared on the apse’s front and side walls, serving as a background for the stone altar that is now rebuilt, which were possible to be rescued to a great extent” (Pamplona, 1976b: 32-33). Despite being long, this quote clarifies, not just the context of the discovery of the mural painting that is still visible in Saint Isidore nowadays, but it also gives us a clear description of the way the interior of this Church looked like until the 1970’s. Like in many Romanesque churches of the region, its interior showed white wall faces and featured altarpieces that, despite being dated back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries by the author, because they were “white and golden”, we most easily believe that they were of Neoclassical nature. In an interview with *O Comércio do Porto* newspaper, Fernando Pamplona (1976b: 5) confirmed that these were “absolutely common 19<sup>th</sup> century altars”. We shall return to this topic.

This pictorial ensemble bears the date 1536 and is signed by painter Moraes in two cartouches inserted into the grotesque panels that are located on both ends of the composition; the date appears on the lateral wall, on the Gospel side, and the signature emerges on the apse’s back wall, on the Epistle side. For Luís Urbano Afonso, the simple fact that we are standing before a painting which is dated and signed reflects its author’s personality as an artist and the fact that he is aware of his artistic status (Afonso, 2009: 645). Around that same period, the Classicist values were asserting themselves among us and the author of these frescoes had perfect knowledge of these avant-garde languages.

Paula Bessa highlights the reference made by Artur de Magalhães Basto to a painter – “bastiã de Moraes” – who had been paid “nine-hundred and eighty “réis””, on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1537 (Bessa, 2008: 327-328), to paint the image of Our Lady in the altarpiece of the Porto cathedral. Although little is known about this painter Moraes, the truth is that he was living in Porto at the time when he developed the programme for Saint Isidore; besides, his work was good enough to justify a commission from the bishop Friar Baltasar Limpo (episc. 1537-1550) for the Porto cathedral. So, the same author considers as very enticing the possibility that this Bastiam de Moraes, a painter who was living in Porto in 1537 and worked for the city’s cathedral by order of the bishop, is the same Moraes that signs Saint Isidore’s ensemble (Bessa, 2008: 327-328). According to Luís Urbano Afonso, the plastic features shown in this ensemble were not repeated in any other work in Portugal; furthermore, its high quality also proves that it was the result of a commission by an important patron who remains unidentified (Afonso, 2009: 645). Taking into account its location, the commissioner of Saint Isidore’s ensemble was probably either the responsible for the patronage, should the Church have merely a chaplain, or the abbot (Bessa, 2008: 328).

A Classicist training or, at best, the real knowledge of a Classicist language is understandable, and plausible, in an artist that, at the time, was, hypothetically, living in Porto. Paula Bessa reminds us that the patronising action of the bishop of Viseu, Miguel da Silva, had begun in 1527 with the construction of the church of Saint John of Foz (Porto), which is considered as the oldest known Renaissance building in Portuguese territory, a work directed and monitored



Chancel. Wall on the Gospel side.  
Mural painting. Detail of the date.

Chancel. Back wall on the Epistle side.  
Mural painting.  
Detail of the author’s signature.







by the Italian architect Francesco de Cremona who, in 1514, had worked under the guidance of Bramante in the construction of Saint Peter of Rome (Italy). This is the reason why the same author questions whether the taste shown in the frescoes from Saint Isidore could be a consequence of the impact and influence of Miguel da Silva in the urban area of Porto (Bessa, 2008: 328).

Located on the back wall, the painting presents itself as a triptych, divided by two yellow columns. The central panel showed, naturally, the figure of the patron saint of the Church, *Saint Isidore*; nowadays, around the Romanesque crevice, we are only able to see the ends of his mitre and crosier and the lower part of his mantle. We find the saint's head in a stone fragment, which is displayed in the chancel.



Chancel. Back wall. Crevice.



Chancel. Stone highlighted with a mural painting.  
*Saint Isidore*.

The patron saint was flanked by the *Virgin and Child* and by *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, the latter holding her sword and her wheel of martyrdom; at her feet, we see the decapitated head of the pagan emperor who was responsible for her martyrdom. These female figures are elegant representations wearing courtly clothes, which proves the contact that their author had with more dynamic urban centres (Afonso, 2009: 646). He was knowledgeable of the most recent trends, as proven by the grotesque decorations and plastic shapes, but his figures also show an already Mannerist attitude, since they were uniformly treated; both these facts are in line with the theory that we are standing before a leading artist.

While revealing an urge to intervene on the architectural support he takes advantage of and disclosing a true scenographical sense, Moraes sought to give cohesion to the three depicted figures, certainly chosen by the commissioner, faking the existence of a large window, opened towards a landscape full of trees. To make the space uniform, behind the saints there is the line of a wall and, behind it, we see tree tops with full-bodied foliage, which was treated in an “impressionist” (Bessa, 2008: 326) fashion. The background of *Saint Michael, who is weighing the souls and defeating the dragon* – located on the wall adjacent the back one, on the Gospel side –, and *Saint James*, who is depicted as a pilgrim, were summarily treated, merely indicating the ground level.





Chancel. Back wall on the Gospel side. Mural painting. *Virgin and the Child.*



Chancel. Back wall on the Epistle side. Mural painting. *Saint Catherine of Alexandria.*



Chancel. Wall on the Gospel side. Mural painting. *Saint Michael* and dating of the painting (1536).



Chancel. Wall on the Epistle side. Mural painting. *Saint James.*

On the back wall, the triptych is limited by a vertical strip of grotesques, simulating bas-reliefs placed on each of its ends. The background colours – red alternating with yellow –, as well as the motifs chosen to fill the vertical grotesque axes – in which armours, daggers and paddles are combined with the more usual *putti*, ribbon twistings, foliages or cartouches – are very rare within the context of the Portuguese mural painting of the time (Afonso, 2009: 644). Using a reddish shade, Moraes created a rather credible perspective, as proven by the empty armour placed on the Gospel side (Afonso, 2009: 644). According to Paula Bessa, the source of inspiration for the “hanging” armoury of Saint Isidore may have been the engraving dated from 1534, which is also used in the frontispiece of the *Constituições Sinodais*, drawn up by the archbishop Prince Henrique from the archdiocese of Braga (Bessa, 2008: 327) that, at the time, as we have seen, held the patronage of this Church (Bessa, 2008: 328, note 27). Moraes, the painter of Saint Isidore, was, indeed, very up-to-date.



Chancel. Back wall on the Gospel side. Mural painting. Hanging armoury.



Chancel. Back wall on the Epistle side. Mural painting. Hanging armoury.



## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

Currently deprived of its altarpiece set, the Church of Saint Isidore presents itself as a bare space in the eyes of the visitor. Although this is a result of the interventions carried out in the Contemporary Period, the austere nature of its decoration may have something to do with the parish's population that, in 1758, was distributed by 81 housing units. Now, since the parishioners were responsible for the management of the nave's structure and for all its assets and associated furnishings, we may speculate that, in the Baroque Period, both the budget and the workforce wouldn't be enough to perform complex artistic campaigns, such as the one of Soalhães (Marco de Canaveses), for example, which was not very far from Saint Isidore.

From the remaining structures mentioned in 1758 by abbot João de Freitas Peixoto – the large altarpiece and two collateral ones – only the images that lend them their names remain: Saint Isidore, Virgin of the Rosary and the Infant Jesus.

The Virgin of the Rosary, which is currently resting on a granite plinth on the right side of the nave, is a 17<sup>th</sup> century work that still reflects the Mannerist spirit, but shows clear plastic formulations leaning towards the Baroque. It stands out, in iconographic terms, by the fact that the Infant Jesus is holding a small rose and that His Mother is grabbing a berry between the thumb and the index finger of Her right hand. In fact, the rosary, non-existent, would be hanging from this hand.

The sacristy was used to display the sculptures that were removed from the collateral altars; from its ensemble we highlight an image of Saint Joseph (1<sup>st</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) and an image of Our Lady of Sorrows (19<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>13</sup>.

In terms of painting, excluding the reference that has already been developed regarding the affresco pictorial composition, two oil paintings on wood stand out; one from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, depicting the *Calvary*, and a later one, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, depicting the *Immaculate Virgin*.

The first one captures the final moments of the crucifixion: before the almost expressionless look of the Virgin, John and Magdalene, keeling at the foot of the cross (which she's embracing), Christ expires hanging from the wooden beam, the instrument of his hardest suffering. This could be a reused element, detached from one of the altarpieces. Despite the fact that this iconography is not mentioned by the abbot of 1758, and the piece is not mentioned in the inventory of 1927, it could be on display in one of the altarpieces<sup>14</sup>. Besides, this was a much-loved subject among the Baroque men.



Triumphal arch. Wall on the Epistle side.  
Plinth. Sculpture. Virgin of the Rosary.

13 Other images, listed chronologically: unidentified martyr (17<sup>th</sup> century; may this be the image of Saint Lucia mentioned in 1927?), Saint Sebastian (17<sup>th</sup> century), Saint Anthony of Lisbon (18<sup>th</sup> century), Holy Heart of Mary (20<sup>th</sup> century). The chancel now houses the devotion to a Contemporary image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In general, the entire ensemble is damaged by major changes in terms of its polychromy, both due to poorly-applied repaintings, and to incorrect handling procedures. We must highlight the absence of the sculptures of Saint Catherine or Saint Michael, entities that are both depicted in the frescoes. That fact may have to do with the lack of interest of the faithful in such devotions associated with supralocal powers, which were actually the ones that commissioned those representations. In the inventory from 1927 there are also references to other images: one of the Infant Jesus and one of Saint Joseph (PORTUGAL. Ministério das Finanças – Secretaria-geral – Arquivo – CASTRO, José Monteiro Soares de – *Auto de arrolamento*. [1927, abril, 4], Liv. 70, fl. 76-76v, available online ACMF/Arquivo/CJBC/PTO/MDC/ARROL/019).

14 PORTUGAL. Ministério das Finanças – Secretaria-geral – Arquivo – CASTRO, José Monteiro Soares de – *Auto de arrolamento*. [1927, abril, 4], Liv. 70, fl. 76-76v, available online ACMF/Arquivo/CJBC/PTO/MDC/ARROL/019.

The image that is currently placed directly over the north wall of Saint Isidore's nave that, through its size, colours and figurative treatment, praises the Classical figure of the *Immaculate Virgin* is in a similar situation, preventing us from knowing its origin and initial context. Being the work of an experienced artist, the subject refers us to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, proclaimed on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1854 by Pope Pius IX (through the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*).



Sacristy. Picture. Calvary.



## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

In reply to the Survey sent to all the parish priests of the parishes from the bishopric of Porto<sup>15</sup>, the abbot Gonçalo Tomás de Queirós, the parish priest of Santo Isidoro, informed that the parish church was “in a very good state of repair”<sup>16</sup> at the time. The same parish priest also stated that it was a Church built according to the “Romano-Gothic” taste, which had “artistic objects that were worth preserving”.

In 2013 the Church of Saint Isidore of Canaveses is classified as a National Monument<sup>17</sup>. This is the reason why the interventions it was subject to during the 20<sup>th</sup> century were carried out under its Building Commission’s responsibility (Serenó, 2006). As we’ve already mentioned, it was during a restoration intervention that was seeking to restore the “primitive purity” (Pamplona, 1976a: 5) of this Romanesque Church that the mural painting which makes it so remarkable was discovered. The fact that in the mid-1970’s there was the intention to apply here an intervention practice that was usual in the first half of the century, purposely removing elements that were considered uncharacteristic of the Church’s construction period is extremely curious. So, it is within this context that we see Saint Isidore being deprived of its 19<sup>th</sup> century altars, which were considered “absolutely common”, and stripped “of the thick crust of stucco and plaster that was concealing the nobility of its granite walls” (Pamplona, 1976a: 5). Therefore, it is with enthusiasm that the journalist that tells us the “Novidades em Marco de Canaveses” in *O Comércio do Porto* newspaper, states that after this major intervention we feel “like we’re right in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which means eight hundred years younger! This is indeed a rare thing that is worth witnessing” (Pamplona, 1976a: 5). Although this intervention was financed by the parish, Fernando de Pamplona tells us that the restoration works were carried out under the architect Sola Campos’s responsibility and monitored by the auxiliary bishop of Porto, Domingos de Pinho Brandão, “who is an expert in art history” (Pamplona, 1976b: 35, note 1; 1976a: 5). In the 1990’s, preservation works were carried out occasionally (Serenó, 2006: 2).

In 2010 the Church of Saint Isidore of Canaveses became part of the Route of the Romanesque and it already has a project for the preservation and restoration of its mural paintings that will include, besides research works, a detailed study and documentation in terms of the pigments and techniques used. The intervention proposal comprises several tasks, from which we highlight the cleaning and consolidation of the remaining ensemble (Pestana, 2012: 11).

[MLB / NR]

15 Victor Le Cocq, through an order issued by the Minister of Public Works, had been commissioned to draw up a map of the preservation state, corresponding repairs and authorized expenses of all the buildings that were under that Ministry’s management. These buildings included those that were considered monuments, parish churches and public chapels, among others (Rosas, 1995: 511).

16 Queirós, Gonçalo Thomaz – Missiva, 10 de outubro de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM 1706/14 (Igrejas do bispado do Porto. Concelhos de Lousada e Marco de Canaveses).

17 DECEE no. 23. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I*. 142 (2013-07-25) 4387.

## CHRONOLOGY

1115: first reference to Saint Isidore of Ribatãmega;

13<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> half): possible construction of the Church of Saint Isidore of Canaveses, according to the remaining Romanesque traces;

1520: the parish is documented as being dedicated to "Saint Isidro";

1536: date inscribed on the remaining mural painting panel of Saint Isidore, accompanied by the signature "Moraes";

18<sup>th</sup> century: Saint Isidore is shown as belonging to the patronage of Travanca (Amarante);

1976: discovery of the mural painting of Saint Isidore;

1990s: documentation regarding several conservation works;

2010: the Church of Saint Isidore integrates the Route of the Romanesque;

2013: the building is classified as a National Monument.

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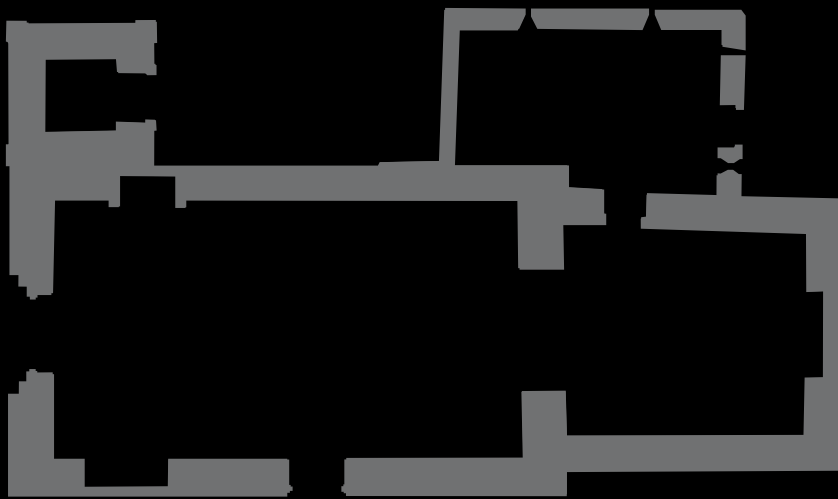




**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
CRISTOPHER  
OF NOGUEIRA  
CINFÃES



**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
CRISTOPHER  
OF NOGUEIRA  
CINFÃES



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The land of São Salvador, mentioned since 1070 (Herculano, 1960), currently corresponds, *grosso modo*, to the parishes of Cinfães and São Cristóvão de Nogueira. In 1258, the name “Sancti Salvatoris de Nogueyra” still appears alongside “Sancti Christofori de Nogueyra” (Herculano, 1936). The land’s castle would be surely located in São Paio, a place marked by an early human presence as proven by the archaeological remains collected there, whose chronological arc spans between the Iron Age and the Middle Ages<sup>1</sup>. This was surely the “oppidi” held by Lord Nuno Sanches de Barbosa (from “the Ribadouro” family) in 1180 (Pinho & Lima, 2000). Its domains extended between the rivers Douro (to the north), Bestança (to the east), the brook of Piães (to the west) and the hilltops of Montemuro (to the south).



Aerial view. On the bottom right corner, the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira.

The division of São Salvador into two jurisdictions – Cinfães and Nogueira – probably occurred between the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was certainly the result of inheritances and family divisions in “the Ribadouro” lineage, owners of this, as well as of the neighbouring lands of Ferreiros and Tendais<sup>2</sup>. The memory of the union of the two parishes in one single land still remained in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as we shall see, through intricate limits between parish and municipal terms. However, the origin of both churches is surely quite earlier, because, in 1076, there are already references to their patron saints “saint Pelagius”

<sup>1</sup> Several separate reports on the archaeological findings have been discovered in the site. These are written and oral testimonies on the historic importance of this space that drew Martins Sarmiento and José Leite de Vasconcelos' attention (1903: 66-68).

<sup>2</sup> The lands of Cinfães (São Salvador), Tendais and Ferreiros had been donated by the Count Henrique to Egas Gosendes, the paternal grandfather of Egas Moniz, known as the governor and schoolmaster of the first king of Portugal. According to A. de Almeida Fernandes (1946: 30-35), he died around 1130 and, shortly afterwards, his grandson, Mem Moniz, together with his wife, Cristina das Astúrias, are referred to as the landlords of rural villages in the Tendais and Ferreiros region. Therefore, the division of assets and rights associated with the region's lands by “the Ribadouro” family took place during the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

and “saint john of cinphanes”; the latter found in the same year but in another document under the name “basilice” (Herculano, 1860). The Saviour, whose title matches the religious and bellicose atmosphere of the Reconquest might have been replaced by the Mozarabic Pelagius (known in Lorvão and Guimarães in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century) in the primitive hermitage located close to the castle, and both replaced in the new church of Nogueira by the later devotion to Saint Christopher. Perhaps the legend that still survives locally and ascribes the extraordinary relocation of the primitive church of Saint Christopher, “which took place overnight”, to herculean Moors”, is concealing the change of the parish’s primitive spiritual axis, when it was no longer necessary to turn to the Saviour’s righteous sword or to the exemplary life of the young man called Pelagius, who was tortured in Cordoba by the Muslims and, in the meantime, replaced by the apotropaic protection of Christopher, the good giant.

However, although we accept the existence of autonomous or private churches (basilicas) in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, their transformation into incumbent churches subject to a diocese whose limits were still being defined (we should note the periods of subordination to the territory of Coimbra in the 13<sup>th</sup> century) was a lengthy process that only came to an end when the municipal borders were defined. Only then the church would become a simultaneously religious and social epicentre, supported by a series of individuals whose relationships and vicinity bonds unravel within a properly defined territory.

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West façade.



## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

So, it is within this context that we should understand the scarce Romanesque traces we managed to identify in the building of the existing Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira, as well as its clearly Gothic structure, which is easily explained by the late chronology of the formation and consolidation of this parish with its own Church – between the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century; that does not mean the absence of an older pre-existing temple with different functions than the ones performed by the community temple.

It is precisely on the nave's north elevation that we find the oldest traces and, more specifically, on the south side elevation, close to the tower and halfway up the wall. We are talking of the remains or reuse of a frieze composed of a total of six ashlars featuring the theme of the so-called palmettes from Braga, so popular in the Romanesque style from the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region. Travelling long distances and even going beyond the “borders” of Braga, this motif found in the Romanesque traces of the Braga cathedral is the result of the simplification of the Classical palmette, depicting only its external outline.



North façade. Nave. Frieze and later works.

Ever since its foundation in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Braga cathedral played a crucial role as a “radiating” centre<sup>3</sup> associated with the Romanesque style in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region. In fact, although this is not an exceptional architectural creation, the Braga cathedral took on a leading role over this province and its “periphery”, not only because it was one of the first buildings in the region that followed “the new style” which, centuries later, was called the Romanesque style, but also because, by having a primate and, thus, being the religious capital in the earliest period of the

<sup>3</sup> About the subject, please read Botelho (2010: 41-52).

Portuguese monarchy, it was placed on a different level when compared to the large number of monasteries and regional churches across which its influence spread. Here we should recall that the different dialects that Romanesque architecture took on in the territory that became Portugal were not closed in on themselves; instead, they were profusely and productively interconnected, thus resulting in the exchange of influences and also in the circulation of artists.

In Saint Christopher, the presence of this rather popular motif not only proves the reach that the influence of the Romanesque style, which had spread from the Braga cathedral, achieved in geographical terms, but it is also proof of its precociousness in chronological terms. Besides, we should note the difference between the grain and the colour of the granite that shapes this frieze and the rest of the granite that was used in the building.

Here we may suggest two possibilities, taking into account the earlier chronology presented by the rest of the nave, which we shall analyse below. We find it more likely this frieze to be the result of the reuse of a building that might have existed in this place or, alternatively, we could be standing before the reuse of sculptural elements from a primitive church consecrated to the Saviour which was, in the meantime, relocated, thus providing factual expression to the narrative we have mentioned before.

It is also within this context of reuse of materials that we should understand the various terminal ashlar of the nave's cornice, located on the same side, which depict a zigzag motif carved in relief. The reuse of materials was a very common practice throughout the entire history of art. Although there are frequent attempts to justify the reuse of ashlar by alleging a supposed prestige associated with the value of antiquity, this practice was, most likely, the result of a pragmatic need. Reusing what is already made (and well made) is much simpler than starting from scratch. And the choice of the building's location was not always the result of elaborate notions on the sacred/profane dichotomy, but rather of the reuse of outcrops on which it would be possible to safely build the new structure.

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East and north façades.



South façade.

Besides, on the nave's south elevation, the irregularity of the masonry work is quite obvious, both in terms of the ashlar's size and alignment, and of the variation of grains that allow us to identify different types of granite. So, we believe that this section of the south elevation, at least until the point where there is a slightly protruding arch (which, inside, corresponds to one of the chapels embedded in the nave's wall), presents an earlier chronology. As we shall see further ahead, the Church's chancel was rebuilt (surely also reusing ashlar from the primitive Romanesque chancel) between 1779 and 1794, during the rectorship of José da Cunha Gouveia, according to the report of the inspection conducted on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1784<sup>4</sup>. That fact is clearly proven by a closer look at both lateral elevations where the marks of a scar are quite obvious. Considering the lack of documentary sources, we could only provide more precise information on the building evolution of the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira by resorting to architectural archaeology.

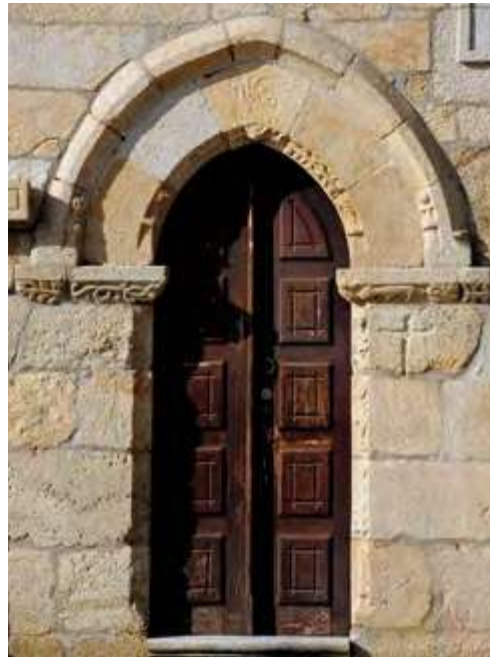
When we speak of analysing a building, or any other historic monument, through the archaeological methodology, it seems that we are inevitably thinking of an archaeological excavation (Nuño González, 2005: 95). An excavation may be useful to study a building that has, totally or partially, disappeared, so as to find out information on the foundations or building stages hidden underground or even in the immediate surroundings (annexes, cemeteries, building sites used during reconstruction or renovation works), but the archaeological method may be used to study a preserved building without necessarily implying an excavation. It is possible to study our architectural heritage according to an archaeological methodology based on a scientific method called stratigraphic analysis. So, in some cases, the walls of the buildings

<sup>4</sup> ADL – *Visitações*, São Cristóvão de Nogueira, fl. 31.





West façade. Portal.



South façade. Nave. Portal.

have been read at many different levels, crossing the information collected in the documentary sources with the one provided by the ashlar, their shape and interrelation. As a result of this interdisciplinary work, it has been possible to map the different building stages of a given architectural wall through a very careful observation.

The construction of Saint Christopher of Nogueira's nave is naturally of Medieval origin, however, taking into account its decorative elements, more than Romanesque, it fits into what has been called the "resistance Romanesque" or even "rural Gothic style". Similarly to the geographically close Churches of Saint Mary of Barrô (Resende) or Saint John the Baptist of Gatão (Amarante), we are standing before an example where Romanesque persistence's are combined with Gothic signs. Together with the long chronology associated with the Portuguese Romanesque style, which fully justifies the need for a diachronic analysis, we should always consider the difficult penetration of the Trans-Pyrenean Gothic style in Portugal, especially in the North and Beira regions.

So, the Church's two portals are good evidence of the importance that this type of architecture reached among us and, particularly, in this region. Without a tympanum, the main portal features three broken archivolts directly supported on the walls. Although the pearls, or half-spheres carved in relief, which decorate the archivolts and the corded motifs shaping the imposts take us back to a Romanesque persistence, the chamfered edges of the stepped walls are already telling us of a different artistic period. However, we should notice the originality of the motifs sculpted on the base of the voussoirs, which are a bit worn out, despite more visible on the south portal. There are two fists holding keys (?) placed on both imposts. On the walls, which are defined by a bevelled edge, there are curious decorative motifs carved in relief, from which we highlight a lizard on the observer's right. Besides that, both the remaining voussoirs









South façade. Nave. Corbel.



South façade. Nave. Corbel.

of the archivolt and the impostes, as well as the walls are dominated by intertwined botanic and phytomorphic motifs carved in relief. The portal has a single archivolt dominated by its surrounding arch; on the keystone we see an inscription that is quite faded, which may be translated as IHS (*Jesus Hominis Salvator*).

The series of modillions located along the nave is quite rich in terms of carved imagery. Their human figures and several animal muzzles remind us that, particularly during the Romanesque Period, corbels were seen as a crucial element in architectural composition. Their origin is associated with the beams that had to be extended outside the walls to place the edge of the roof a bit further away in order to prevent the water from reaching the walls; from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, in Northern Spain, the front part of these elements began being covered with sculpted figures adjusted to their profile. In general, the oldest narrative modillions show us full-bodied figures which are occasionally hugging (a similar scheme to that of a modillion found in Saint Mary of Meinedo, Lousada), while in the late Romanesque Period they are less frequent and show merely busts or heads (Almeida, 2001: 162). It was in the Alto Minho region that these modillions, which tended to be wider and shorter, featured a wider variety of motifs; in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they, eventually, would only depict a face (Almeida, 1978: 105-106). The way in which Nogueira's modillions were designed is also clear evidence of the late chronology according to which we should understand this building.

It is also within this late chronological context that we should approach the remaining tympanum of Saint John of Cinfães, whose design confirms the introduction of late Romanesque models in the region. Although it is difficult to understand its chronology, because detached, the tympanum of Cinfães is dominated by a polylobed arch featuring similar voussoirs to the one placed on the south portal of São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim). The central motif of









the tympanum, which is clearly Romanesque, is composed of a cross pattée that, for having a straighter bottom, looks like a processional cross. This cross is framed by botanic motifs. Although this tympanum is currently placed on a flowerbed on one of the sides of the Baroque church of Cinfães, it is a Romanesque legacy from the period when the land of São Salvador was divided and the parishes of São Cristóvão and São João Baptista were created (or perhaps a little more recent).

Inside the Church, on the Epistle side at the entrance, there is an arcosolium where, instead of a sarcophagus, we find a free-standing granite font, which is the only element that identifies the Medieval origin of the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

**D**uring the Modern Period, i.e., between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, most of the Portuguese Romanesque churches underwent deep changes that, in some cases, made their original or dominant style unrecognisable. These transformations could be structural (demolition of some of their elements and reconstruction according to a new language) or decorative (covering the Church's interior with stucco or tiles, adding a whole series of liturgical furnishings such as the pulpit, the altar, the altarpieces and the enrichment of the corresponding imagery collections).

The Ecumenical Council<sup>5</sup> of Trento (1545-1563), which was held during the papacies of Paul III (1534-1549), Julius III (1549-1555) and Pius IV (1559-1565), sought to find answers to the controversial questions posed by the confrontation between the temporal and spiritual ministries of the Church of Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, seeking an internal renovation that could stand up against the Protestant movements that were getting stronger in Western Europe at the time. This Council has been considered as the most important historic event of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A series of measures focusing on the adjustment of the liturgical space were imposed at the time to ensure compliance with the new precepts defined in the last Tridentine session (XXV),

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Nave and chancel. Altars.

<sup>5</sup> "The Ecumenical Council was a practice introduced in the 4<sup>th</sup> century by the Church, in which an assembly of bishops and other important figures discussed emerging issues affecting the Christian community as a whole" (Barbosa, 2000: 405).



held in 1563. These measures cover several areas that include the ornamentation/enrichment of the sacred space by using materials that are not, supposedly, noble: ceramics and wood. Right after Trento, a whole series of treatises appeared advocating the leading role of art as a pedagogical and persuasive vehicle of the Counter-Reformist church (Rocha, 2008: 55). So, as in most cases there were not financial resources to build a new church according to the rules written by Saint Charles Borromeo (1538-1584) – *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae* –, the alternative was to update the decoration of the sacred space according to the newest artistic languages and techniques. That would happen whenever a religious entity had more financial freedom and, therefore, invested in the renovation and update of its liturgical equipment.

So, it is within this context that we should understand the information that resulted from the inspection conducted on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1784, in Saint Christopher of Nogueira, which mentions that: “in the Church’s chancel, the walls, window panes, lining, roof and golden altarpiece were rebuilt and the chancel’s lining was painted, all thanks to the zeal of the current Rector Reverend, and at his expense; in this work he spent seven hundred and forty thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit], as shown in the list he provided me with, an expense made for the benefit of this parish’s Commandery of the Order of Christ that, on account of its tithes, was obliged to carry out those works, for which the Rector Reverend declared that he had only received seventy two thousand “réis” from the last Commander, His Excellency the Count of Galveias”<sup>6</sup>.

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As we have already mentioned above, the scar that proves the transformation carried out in Saint Christopher of Nogueira is quite visible. Besides, considering the remains of a round arch that are visible on the outside of the back wall, we believe that many of the ashlar from the primitive Medieval chevet were reused. However, the chevet’s modillions are coeval of this intervention, as proven by their more rectangular shape and by the fact that they are plain or feature simple carved flutings.

This work was carried out so as to respond to Tridentine demands, so the opening of the nave’s large windows, which are surmounted by curved tympana, as well as of the straight-lintel window that surmounts the main portal are probably from the same period. The pinnacles placed on top of the Church’s upper angles should also be coeval of this intervention aimed at the modernisation of the Romanesque building of Saint Christopher of Nogueira. As for the tower, we believe that it was surely built either during this same period or, at least, in the following century.

At the time, together with these architectural transformations, the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira was provided with a grand gilded woodwork ensemble, from which we begin by highlighting the Rococo altarpiece, surely built after 1778.

However, the nave’s two collateral National Baroque [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)] altarpieces are from an earlier period; they were consecrated in 1758: the one on the right (Epistle side) to the Virgin of the Rosary and to the secondary devotions of Saint Francis and Saint Sebastian (currently on the main altarpiece), and the one on the left (Gospel side) to the Church’s patron saint, Saint Christopher, with the Infant Jesus on his shoulders together with the image of Saint Joseph.



Nave. North wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. South wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. South wall. Altarpiece.

The aforementioned rector also refers a lateral altar located on the Epistle side of the Church's body, dedicated to the crucified Christ. The altar is still there, although it was moved to the opposite wall and deeply changed by recent and poorly skilled repainting interventions. The crucifix was also replaced by the sculpture of the Virgin of Graces flanked by the gracious Baroque images of Saint Joseph and Saint Francis, which were moved from their original places. The Brotherhood of Saint Francis was probably based on this altar; the rector José da Cunha said it belonged to the "Thirds of Saint Francis" subject to the reverend Commissioner Priest of that city's Franciscan community (Gouveia, 1758). This reference confirms the missionary spirit that the Franciscans from Lamego were spreading across the region, thus giving expression to certain devotions and invocations, such as the Crucified Lord, promoted by the order for being naturally associated with its patriarch, Saint Francis of Assisi, an imitator of Christ<sup>7</sup>.

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On the opposite side, there is another Rococo altar accommodating the Virgin of Mount Carmel together with the images of the Infant Jesus and the Virgin of the Rosary of Fátima. A new altarpiece was built on the same wall, next to the choir, to accommodate the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is currently flanked by the images of the blessed Jacinta e Francisco Marto; its manufacturing date is unknown but this might have been built still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As we can see, the changes made along the Church's body, which correspond to the campaign documented in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were quite significant. And although the devotion to the Crucified Christ and to the Calvary that rector Gouveia said were above the chancel arch in 1758 were separated from the Church's collection of integrated heritage, the devotees' interest in the topic of the Passion was never forgotten.

In the altar that initially accommodated the Virgin of the Rosary, the invocation was replaced, probably still during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by the Virgin of Sorrows, a processional image whose realism matches the pious and scenographic atmosphere that cherished the devotion to

<sup>7</sup> The other brotherhood was the one of the Lord of the Steps or the Souls; on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1800, its major-domos contracted the carpenter Manuel de Sousa Mesquita, who lived in the hamlet of Igreja, to finish the carpentry work of the new house of the Lord (ADV – Notariais, Livro 185/2, fls. 82-83).

the Passion of Christ. Below the processional image of the crying Virgin, a lying Christ completes the compassionate programme which is framed by the woodwork ornaments that cover the chancel arch, on the surface facing the nave: three angels are carrying the ladder, the chalice and the scarf were used during the Golgotha martyrdom. The celestial court of male and female saints depicted on the vaults of the chancel and the nave surmounts this ensemble.

Starting in the chancel, which the Church's patron was responsible for, the iconographic programme is somewhat complex, while combining popular devotions like Saint Barbara, Saint Lucy and Saint Blaise with holy bishops and doctors of the church, martyred virgins and Saint Claire, the patron of the female Franciscan monastic movement. Close to the end of the main altarpiece, Saint Joseph and Saint Joachim, Christ's father and grandfather, are flanking the royal effigy, while reminding us of who held the right of patronage. In the middle of the entire composition we find Christopher, the patron saint, in its most popular depiction: that of the good giant. It is likely that this pictorial fabric conveyed a message, expressed through the arrangement of the invocations. Within this context, we should not disregard the presence of the episcopal power among the thaumaturgy's (some of whom were bishops, such as Nicholas of Bari or Blaise of Sebaste).

In the Church's body, the author or authors of the painted coffered ceiling created a true book of sermons divided into 56 panels, arranged into seven by eight rows. There is a predominance of male and female saints from the Counter-Reformation, a very clear sign of the will to catechise through image and to introduce new devotions and new hagiographic models in local religiosity. So, and reading from the chancel arch to the high choir, although this ceiling seems to follow Christ's genealogical and spiritual tree, whose roots are located in the chancel (showing the Virgin of Conception and Saint Anne on the central row), the largest share of the pictorial area includes a pleiad of saints cherished by the Church reformed in Trento and by certain religious orders present in the region: Saint Rose of Lima, Saint Didacus of Alcalá, Saint Bernardine of Siena, Saint Theresa of Avila, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Saint John of God, Saint Norbert, Saint Bruno, Saint Benedict and Saint Bernard. The representation of holy bishops, such as Saint Paulinus of Nola or Saint Honorius of Canterbury, are also present. Among them, we find the usual reference to the well-known apostles, martyrs and intercessors from the popular prayer books, such as Saint Roch, Saint Euphemia, Saint Apollonia, Saint Michael and Saint Anthony – both placed in prominent positions (central row) within the pictorial composition.

Although we do not know the motivation and factors that contributed to the choice of such devotions, we cannot ignore the will of the artisan or artisans, of the commissioner and of the parishioners who were responsible for the Church's body. So, it is natural that they were all subject to the traditional and most usual invocations, to the hierarchy imposed by the Scriptures, which were joined by Counter-Reformist invocations and other invocations associated with the region's material and spiritual interests. As suggested by the memoir written in 1758 by the rector of Saint Christopher, which we have already mentioned, the Franciscan interference had significant impact on his Church. We can ascribe the responsibility for the modelling of the religious space of the body of the Church of Saint Christopher to the Franciscans, as well as to their preaching and evangelising work while acting as missionaries and sponsors for these Third Orders. Other devotions included in the coffered ceiling, such as Saint Bernard and Saint











Benedict, were surely not ignored by the devotees from Nogueira, given the temporal presence of Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries within the parish and municipal boundaries<sup>8</sup>.

The refurbishment carried out in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century which introduced deep changes in the Gothic space – and resulted in a stylistic hybridity and in a rich ensemble with artistic and aesthetic diversity – conceals motivations and a series of issues that go far beyond merely artistic or architectural concerns. The rector José da Cunha Gouveia, the mentor of the works campaign, warns about the problems of the commendatory system. In fact, both Saint Christopher of Nogueira and its neighbouring parish of Cinfães became commendations of the Order of Christ with tempting revenues which were handed over to lords of the highest nobility.

Right in the introduction, and as an answer to the second question on the Pombaline survey, the rector states: “this Church, known as Saint Christopher of Nogueira is presented by His Majesty, may God protect him, and its revenues, namely taxes, tithes and first-fruit rights belong to His Honorable Excellency the Lord Count of Galveias. And further ahead, while mentioning the condition of the main altarpiece, he adds: the commissioning of the aforementioned altar, or chancel, is an obligation of His Honorable Excellency the Lord of Galveias, since he is the owner of all of the parish’s revenues; the aforementioned gentleman has been grossly negligent in regard to the reconstruction of the chancel, which is in a miserable condition, and while this should be the most decent altar in which to praise and aggrandize Our Omnipotent God, it is actually the most indecent and imperfect one in this parish, to its residents’ regret and sorrow” (Gouveia, 1758). This type of complaint is frequent, both in parish churches and in monastic temples that were in the hands of religious or lay commendatory abbots, who benefited from the incomes they earned without contributing to the chancels over which they held the right of patronage. There are different cases, as the one of Veade (Celorico de Basto), where the commanders of Malta intended to leave a mark of their prestige and power, but the examples we know point to a shameful neglect in terms of the management of the assets in the hands of lay people, who lived far away, or even of institutions (like in Escamarão, located nearby).

Tired of postponing the solution for a problem he was periodically faced with as presented by diocesan inspectors – that of the poor state of repair of his Church integrated heritage –, rector Gouveia sponsored a works campaign that left a laudatory record on the choir, at the Church’s entrance. That was possible, not only thanks to the good will and sponsoring spirit of the priest, but also partly due to his comfortable annual income (approximately 100 thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit]), together with the parishioners’ contribution, as mentioned in the inscriptions:

AS OBRAS DESTA IGREJA MAN [THE WORKS OF THIS CHURCH WERE]  
DOU-AS FAZER O REVERENDO JOZE [COMMISSIONED BY REVEREND  
JOZE]  
DA CUNHA E GOUVEIA REITOR NELA [DA CUNHA E GOUVEIA ITS RECTOR]  
E OS MORADORES DESTA FREGUESIA [AND BY THE INHABITANTS OF  
THIS PARISH]

<sup>8</sup> On the distribution of devotions and monastic properties in this region, please read Resende (2011).



DOS RENDIMENTOS DA [SPONSORED BY ITS INCOME]  
MESMA E TAMBÉM DOS [AND ALSO THEIR OWN]  
SEUS AS COMPLETOU NO [THEY WERE COMPLETED IN]  
ANO DE 1778 [THE YEAR OF 1778]

There is a certain pride exuding from the speech of rector José da Cunha Gouveia, whose surnames reveal a noble origin, and who was the spiritual leader of a populous parish (in 1527, São Cristóvão counted between 54 and 196 residents (Collaço, 1931) and, in 1739, 1303 souls (Maria, 1739)). His memoir is an incursion into a few economic and social aspects of Saint Christopher of Nogueira, from the profusion of noble houses and estates, whose chapels the rector describes (albeit briefly), to the notable men with different virtues that the Baroque speech lists, while sparing no compliments.

The idea of antiquity and spiritual value that were necessary for the parish to stand out from the others is conveyed, for instance, in how the parish priest highlights the therapeutic value of the image of Saint Christopher and its intercession as a patron saint among the parishioners: “the parish’s residents worship him as they can, and there are no records of a bolt or a flash of lightning ever striking and hurting a creature in this parish, and the cause for that is ascribed to the favour and protection of this glorious Saint” (Gouveia, 1758). Furthermore, the list of brotherhoods (two) and confraternities (five), among which was the one of the Virgin of Cales, a notable Medieval sanctuary located on the boundaries of the terms of Nogueira and Piães, reveal the participation of the parishioners in the management of the parish’s religious heritage. On “Cales”, which were surely an important source of income for the parish, the rector tells the story of the miraculous reception and discovery of the image, a topic common to many Marian apparitions that resulted in similar sanctuaries. The devotees went there searching for spiritual, but also physical, nourishment, asking for the Virgin to share the milk with which She was breastfeeding the Infant Jesus she was holding in her arms.

Although it was a municipality whose term was far from being large (when compared, for example, with the neighbouring municipality of Sanfins, which included five parishes and two “coutos” [a type of Portuguese administrative division]) and extended across a mountainous area, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, its population was divided into 420 dwellings, approximately one hundred of which were part of a jurisdiction shared with the parish of Cinfães, a trace of the Medieval organization in which both parishes were part of the “terra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of São Salvador. This enclave included the villages of Temporão, Portela, Velude, Vila Nova, Aljereu, Louredo do Mato, Ponte, Louredo and Lavadouro, whose residents were parishioners of Saint John the Baptist of Cinfães in one year and of Saint Christopher of Nogueira in the following one.

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

Inside the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira, the persistence of granite on the walls tells us that we are standing before a Medieval building. However, we know that, during the Middle Ages, religious buildings had a different appearance which would hide the granite that shaped them. According to the chronicle *Historias* (c. 1003, written by Raoul Glaber, the world had been covered with a “white mantle” of churches around the year 1000. Naturally, we know that the whitewash that once existed in the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira (Guimarães, 1954: 92) was not from this period. But we know that, in 1982, there was an intervention to remove plasters (Carvalho, 2006).

An inscription on the pulpit tells us of the completion of a few “restoration works” in 2005; these probably correspond to interventions that included the repainting and gilding of the woodwork and the coffered ceiling, the lighting system, the plaster coating of the interior walls and the filling of gaps with mortar. We have no further information on what might have been carried out in terms of conservation interventions in the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since this is a non-classified property, we are almost sure that the official authorities responsible for the conservation of the national built heritage never carried out any intervention in the building. There were certainly other interventions focused on the building and its assets besides the one that was documented in 2005; however, given that these were carried out by local entities or by the “ Building Commission itself, we have no information on them.

In 2010, the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira became part of the Route of the Romanesque and, within this scope, it has been subject, since August 2014, to conservation, protection and valuation works focused on its roofs and external walls; these works were preceded by the appropriate architectural and diagnostic surveys, which are key elements for a better understanding of the built heritage. This first intervention is seen as the “first step to restore the (...) quality and dignity” of this Romanesque building (Costa, 2012: 6). [MLB / NR]



## CHRONOLOGY

1070: first known reference to the land of São Salvador;

1258: simultaneous references to São Salvador de Nogueira and São Cristóvão de Nogueira;

1527: in the Numeramento there is a reference to the municipality of São Cristóvão de Nogueira, with six villages and 134 residents;

1739: in the *Descrição corográfica do reyno de Portugal...*, the parish of São Cristóvão shows up with 420 dwellings and 1303 inhabitants;

1778-1794: period of documented works on the structure and integrated heritage;

1982: removal of plasters;

2005: completion of several restoration works;

2010: integration of the Church of Saint Christopher of Nogueira in the Route of the Romanesque;

2014-2015: works for the general conservation of the Church, mostly at the levels of the roofs and external walls.

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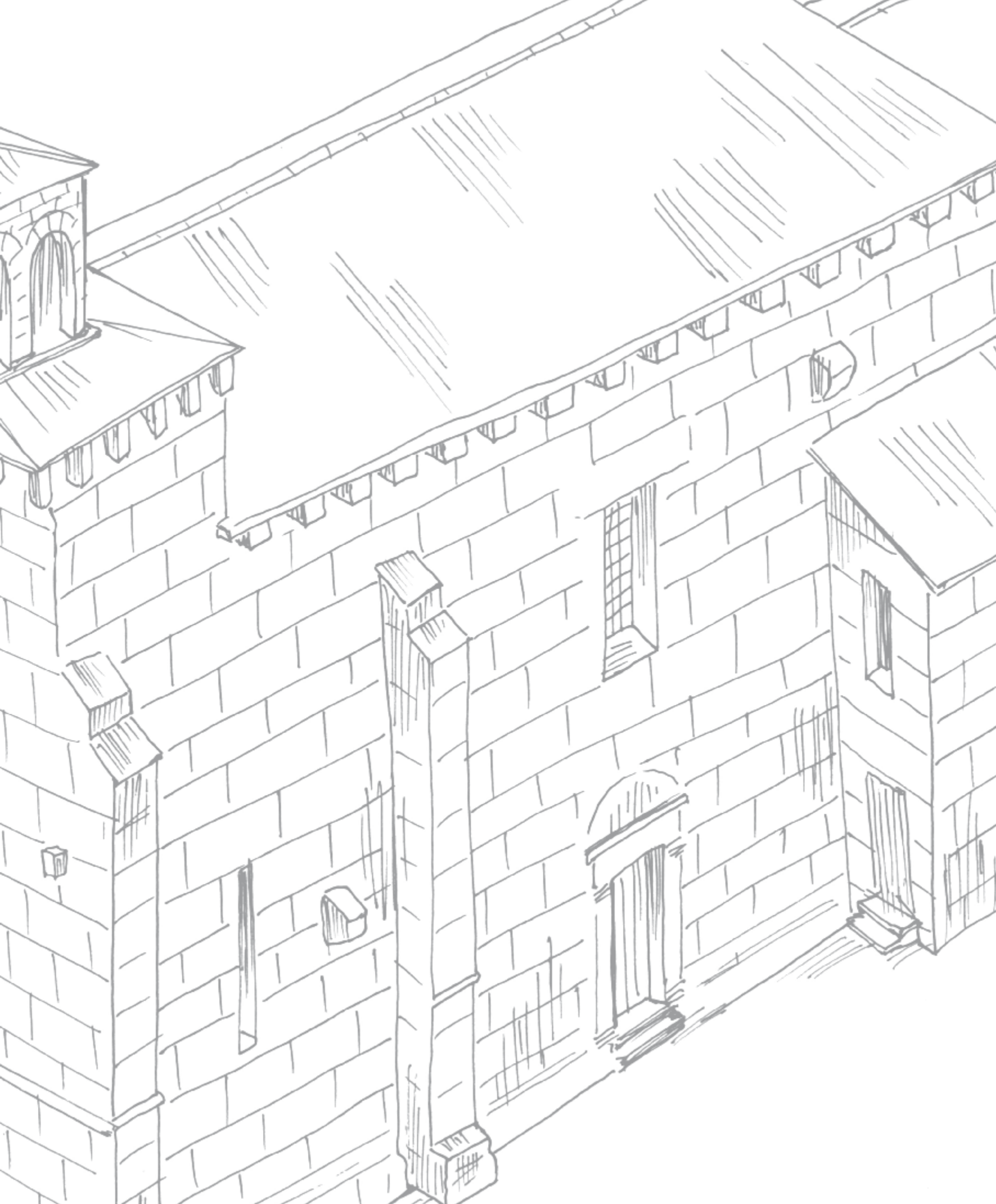
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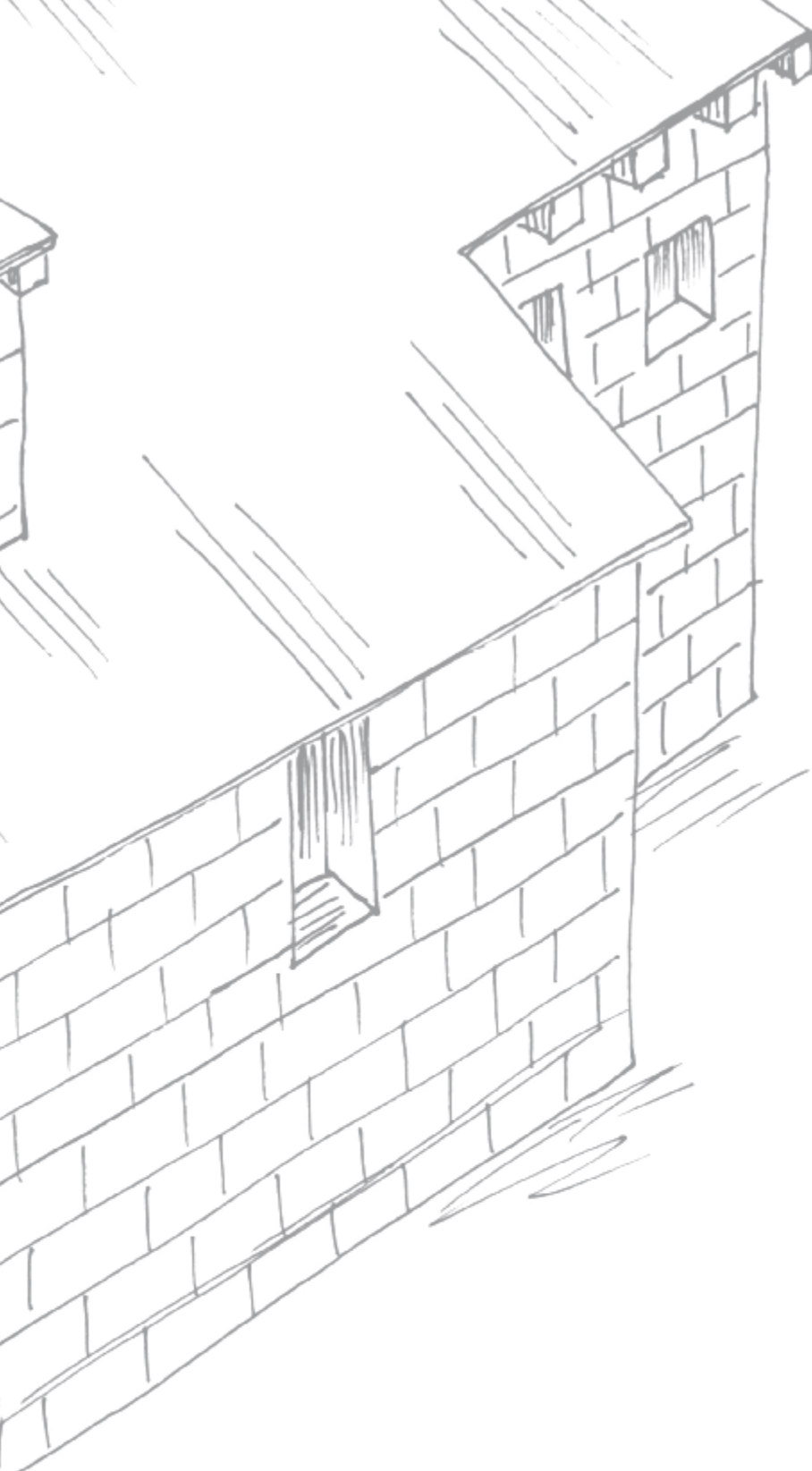
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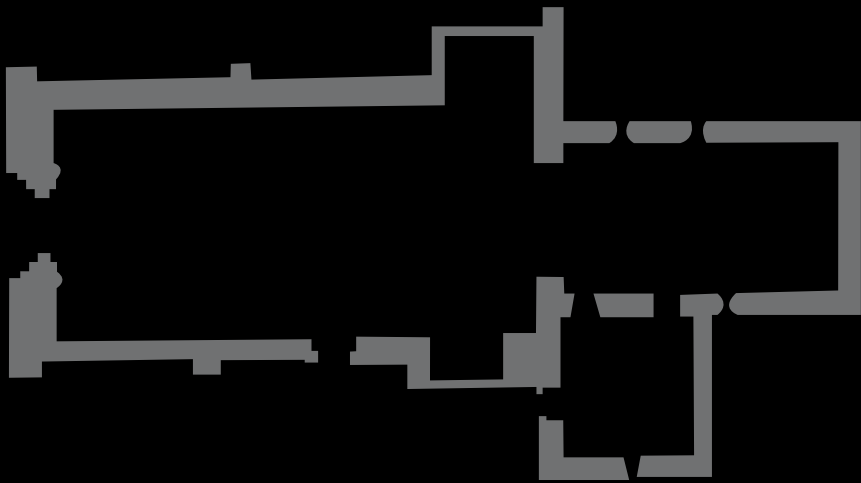




**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
MARTIN  
OF MOUROS  
RESENDE



**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
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RESENDE



Plan.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The parish Church of Saint Martin of Mouros stands on a mountain top that elevates itself over the final stretch of the Bestança brook (or São Martinho brook), on its way to the Douro river. Built on an easily defensible area, featuring steep slopes and remarkable granite massifs, this Church, with a silhouette that imposes itself from the different points of the valley, stands out from the landscape of the Meadas mountain range in a very peculiar way due to its unique physiognomy. This Romanesque building is set up on a high-sloped ground, a feature which is more visible in its north façade and that the existence of a base, comprising rows of ashlar with different heights, tries to compensate. We should note the granite outcrop that is also visible on the north side, close to the chevet.



General view.

Although the first news on any kind of occupation of this territory date back to the “castreja” [fortified camps] age (Costa, 1979: 341), and to the subsequent Romanisation period<sup>1</sup>, from which this territory features quite remarkable traces, we should highlight that, in the Middle Ages, there were already news on the taking of the castle by the army of Ferdinand, the Great – King of Castile (k. 1035-1065) and Leon (k. 1037-1065) –, thus integrating Saint Martin’s into an important defensive line along the Douro river that also included the castles of Lamego and Castro de Rei (Tarouca). We should remember that it was after the taking of Lamego, on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1057, that the Christian armies of Ferdinand the Great took the

<sup>1</sup> Regarding this matter, please read, among others, Jalhay (1951) and Mantas (1985).





View over the valley of the brook Bestança.

castles of Cárquere (Resende) and Saint Martin of Mouros (Barroca, 2003: 32). The latter defensive structure, of which some traces still survive, is located to the west of the existing village, being certainly a heiress of the “castro” [hill fort]; the primitive Christian temple, which was built close to its fence, was dedicated to the Saviour like so many others at the time<sup>2</sup>. The invocation is simultaneously a sign of the taking and a war cry, which takes shape in the iconography of Christ, as King and Justicer. Once the castle had been taken and the space had been made consecrated, the walled town was able to resume its life, along the fertile Bestança brook.

Such an early occupation is easily explainable if we consider the agro-pastoral potential of the lands that still surround this Romanesque Church, built upon the slope. In Medieval times, the parish Church already featured the following trilogy: “ager” (farming area), “saltus” or “thicket” (with oaks and chestnut trees, i.e. hardwood trees) and the “hill” (Rosas, 1987: 4). According to Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida (1978: 49), such division, asserted as a micro-agro-silvo-system, provided balance between the production of cereals in the winter and, in the summer, the existence of grass and pastures for the livestock, together with wood and bundles of twigs for the house, acorns and chestnuts to fatten the pigs and feed for the stables, wood for the fire and the oven; this system settles around the late 11<sup>th</sup> century and reaches its peak before the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Almeida, 1978: 32). A description of “The Brook of Saint Martin”, dated from 1531, tells us about this “cool valley”, which is still “very dense and [that] looks a lot like Sintra, but with thicker woods: and the entire valley is full of chestnut trees, and walnut trees, and hazel trees, and orange trees, and other very excellent pine trees, and many good orchards and quagmires; it provides the finest wheat we find in all its surroundings (...) and great amounts of nuts and chestnuts; and many and very beautiful chestnut logs and wood boards are carried out from there to be shipped at the Douro” (Fernandes, 1926: 569). In fact, later, Modern and Contemporary descriptions reproduce similar ideas of abundance, fertility and variety of crops.

<sup>2</sup> About this castle, its location and a short description within the context of the Reconquest fortresses, please read Teixeira (2001: 463-476). The author cartographically identifies and marks the plausible location of the chapel of the Holy Saviour, which was ruined in the meantime (2001: 471).



West façade and churchyard before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: Nuno Resende's private collection.

As, indeed, we are still able to verify nowadays, hardwood trees take on a significant role in the landscape surrounding the current parish Church of Saint Martin of Mouros. In 1342, in the context of the confirmation of customs and traditions decreed by Countess Teresa for the village of São Martinho de Mouros, there is a reference to the “church’s oak trees” upon establishing that, from that date onwards, the meetings of the council’s important men should be held in that place (Serra, 1816: 586).

The construction of a Romanesque building (or of any building) has, in its design, a series of constraints that explain its location. The existence of a river nearby, the territory’s orography, the access to transportation infrastructures, the population density (and the dynamism of the populations settled in the area), the preponderance of a given lineage (whose power is widely spread, both at local and regional levels), the agricultural potential of the territory or its strategic location, are factors that influenced the construction of any building in the Romanesque Period. So, these agents will regulate its physical dimension and the simplicity or complexity of its building and iconographic solutions, since the construction is located in a specific place and meets the needs of a specific community.

Although there is very few historical information on this building during the Middle Ages, the same does not apply to the territory where it is located. São Martinho de Mouros was honoured with a foral charter drawn up by the Countess of Portucale, Teresa de Leão (1080-1130), on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1111, in which she confirmed the previous charters given “to you, good men of São Martinho de Mouros, which you have had since the times of my grandfather, the King Fernando and my father, the King Afonso: who gave this castle with this charter to the bailiff Sesnando” (Serra, 1816: 580), the latter between 1057 and 1065 (Duarte, 1994: 996).

Since then, several documentary sources, throughout the Middle Ages, mention the territory of Saint Martin of Mouros. We believe that such historic importance of the territory might have justified the construction of a monument as peculiar as this Church during the Romanesque Period. In fact, we must not forget that the General Inquiries in 1258, carried out following a request by King Afonso III (k. 1248-1279), inform us that the king is its patron and presenter: “(...) de patronatu ecclesiae Sancti Martini de Mauris dixit, quod Dominus Rex est patronus, et presentat dicte ecclesie” (Herculano, 1936: 990).

This reference to the patronage matches the stylistic chronology of the construction of Saint Martin of Mouros, as well as an inscription mentioning the year of 1217, which Mário Barroca (2000: 688-690) considers as a commemorative inscription related to a specific construction stage of the Church: Era : M<sup>a</sup> : CC<sup>a</sup> : 2<sup>a</sup> : V<sup>a</sup>.

That inscription, which refers us to the “Era of 1255”<sup>3</sup>, is engraved in an ashlar embedded in the outer façade of the chancel, on the north side, placed on the first row above the footing and in the fifth stone from the right. However, its poor state of conservation allows it to go unnoticed under less watchful eyes.

<sup>3</sup> We cannot forget that the use of Arabic numerals in Portuguese epigraphs would only become common practice from the first quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. As it is known, during the Middle Ages, carvers engraved the Arabic number “5” as an inverted “2”, a fact that has been giving rise to debates in terms of epigraphical reading. Regarding this subject, please read Barroca (2000: 688-690).





North façade. Chancel. Commemorative inscription marking the Church's construction.

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We believe that the positioning of this commemorative inscription in Saint Martin of Mouros is of the utmost importance as a basic chronological reference. As a rule, the Romanesque construction would begin by the chevet so, right after it was completed and even before the beginning of the construction of the nave, it would be possible to hold liturgical ceremonies, after the celebration of its dedication and consecration. Then, when the chevet was already being used for divine worshipping, and if the available funding allowed so, the construction of the nave would then follow.

In this context, the date 1217 is either related to the beginning of the construction of this Church or, alternatively, it could be a reference to the completion of the first stage of construction, i.e., of the chevet (Barroca, 2000: 690), should the procedures more commonly used at the time be followed. Besides, this date also meets the hypothesis raised by several authors that place the date of the completion of the nave during the second quarter or mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Almeida, 1986: 108; Rosas, 2009).

On the other hand, in this Romanesque Church dedicated to Saint Martin, we identify something curious which shows that, in the Romanesque Period, the sequence for the construction of a building didn't always follow one single rule. In the period under study, the exception was, many times, the rule. Let us, therefore, observe the tower-shaped volume that shapes the main façade.

Here, the first quarter of the nave is dominated by a bulky western volume that, as a sort of façade-tower, provides this Church with a somewhat militarised and defensive look. We must not forget that, generally speaking, the atmosphere of the Christian Reconquest was reflected in the Portuguese Romanesque architecture; this was the context in which this new architectural style found an atmosphere and its very own expression space for development, asserting itself as the reorganisation of the territory promoted by the Christian kings progressed.







There is no doubt that the solidity of a church – one of the best buildings in any city and, undoubtedly, the largest and most robust building in any given village – provided shelter for the entire community – or, at least, for specific religious or secular groups – in moments of peril (Nuño González, 2002: 127). So, this feature is sometimes emphasised in the architectural structure itself, through its sturdy and robust appearance. We could mention, by way of example, the old Coimbra cathedral.

Based on the reconstitution suggested by António Nogueira Gonçalves (1934; 1940; 1942; 1958; 1969; 1984), we now know that the façade of Santa Cruz of Coimbra included a strong defensive tower in front of the church, showing a similar typology to the one we still see today in the old Coimbra cathedral, composed of a central protruding volume, with a large window opened above the raised portal; both feature decorated archivolts and are separated by a small drip-course resting on little arches. Working much like a foyer, this pre-nave opened its interior onto the nave.

More recently, Manuel Real (1982: 118-132) has been paying a special attention to the spatial organization of Augustinian churches, whose order was an important support for the expansionist and autonomy-related policies of King Afonso Henriques (1143-1185). Consequently, these churches stand out for their fortified profile (Real, 1982: 126). Embodying the art of the Portuguese Reconquest (Real, 1982: 123), the churches of the Canon Regulars stand out precisely by the existence of a narthex-tower; the churches of Santa Cruz of Coimbra, built from June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1131, onwards, and São Vicente de Fora, in Lisbon, were the most flagrant examples. The atmosphere of insecurity felt during the Reconquest led people to build bastions and collect real arsenals for their own defense, especially in borderline areas, and, mainly, in churches located outside the village walls (Real, 1995: 18). Remember that these two Augustinian monasteries were precisely located outside the wall line of their respective cities.

The expression “fortress-church” is too often used in the bibliography regarding the Romanesque Period, especially the one that was produced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. The fact that many churches feature merlons and that there are a few towers of military traits associated with monuments with a religious nature (although these are mainly from the Gothic period), such as the one of the Saviour of Travanca (Amarante), are enough, for many authors, to defend the existence of a typically Portuguese typology that shows an obvious military trend, despite this trend being more rhetorical than actually military. This subject also seeks to point out the constant connotation of the Portuguese Romanesque style with the Christian Reconquest that here, in Saint Martin of Mouros, was emphasised during the restorations carried out in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as we shall see further ahead. Note that this Church dedicated to Saint Martin of Tours was given an equal importance in the list of “Castles from the 1<sup>st</sup> Medieval Period” from the monumental work by Damião Peres entitled *A gloriosa história dos mais belos castelos de Portugal* [The glorious history of the most beautiful castles in Portugal] (Peres, 1969: 75-76).

In the Middle Ages the tower was seen as a symbol of safety and, in the absence of castles, the church represented the best fortress (Almeida, 1971: 69). The religious and the military are, therefore, inseparable (Nuño González 2002: 130). The cathedrals from Braga, Porto,



Reconstitution of the monastery of Saint Vincent of Fora (Lisbon) from an engraving by Braunius. Source: Castilho, 1936, *apud* Fernandes, 2010: 89.

<sup>4</sup> About the subject, please read Botelho (2010: 379-385).



Monastery of Travanca (Amarante). General view.

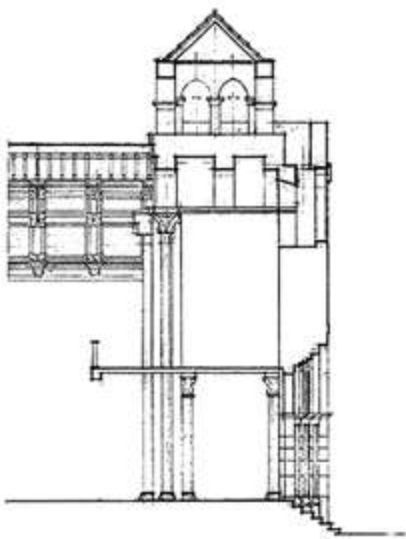
Coimbra and Lisbon, standing on dominant locations, look like fortresses and stress the determination and “firmness of the Portuguese commitment” (Almeida, 1971: 69). So, for Aarão de Lacerda, these buildings are evocative symbols “of those times when the faith and the sword were joined in the same efforts of proselytism and conquest, thus influencing the construction of fortress-temples, ready to be transformed into warrior bastions” (Lacerda, 1942: 213-214).

In the case of the narthex-tower of Coimbra, the existence of a tribune on the church’s upper floor certainly responded to specific liturgical goals associated with the “regular mass” and the “solemn mass” of the canonical practice (Real, 1982: 125). The galilee surely accumulates a “martyrdom-related” function; it quickly began receiving pious burials, which caused its use to be spread across other regions (Real, 1995: 18).

Although we should understand the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros within a different, more ruralised, context and not as part of the same family of churches as Santa Cruz of Coimbra, the fact is that, in the valley of the Bestança brook, we have a significant specimen of one of the most innovative and international shapes of the Portuguese Romanesque style of that period.

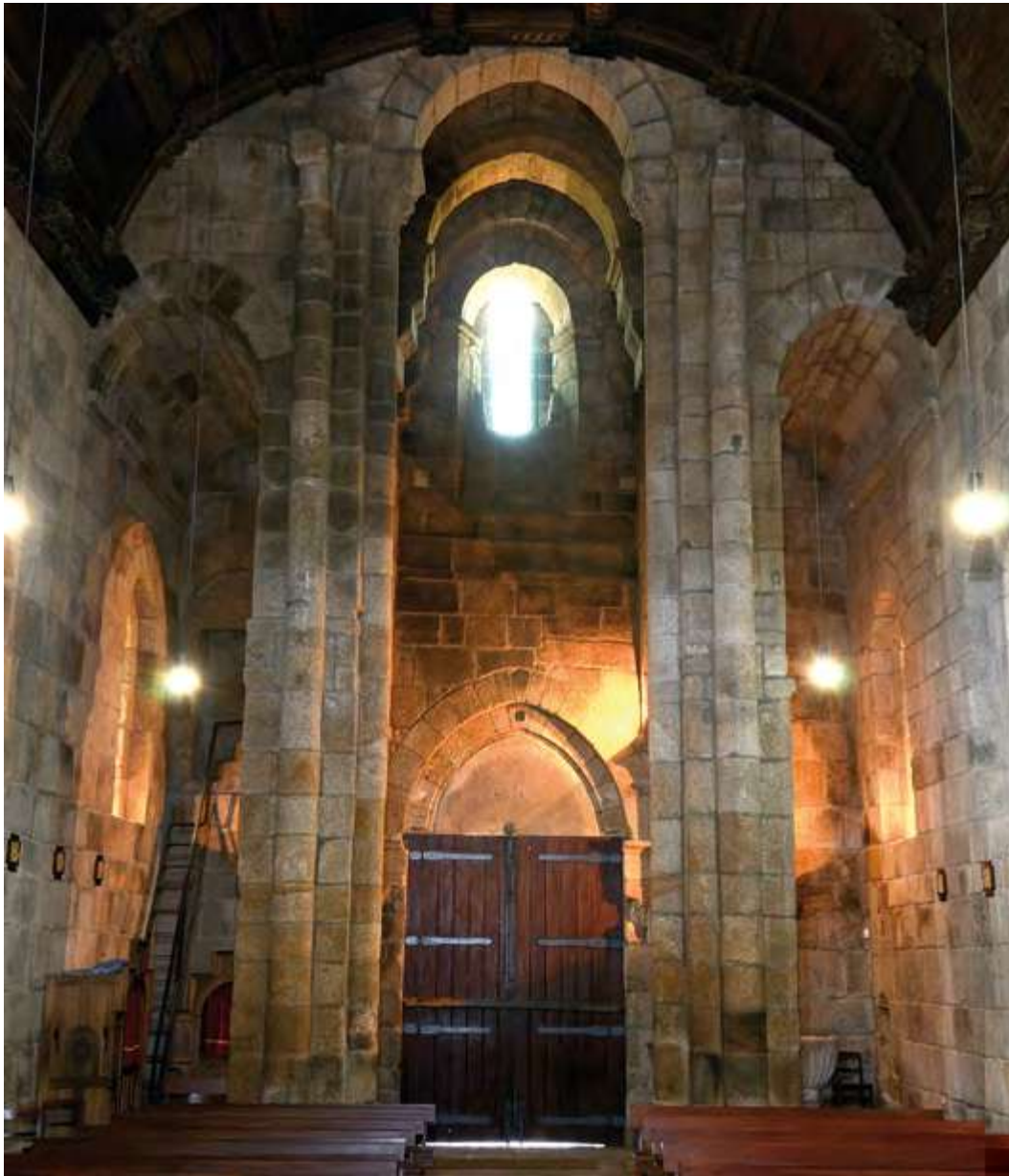
In fact, the tower-shaped volume of Saint Martin of Mouros is one of its kind within the panorama of the Portuguese Romanesque style. This volume takes up the entire width of the Church and, fulfilling the role of a west façade, it shapes a vertical structure that rises just above the nave’s level.

But it is in terms of its internal space that this volume shows an extremely original composition given the fact that it creates, in this part of the temple, a solution comprising three narrow naves, with parallel stonework vaults, one for each bay. Three round arches rest on two high and robust square pillars, which have half-columns adorsed to three of their sides. These



Church longitudinal section.  
Source: IHRU archive.





View of the nave (first third).

pillars, with the help of the external buttresses that end just below the cornice, are the ones that support the entire structure. The central arch is much higher than the other ones, rising right up to the nave's panelled ceiling. Accompanying the level of the arches, the small central nave's vault is higher than the lateral ones; it is also supported by a small transverse arch resting on corbels. Two longitudinal arches rest on columns whose carved capitals complete this ensemble. In these capitals we can find vegetal and anthropomorphic themes, from which we highlight the representation of the seated man or of the man being swallowed by animals, a common theme on the Braga-Rates axis. Here, the sculptural treatment given to the granite is asserted by its turgid appearance.



Nave. Capital from the first bay.



Nave. Capital from the first bay.

Alexandre Alves Costa questioned if such an original body could actually correspond to the beginning of a Church that was intended to feature three naves and from which only the first flight was built, thus simplifying the remaining elements and reducing the body to a single nave (Costa, 2007: 107). If this theory were to be confirmed, would it be possible to consider that this body was earlier than the chancel or, even, that both elements were built simultaneously? Why was there a decision to build a Church with this program and size in the Douro region? And if that was the case, why did such a sudden change occur in terms of its construction programme?

Beyond these arches, and leaving these small naves behind, the wide spatiality of the single nave appears in a contrasting way. So, its amplitude shows, in addition to its great height, that this was an exceptional place in terms of the Romanesque scale that was being used within our territory at the time.

Further ahead, the triumphal arch, which is pointed and surmounted by a framed oculus, comprises three archivolt resting on colonettes embedded on the wall, with capitals that are also decorated; these were carved using granite with a finer grain than the one that was used in the rest of the Church, which also allowed giving a more refined and defined treatment to the sculpted shapes. Here, there are monsters swallowing naked figures that are hanging from their mouths by the legs, a subject with clear origins in Braga and that is also repeated in the main portal and in one of the high capitals from the nave's first bay, as we have seen.

In the archivolt we see denticulate motifs. However, given the great extension of the triumphal arch's span, when compared to the arches from the Church's first bay, we could take the risk of suggesting it belongs to a later chronology. Besides, the chancel's great amplitude and the fact that it shows flat corbels on the outside are signs of an extension of the Romanesque *modus aedificandi* over time; perhaps, in this case, it already takes on a resistance-style nature. This space of the Church has wide rectangular large windows that create a clear contrast with the crevices of Medieval origin that still illuminate the nave's interior in a diffuse way.

On the outside of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros, the spirit of the Romanesque aesthetics is very much present. The presence of stones carved with initials along its wall faces, which were also reused in the bordering walls, remind us of the organisation of building sites in this period. On the main façade, a narrow crevice surmounts a portal formed by three sharp-edged pointed archivolt. With three fluted shafts and capitals featuring botanic and animal





Triumphal arch and chancel ceiling.

themes, this portal finds parallel in the axial portal of Saint Mary of Almacave, in Lamego (Correia, 1924: 64). The vegetal and anthropomorphic-themed sculpture, well attached to the frustum, suggests a later chronology than the one of the nave's high capitals, which are more swollen, or even of the ones from the triumphal arch. The ensemble is surrounded by a chequered frieze and its impost extends itself along the entire façade. Although currently we find a flat tympanum here, there is information that, in 1924, a large and thick granite stone was leaning against the façade (Correia, 1924: 64). With an engraved cross in the centre, this stone worked as a tympanum that was surely part of this portal (Correia, 1924: 64). Just above the portal, we also see four corbels that prove the prior existence of a porch-like structure.

In the first row of ashlars above the base, on the left side facing the portal, we see engravings showing the standard measuring units used in the municipality (Barroca, 1992: 53-85), namely the “ell” (105,5 cm) and the “cubit” (66 cm). That fact is a clear sign that the local fair was held in front of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros at some point during the Middle Ages.

On the upper part, a cornice rests on a Lombard band – a recurrent motif in several buildings from the Sousa river basin<sup>5</sup> – whose little arches are supported by corbels with zoomorphic decorations shaped as bovine heads; some of them have a more finished look, others look more sketchy or worn away. It is also above this western volume that we find the bell tower; it too is a compact building, in which two round arches were opened, on each side, to shelter the bells. Finally, the western façade is propped by two buttresses, which are located on the corners and

<sup>5</sup> Note, by way of example, the cases of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel) and the Churches of Sousa or Airães (Felgueiras).









West façade. Portal.

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help to provide this entire heavy and massive structure with a better support. Despite the fact that the Church's body is not vaulted, the walls are also reinforced with buttresses that, finished with wedges, end below the cornice level. This cornice, on the side elevations, is supported by flat modillions.



West façade. Corbels.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

When, in 1527, the inquirers that were drawing up the Numeramento on the “comarca” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division] of Beira, they passed through São Martinho de Mouros and found a vast municipality divided into 73 hamlets with 459 inhabitants. The municipal boundary, which was one mile and a half wide and one mile long, spread across the Douro river and the plateaus of the Montemuro mountain range, bordering the municipality of Lamego to the east and Resende to the west (Collaço, 1931: 142-143).

A few years later, in the turn of 1531 to 1532, the treaty by Rui Fernandes, a merchant of canvases and embroideries, records a number higher than the one in the Numeramento, accounting for the population of São Martinho in 570 neighbours. Despite the discrepancy and, certainly, the different methods used to count housing units, in the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the urban capital of this municipality was estimated at around half a thousand housing units, which would result in a population close to 2200 inhabitants<sup>6</sup>.

The *Censual da sé de Lamego* (Fernandes, 1999) is contemporary to both sources and adds information on the parish. The patronage of the abbey of Saint Martin that, during the Middle Ages, had been in royal hands, was transferred in 1455 to the second Count of Marialva, together with the municipality’s boundary and its rents (Oliveira, 1999: 180). In fact, it is King Fernando (k. 1507-1534), Prince of Portugal – the son of King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521) and Maria of Aragon (1482-1517), married to the third Countess Guiomar Coutinho (1450-1534) – who is mentioned by Rui Fernandes in his treaty. When this treaty was written, Saint Martin was part of the assets of the Coutinhos, who were its donees and patrons; their house dominated vast areas of territory to the south of the Douro. Those assets were reintegrated in the royal domains when, after the death of Guiomar Gusmão, there were no descendants left from her marriage to the Prince. However, despite the dispute that followed the death of the countess, brought by abbot Lopo de Almeida (promoted to this position by the fourth count, Francisco Coutinho (1480-1532), the Church and its rents were transferred to the management of the University of Coimbra in 1542.

Once established as a rectory or a vicarage, and solved the dispute in 1566, the University was definitely responsible for presenting the parish priest of Saint Martin of Mouros who, in turn, was responsible for the appointment of the priests of the associated churches of Paus, Fontoura and Gosende, which were handed to beneficiaries of the collegiate church. In fact, this structure demonstrates the prestige and importance of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros and the role it played on the evangelisation and social/economic control of the region. Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the temporal and spiritual influence of the mountain range and the valley was based on the driving force of the Church of Saint Martin. Although, in municipal terms, the county included the parishes of Barrô, Fontoura and Paus (in the Bestança valley), in ecclesiastical terms, the might of the abbots reached Gosende, high up in the mountain of Montemuro, where, in

<sup>6</sup> We used the statistical coefficients proposed by João José Alves Dias (1996) for Portuguese housing units in the turn of the Middle Ages to the Modern Period, corresponding to 4.3 to 4.8 individuals per housing unit (addresses), which would result, in the case of São Martinho de Mouros, in a population whose numbers would vary between 1974 and 2736 residents.



1531/32, Rui Fernandes already refers the existence of offerings given by its inhabitants, as a present for “having given its patronage to the church of saint Martin” (Fernandes, 1926).

On this period, rich in sources and marked by the instability among its lords, we do not know much in terms of the artistic and spatial evolution of the temple of Saint Martin. Although these are not the patrons’ responsibility, since they are located on the nave’s collateral walls (therefore, under the parishioners’ responsibility), the paintings (currently concealed by the altarpieces) from which the depictions of *Saint Blaise* and of a certain female figure wearing a Benedictine habit are the only remains, may belong to the last few years of the 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>. And the paintings, erroneously ascribed to the school of Grão Vasco, which currently decorate the lateral wall of the larger chapel, and were, possibly, once part of the main altarpiece, may have been a gift from the Coutinhos<sup>8</sup>. These are two oil paintings on chestnut boards depicting scenes from the life of a charitable and mystical Saint Martin, an iconography that is distant from the one that, in a sculpture, dominates the main altarpiece, i.e., of a hieratic and vigilant bishop. The dating and ascription of their authorship has already been explored by Joaquim Oliveira Caetano in 2000, who corroborated previous opinions that considered these as works from the Masters of Ferrerim. In fact, as the author highlights, the great undertaking of the Franciscan convent built out of the Coutinhos’ devotion included other altarpieces that were intended to be placed in churches under the domain of the house of Marialva, among which we may include the boards of Saint Martin of Mouros, a work which, therefore, was carried out after 1534 (Caetano, 2000a e 2000b).

Is it mainly with the input of the University of Coimbra and, especially, during the Jesuit period of the Rectory’s management that we find a larger number of sources, a sign of a better organisation and of a considerable investment in maintenance and improvement works, both in the main parish Church and in its associated churches.

In fact, throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there are records of several payments related to occasional improvements and interventions, not just in the Church, but also in the prelate’s house, where the University invested 5000 “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit] in construction works in 1638 (Almeida, 1972: 90). In the following year, a few repairs carried out in the ecclesiastical building cost an equal sum of money. And, although they are not documented, a few openings – including the chancel’s<sup>9</sup> fenestrations, the Manueline [style also known as Portuguese late Gothic, which develops during the reign of King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521)] arch (would it be anticipating a collegiate choir?) and the already Mannerist portal, which is framed by pilasters and facing south – probably belong to the last few years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and to the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In November 1649, there was the need to spend 2000 “réis” in the alterpiece’s painting – surely the largest one, since the works related to the chancel’s assets were under the patron’s responsibility – and, in the following month, the glazier Francisco Jorge was paid to make a few glass panes for the Church (Almeida, 1972: 194, 196).

7 The figures were identified in 1919 by Vergílio Correia (1924: 67-68). The photographic reproduction of the frescoes can be seen in Pinto (1982). *Saint Blaise* is on the Gospel side and the female figure is on the Epistle side. Nowadays it is still possible to see traces of polychrome plaster, both along the nave’s walls and in the chancel.

8 As João Soalheiro (2006: 154-159) suggests, while mentioning the building works of Ferreirim, a convent under the protection of the Coutinhos.

9 We admit the possibility, though not grounded in any documents, that the larger chapel underwent major changes still during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. That is noticeable on the outside, in terms of the ashlar and the volume itself.



Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side (behind the collateral altarpiece). Mural painting. *Saint Blaise*.



Chancel. Wall on the Gospel side. Painting.  
*Saint Martin shares his cape with a poor man.*



Chancel. Wall on the Gospel side. Painting.  
*Apparition of Christ to Saint Martin.*

The increase in pious legacies and in the number of brotherhoods and fraternities from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards led to substantial changes in the spatial organisation of the nave, for which popular piety requested the construction of more altars, related to customary devotional expressions. In this context, we highlight the establishment of the Brotherhoods of the Blessed Sacrament, of the Souls and of Saint Nicholas<sup>10</sup>, which were already active in 1625 and 1654. In 1758 there is also reference to the Brotherhood of the Stations (of the Cross) and the rector mentions four altars, all in the nave, in addition to the largest one: the one of Our Lady of the Rosary, the one of the Lord of the Wounds, the one of Saint Sebastian (non-existent) and

<sup>10</sup> The image is still kept in the sacristy.





General interior view from the nave.

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the one of Our Lady of the Exile. The construction of these altarpieces may have justified the emergence of the small projecting volumes that exist on each side of the nave's end.

The catechetical programme related to the Counter Reformation that still marks the chancel's space nowadays probably dates back to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, standing out by its coffered woodwork with hagiographic and allegorical themes. On the altarpiece, the image of the patron saint chairs the place of honour and, opposite, we find Saint Francis Xavier, whose devotional notability was probably introduced by the Society of Jesus.

In fact, the coffered ceiling reveals the Counter Reformation's spiritual and catechetical nature which was most certainly influenced by the Jesuits' intervention. "Old" devotions shaped by popular piety, such as Saint Michael, Saint Lucia and Saint Barbara stand side by side with "new" invocations, such as Saint Francis or Saint Ignatius, which convey a very clear evangelising and propagandistic message. In fact, here, the written and spoken word takes up a significant place because, from the righteous hand of Michael (*qui ut deus*), to the open book of Saint Ignatius, all the graphical composition appeals to redemption, conversion or confirmation, either associated with the acceptance of the mystical body through the virginal milk (the lactation miracle of Saint Bernard), or through baptism or the word received directly from God, as listened by John, in Patmos. Amidst all of this, allegories such as the one of the *sapientia* remind us that the patronage was in the hands of academics. On the lateral "coffers", scenes from Saint Martin's death encourage ecclesiastical and lay people to look more closely into other moral and hagiographic examples from the patron saint's life.

The woodwork from the same period shows, both in the larger altarpiece and in the lateral and collateral ones, the dominance of the National Style [1690-1725]. However, we should highlight that the interventions carried out in the chapel, which clearly show a superior ornamental quality, show a greater investment from the patron, unlike the nave, which was under







the parishioners' responsibility and, therefore, required a less propagandistic, more functional and less expensive speech. The main altarpiece stands out by its Eucharistic throne that, despite small in size, is surmounted by a representation of the Ascension of Christ, the closing moment of the cycle of the Passion of Christ, which begins with the Saviour's martyrdom when he is tied to the column, a scene reconstructed below, in the tabernacle's door.

In terms of good plastic quality sculpture, we should highlight Our Lady of Conception – with a Mannerist touch and currently placed above the tabernacle –, the images of Saint Martin of Tours (the patron saint), Saint Francis Xavier and Saint Francis of Assisi (placed on the lateral chapel) – which are already from the early years of the century – and the one of Our Lady of the Rosary, pertaining to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With an inferior quality, but not less important within the parish's devotional context, we have the worships and corresponding images of the Blessed Gonçalo of Amarante (popularly considered as a saint), Saint Anthony of Lisbon and the Holy Family (called “of the Exile”, in 1758), invocations and sculptures that were venerated in the nave's collateral and lateral altars. The sculptures of the *Ecce Homo* (represented in full-size), Saint Roman and Saint Nicholas of Bari (previously associated with an altar and a brotherhood) are also from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

During the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the legend of the “Mouros” [Moors] as lords of the land and builders of the Church was still referred to, although the rector João da Cruz, yielding to some prejudice, considered the nickname as a sign of his parishioners' pride and arrogance (Cruz, 1758). Despite the fact that any old building or remarkable ruins were frequently ascribed to the Moors, in Saint Martin the nickname sounded like a misfortune, the utmost symbol of a remote people – although we cannot find a plausible reason to justify how the land from which they were expelled after remaining for such a short period of time – and which was Christianised, repopulated and managed by the settlers right away – would wish to include them as part of its name. The most likely circumstance is that, since the name was defined as a sort of trophy (Saint Martin, a land taken from the Moors), that epithet remained as a symbol of antiquity and, over the centuries, fostered the local collective imagination that even managed to justify the rather abstruse shape and legendary function of its main parish Church.

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Nave. South wall. Altarpiece. Sculptural ensemble. Holy Family.



Nave. North wall. Plinth. Sculpture. Saint Francis of Assisi







## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

Only in the 1940s can we find records of interventions carried out in the Church of Saint Martin (Antunes, 2006), by this time part of the interventionist policy developed since 1929 by the DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]<sup>11</sup>. Taking on the responsibility for the ideological enterprise of the “material” restoration of the Motherland, according to a materialisation of the “cult of monuments”<sup>12</sup> and at the service of a triumphalist vision of history, which was highly cherished by the “Estado Novo” [authoritarian regime installed in Portugal between 1926 and 1974], the DGEMN eventually became the instrument that materialised a political ideology that sought, and found, its legitimacy through the praise of the National past.

Among the “national monuments” cherished by the “Estado Novo” we will find that there was special affection for those that had been built during the Medieval Period and to which Saint Martin of Mouros belongs, in a very special way. In fact, according to a noticeable preference for monuments associated with the period of the Formation of the Portuguese Nationality, certain Romanesque buildings underwent interventions that were entirely guided by the same principles, since they were intended for the same purposes, as well as performed and implemented by the same DGEMN<sup>13</sup>.

Since the monument’s primitive state was considered as the purest one, because it was related to its origin and to the period meant to be emphasised, DGEMN constantly sought to retrieve that exact state through the elimination of the elements that were seen as being involved in the transformation of its legibility over time. Therefore, the stylistic reintegration was established as the most important restoration trend, legitimised by the stylistic restoration principle (Tomé, 1998: 18, 20).

In the specific case of the intervention carried out in Saint Martin of Mouros we should highlight a few aspects. First of all, the somewhat late nature of this restoration, which was only carried out after the centenary celebrations of 1940, a circumstance that can only be justified by the fact that it was considered that this building retained its Medieval appearance in a satisfactory way. However, comparing the existing documentary data with the iconography related to the intervention that was carried out here between 1941 and 1951, we immediately realize that the main concern was the rhetorical emphasis of its Medieval nature. This emphasis was materialised in two specific directions.

11 The DGEMN was established by Decree no. 16 791, dated April 30<sup>th</sup>; at the time it was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Trade and Communications and gathered the services whose responsibilities focused on national buildings and monuments, namely in terms of the conduction of construction works.

12 On the DGEMN, its organisational composition, functions, directors and technicians, please read Neto (2001: 203).

13 On the ideology behind the DGEMN’s intervention in Medieval monuments and its materialization please read Rodrigues (1999: 69-82).



West façade and churchyard before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



South façade before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

First of all, there was an extreme concern in stressing the façade's tower-shaped nature. So, the building was lowered to the cornice level, which led to the reconstruction of the belfry which gave it a somewhat elevated appearance. That campaign required an extensive intervention on the wall faces of the north façade, which explains the fact that the buttresses are currently finished with wedges, which were uncommon shapes in the Romanesque Period. Note, once again, that the militarised tone of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros is more rhetorical than actually real; it was a feature that this intervention sought to enhance by releasing the belfry from visual constraints, while asserting it formally, as if it was some kind of watchtower.

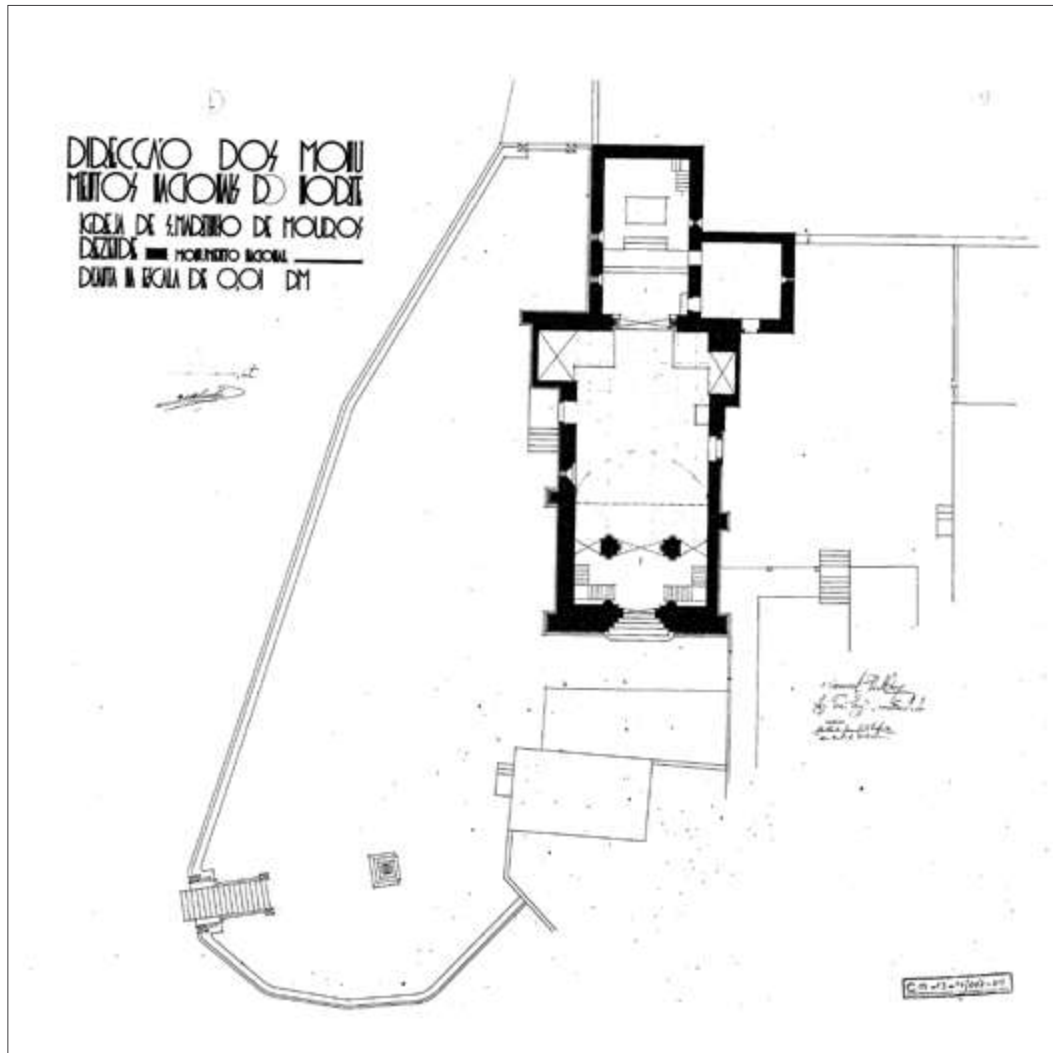
Then, this formal improvement was emphasised by the need to widen the area from which the monument could be admired, i.e., through the clearance of its most immediate surroundings. Both the plans and the photographs prior to this intervention, which we can observe in the archive of the extinct DGEMN, show the existence of a series of buildings adjacent to the south façade that created a much narrower space in front of the main façade than the one that currently exists. The demolition of these vernacular dwellings, dominated by the use of rammed earth, led to the construction of a terrace that opens this Romanesque building towards the landscape and, in turn, allows it to have the building on its horizon. The creation of that terrace was made according to the practice that was followed at the time in terms of the treatment given to the monuments' surroundings, which was focused on the hygienisation of degraded urban areas and on freeing area around historical and monumental buildings through the opening of wide spaces – the so-called “sventramenti”<sup>14</sup>. By way of example, note the cases of the Porto cathedral and of the Funchal cathedral<sup>15</sup>.

Inside we also find, although in a more discreet way, a will to glorify Saint Martin of Mouros' Medieval traits. More discreet because, although several artistic elements of the Modern Period

<sup>14</sup> Simultaneously to those careful “archaeological restorations”, there are proposals for grandiloquent sceneries that emphasise the monumentality of the rediscovered Imperial Rome (González-Varas, 2000: 239). The “sventramenti” are an “operation of radical transformation of the architectural and social-economic structure of historic centres, which was being developed in Italian cities” under Mussolini's regime (González-Varas, 2000: 359).

<sup>15</sup> About the subject, please read Botelho (2006: 125-129).





Church and churchyard plan before the works carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

were kept – such as the main altarpiece, the collateral altarpieces and one of the nave’s altarpieces, besides some statuary pieces and the pulpit –, during the interventions carried out in the 1940s the high choir that existed in the nave’s first bay was demolished. Resorting to the robust pillars that exist in this area of the Church as support elements, the access to this wooden structure was made through two staircases with various flights, located on each of the angles of this religious space. Furthermore, the inner plaster was removed with the clear intention to emphasise the ancestry of the granite that shapes this Church’s structure.

However, one of the most extensive interventions related to the chancel’s interior was carried out in the 1960’s. So, in 1962, the lateral wall on the Epistle side, i.e., on the observer’s right, was demolished and rebuilt; since then, the interesting three-centred arch decorated with pearls that is opened above the level of the access door to the sacristy has been kept visible. We do not know the true reason behind the existence of this arch, whose position takes on somewhat unusual features, and we also have no knowledge on the causes that led it to be walled up. Only the emergence of documents related to this could lead us to a more conclusive idea.



Nave before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



Intervention in the chancel (1959). Source: IHRU archive.

In addition to the more visible interventions, the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros has been subject to several preservation actions related both to its architecture and to its artistic elements and liturgical furnishings since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

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In 2010, Saint Martin of Mouros became part of the Route of the Romanesque. [MLB / NR]



Intervention in the nave (1946). Source: IHRU archive.



## CHRONOLOGY

1057: taking of the castle of Saint Martin to the “Moors” by Ferdinand the Great;

1111: the Countess Teresa grants the foral charter to São Martinho de Mouros;

1217: the year that marks the beginning of the construction of the Church of Saint Martin;

1258: the General Inquiries allude to the royal patronage of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros;

1342: the charters of São Martinho de Mouros are drawn up, documenting aspects of its proto-municipalist and communitarian organisation;

1455: the patronage of the Church is transferred from the Crown to the House of Marialva;

1513: King Manuel I grants a new foral charter to São Martinho de Mouros;

1531/1532: Rui Fernandes, a chronicler and merchant, mentions São Martinho and the valley of the Bestança brook;

1534 (c.): painting of the boards depicting Saint Martin’s life;

1543: the patronage of the Church is transferred to the University of Coimbra;

1638-1649: news about multiple payments for one-off works in the Church and in the parish residence;

1758: the rector João da Cruz, parish priest of São Martinho, signs the memoir that draws a social, economic and artistic portrait of the parish;

1941-1951: conduction of restoration works on the main façade and on the Church’s protection area, under the DGEMN’s responsibility.

1962-1968: the chancel and sacristy of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros are subject to a major restoration intervention, under the DGEMN’s responsibility.

From the 1970’s until the present day: the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros has been subject to several preservation interventions;

2010: integration of the Church of Saint Martin of Mouros in the Route of the Romanesque.

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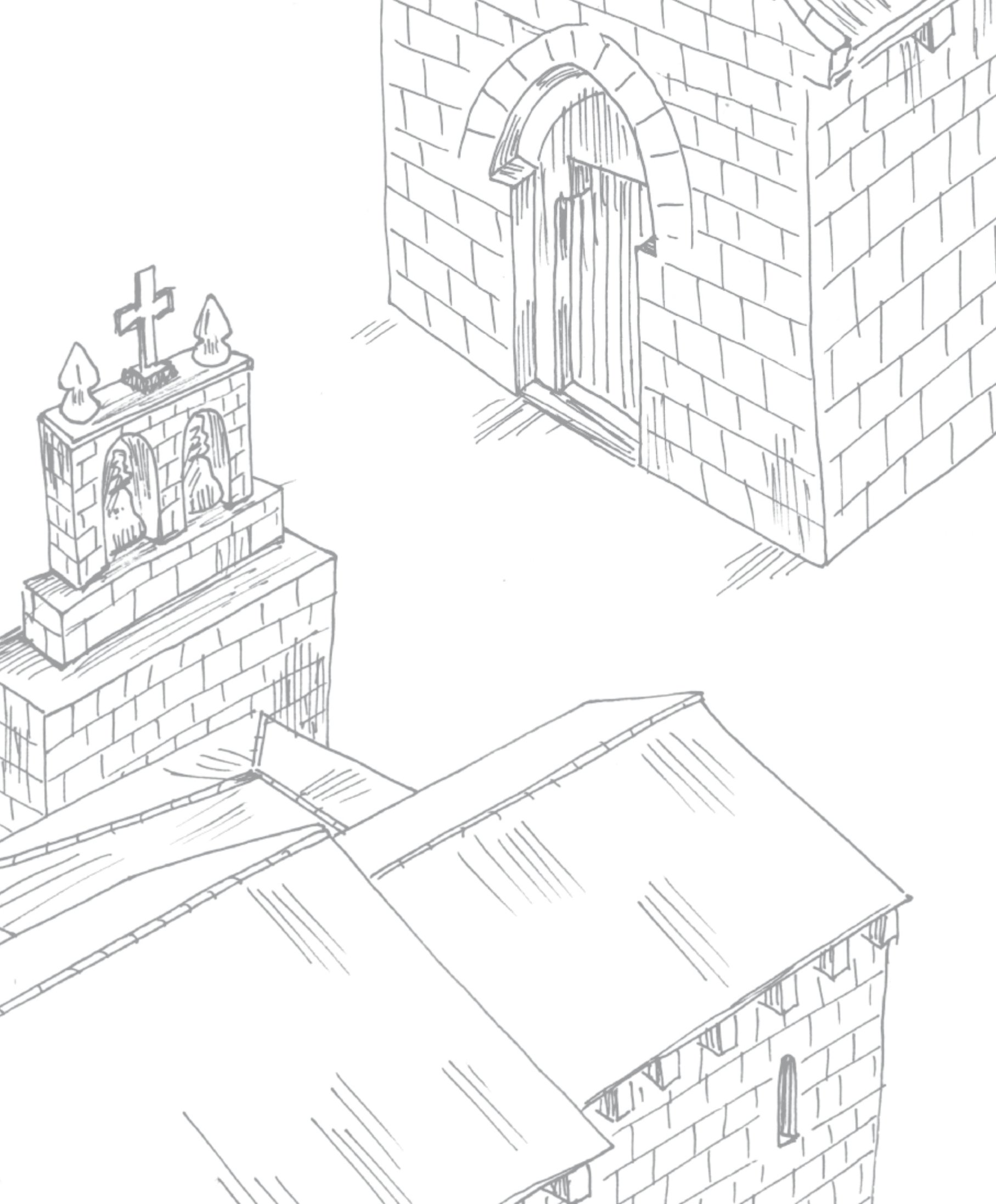
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**CHURCH**

OF SAINT NICHOLAS  
OF CANAVESES

**CHURCH**

OF SAINT MARY  
OF SOBRETÂMEGA

MARCO DE CANAVESES



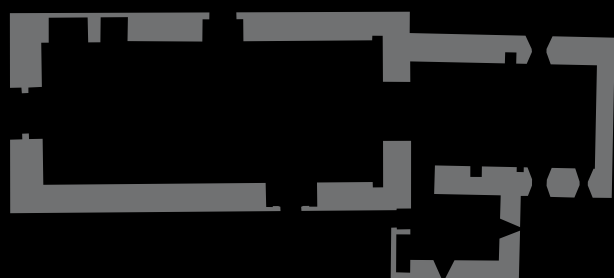
**CHURCH**

OF SAINT NICHOLAS  
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MARCO DE CANAVESES



Church of Saint Nicholas. Plan.



Church of Sobretâmega. Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

As mentioned in the article “Sobre-Tâmega”, published in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira*, while referring the town of Canaveses, “the history of both portions of this settlement, as we may well understand since its origin is not different in this or that section, just because they are separated by a river, is one and inseparable in its parts” (Correia et al., 1963: 425-431). In fact, despite the Tâmega standing as a river barrier, the unilinear plan of the town of Canaveses could not be truncated by this natural element that man has turned into his own advantage, both as frontier or passage. So, the circumstances behind the emergence and development of this settlement, built between two parishes, were a river whose northeast-southwest flow crossed an important west-east human circulation channel. The intersection of the two gave rise to a village – a fact that was actually the necessary stimulus behind the appearance of countless human settlements and, at a macro-scale, of most civilizations.

The position of the mother Churches of both settlements: Canaveses and its extension along the right bank of Sobretâmega corroborate the importance of this road by opening the façades of its temples towards it. However, before the consolidation of Christianity, this location was already one of the penetration channels connecting the west coast of the peninsula to its interior, a human path fostered by the great Romanisation work.

Although most authors mention the Caldas de Canaveses as the most important reason for the existence of a road, the truth is that the status of “Tongobriga” seems to justify this. The size of this *civitas*, which saw its apogee in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., seems enough to justify the existence of a branch or a main road, despite the fact that the outline of this road is still not accurately known (Almeida: 1968). However, the old bridge of Canaveses was surely an intermediate point that stood for a long time as the main crossing element over the river Tâmega.

Local historiography, always willing to praise the town’s qualities, could not fail to emphasise the connection of Mafalda to the crossing and to Sobretâmega, yet hesitating between the first queen of Portugal, from the House of Savoy (1125-1157) and her granddaughter, the blessed Mafalda from Arouca (c. 1200-1256). According to traditions, eagerly conveyed by monographs, the former had ordered the construction of the bridge of Canaveses, providing São Nicolau with a hospital and an inn to support the poor and travellers. The article “Sobre-Tâmega” in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira* develops this issue, highlighting that, long before princess Mafalda, the Gascos family already had full control over the region. Supposedly, Egas Moniz was succeeded as landlord of the “honra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Canaveses by his daughter Urraca Viegas, the governess or chambermaid of the blessed Mafalda. If we associate this fact to the circumstance that this region was closer and more familiar to her than to her grandmother, a foreign queen, the homonymy issue seems to be solved. The entry’s author further says: “the abbot of the church of Saint Peter of Canaveses, Gonçalo Mendes, a juror, when asked about the ownership of that church, answered that it had belonged to queen Mafalda: “it was Queen Mafalda” who, considering what has been said, was undoubtedly the daughter of Sancho I who had died two years before (...)” (Correia et al.,



1963: 425-431). Considered responsible for the foundation of the Church of Abrugão (Penafiel), located nearby, or for the transfer from the old chapel of Saint Peter to the new Church of Saint Mary “sobre-o-Tâmega”, the blessed Mafalda was seen by the first historian as more than a mentor of bridges: she took on the role of a true regent, while replacing the king or the major wealthy landlords in terms of territory planning in those locations where, as proven by her will, she actually had little manorial interests.

Regarding the change from Saint Peter<sup>1</sup> to Saint Mary, it is most likely associated with the decay of the first invocation in favour of the Marian devotion, which the archetypal legend about the miraculous finding of an image in the river course filled with prestige. As in so many other cases, the decline of a chapel resulted in the favouring of a different new church, either because the patron saint did not inspire devotion, or because the elites gave additional attention to other invocations and, consequently, to the building sheltering them. The tax of 20 “libras” [former Portuguese currency unit] intended to be a contribution for the Crusades was surely still collected and charged to the church of Saint Peter. It is referred to as “Canaveses”, but under the jurisdiction of the “terra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Penafiel, which undoubtedly confirms it as the predecessor of Sobretâmega. The same source does not mention Saint Nicholas in the set of Churches on the “terra” of Benviver, which proves the late foundation (after 1320) of both filial Churches (Almeida & Peres, 1971: 95-96). As it also discards the intervention of any of the royal Mafaldas.

Although the river did not separate the unilinear urban settlement, it answered before different administrative contexts. During the Middle Ages, Sobretâmega, on the right bank, was under the (civil) influence of the “terra” and “julgado” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Portocarreiro, and Saint Nicholas of Canaveses, thus being spiritually and ecclesiastically subject to the mother church of Fornos and forming a municipal centre. The authors were not always able to disentangle this jurisdictional network and simplify what in fact becomes complex when examined in the light of the existing administrative grid<sup>2</sup>. There were deep changes until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from which we should highlight the temporal nature of the “beetria” [a type of Portuguese administrative division].

This type of boundary is translated into a privilege which allowed specific residents to choose their lord. In short, it was an elective “honra”. As referred by A. de Almeida Fernandes while mentioning another Portuguese “beetria” – Britiande (Lamego) – the word “is of Spanish origin: from the Latin word Benefactoria, which in Portuguese would be “benfeitoria”: a protection” (Fernandes, 1997: 272). In Britiande, as in Canaveses, the population placed itself under the protection of Pedro, the bastard son of King Dinis (k. 1279-1325) in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This situation lingered – although the election process was corrupted by direct interventions from the king – until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the royal power finally determined its extinction, despite the insistence of the population that, in 1550, had handed the management of the “beetria” over to the Duke of Bragança.

1 The invocation was still preserved in 1623, associated with a local chapel (Cunha, 1623: 422).

2 We refer the reader to the cartographic reading of the evolution and transformation of the territory that was appropriately contextualised by the maps published in Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro (2009: 86-89).

The town, despite its scarce population, managed to achieve an importance that was still significant enough to accommodate the presence of a royal delegation in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, either due to the memory of the previous kings who had honoured it with their legacies, or because it was a passage between the Douro and Minho regions. The truth is that here, in the town of Canaveses, peace was declared between father and son, Afonso IV (k. 1325-1357) and Pedro I (k. 1357-1367), on August 5<sup>th</sup> 1355 (Pina & Lopes, 1653: 71-72).

Both sides of the river shared the same interests and the fact that there was a river in the middle was not considered an obstacle. It was divided into two administrative districts until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and from 1406 onwards they both became part of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region. The toll tax was not charged to people who lived in the term which, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was still composed by the two parishes, ruled by an ordinary and orphan's judge and by the corresponding municipal organs, some of which confirmed by the managers of the inn and the hospital, others by the King (Costa, 1706-1712: 135). Saint Nicholas had a tabernacle but was a filial curacy of Fornos<sup>3</sup>, and Sobretâmega, was abbey<sup>4</sup>.



Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas. General view of the Churches and the surrounding landscape.

<sup>3</sup> We should highlight Francisco Craesbeeck's (1992: 175) comment on this issue; while referring the mother church of Fornos, which had most certainly been founded in an earlier period: "it does not feature a sacarium, nor does its small size and isolated location allow it to; however it is attached to the church of Saint Nicholas of the town of Canaveses", a sign of the relevance that this branch had gained for being in a busy route, as opposed to the location of Fornos.

<sup>4</sup> One of the four ecclesiastical districts into which the bishopric of Porto was divided (in order to make its management and visits easier) was called Sobretâmega (Costa, 1706-1712: 354).



## The bridge of Canaveses

“Five leagues to Vendaval [after Amarante] violently flows the river Tâmega fiercely under the bridge that Queen Mafalda had commissioned for the Village of Canaveses, so majestic, that is of greatest fame in Portugal, due to its height and length, and also due to the architecture of the work, entirely topped with crowned battlements, which opened the passage for most part of upstream Douro and the Kingdom of Castilla (...)” (Costa, 1706-1712: 107); this is how Father António Carvalho da Costa describes the ancient crossing over the Tâmega in Canaveses in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. In one go, the clergyman highlights the structure’s monumentality and, therefore, its importance, as well as its role within the road network of northern Portugal. In fact, its relevance was associated with the fact that it ensured the transition between the coastal area and the inner Douro region, thus supplementing the east-west penetration along the river. Despite normally associated with a pious origin, we cannot ignore its importance within the political context of the nation’s early centuries.

Since it was not a new structure, but rather a reconstruction carried out in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the bridge of Canaveses was heiress of the Roman crossing from which it inherited part of the foundations and the model, reused by the master stonemasons who built it. In 1948, this possibility was actually raised by António Monteiro in an article that, using the demolition of the Medieval bridge as a starting point, analyses the Classical reminiscences of its foundations. The author asserted, with photographic evidence, that when the bridge was demolished there was still a combination of part of the Roman structure with the Medieval work. Furthermore, we often forget that the modest budgets, the shortage of workforce and the lack of suitable techniques or instruments for the transportation of stone caused significant constraints in this kind of constructions. The strategies of reusing older structures and taking advantage of rocky outcrops were often used by Medieval builders. A recently designed graphic reconstruction gives the Roman crossing a monumental look: nearly 10 arches helped crossing the river in a particularly wide point of the Tâmega basin (Dias, 2009: 37-80). However, the photographic records available show that the Medieval bridge featured only five spans<sup>5</sup>.



Bridge of Canaveses (missing) (Marco de Canaveses).  
Downstream view. Source: IHRU archive.



Bridge of Canaveses (missing) (Marco de Canaveses).  
Central arches. Source: IHRU archive.

<sup>5</sup> On the dimensions of the bridge, please read Monteiro (1948b: 26-39). The author quotes the measures collected by Francisco Craesbeeck and the memoirists of 1758.

António Monteiro, based on comparisons and conjectures, asserts that this bridge was part of “via Tamacana” (a word considered by some people as the origin of the toponym Canaveses), placing its construction between the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian (98-138 A.D.) – coinciding with Tongobriga’s building apogee<sup>6</sup>. It is natural that the decline of this *civitas* was followed by that of the bridge, subject to periods of intense war, when crossings always suffer serious mutilations.

It is, therefore, likely for the bridge’s location, placed on a transition axis between valleys (Tâmega and brook Juncal), to be considered by the Roman engineers as a privileged crossing site, thus avoiding the steep slopes and taking advantage of the contour lines of those natural corridors. Many authors define Roman itineraries across territories considered absolutely unsuitable for the construction of roads, i.e., paths that would allow the regular circulation of vehicles. Besides, and regarding the Roman road that crossed the Tâmega close to Canaveses, while it seems certain that it headed towards the Atlantic coast until intersecting in one of the main roads between “Cale” and “Bracara”, the path it followed after Tongobriga finds less consensus among the authors. Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida suggests a path that ran along the fracture of the Juncal brook until Ribadouro: “it crossed a place that was meaningfully called Porto Antigo and then it went up the Montemuro mountain range and down across Castro Daire until Viseu” (Almeida, 1968)<sup>7</sup>. More recently, other authors “diverted” the path of this section to the existing municipality of Baião, making it zigzag across Soalhães, Grilo and Ancede (Dias, 2009: 61-63).

The men from the Middle Ages reused road sections and materials but did not deploy all efforts to preserve the old Roman roads that, in the meantime, had been devastated by the Barbaric and Muslim raids. But all of them had the same underlying idea: that nature had provided communication channels – the valleys – that served to displace people and goods, both through parallel tracks or walkways and by the water course itself, when it allowed navigation. Nevertheless, it is natural for a millenarian crossing site to be kept and restored (even for symbolic reasons) for the use of new generations to come. However, the human paths were modified according to the new landscape, the new human settlements and, of course, trade, whose centres both for the extraction of raw material and manufacture activities had substantially changed since the Romanisation.

Despite being impossible to establish, with certainty, the date of its reconstruction – which some ascribe, as we have seen, to Mafalda of Savoy and others to the blessed Mafalda of Arouca –, the in-depth building works intended to restore the old Roman crossing were most likely coeval of the latter. In fact, although tradition shields itself in the possibility that this may be a royal work commissioned by the first queen, there is no document to prove it – namely the will of the queen itself, which Francisco Craesbeeck says he transcribed from the papers found at the inn of Canaveses, dating back to the era of 1203. Faced with the eccentricity of the date, Francisco Craesbeeck accepts this strangeness and does not even try to justify the unjustifiable: “which seems to be a remarkable

6 Although the author was not aware of the size and importance of Tongobriga, which still had not been subject to archaeological surveys yet, and considered it as an essential connection road to the thermal facilities of Canaveses and Aregos (Monteiro, 1948a: 50-64).

7 We refer to the impossibility of a connection to the south of the Douro in the entry on the Bridge of Panchorra (Resende), considering the geographic characteristics of the Montemuro mountain: vast marshy lands and steep slopes. Please read also Resende (2011), the chapter regarding roads (section 3.2.2.).



mistake, because the Queen died in 1157, which corresponds to the era of 1195". Did it not strike the author that he might have been dealing with an apocryphal or with a gross change of dates, much to the taste of the contenders who, centuries later, came to claim rights and assets under the cover of glorious feats? So, who was interested in the construction of the bridge of Canaveses?

The local lay and ecclesiastical lords, at a regional level, and the king, at a national level, in a country under construction, were naturally aware of the need to ensure fast communications for their agents and even for commercial development.

The creation of the myth of the commission and construction of the bridge of Canaveses by the wife of the first king of Portugal entails several considerations on pious legacies and political needs. Afonso Henriques (k. 1143-1185) left a specific donation for the bridge over the Douro which was never built and was then associated with an aura of legends<sup>8</sup>. But the idea underlying its construction (similar to, we believe, Canaveses) is more political than compassionate: providing a kingdom under construction with roads that allowed the circulation of men and goods in order to fuel the war against the Infidel and, at the same time, stimulate the economy<sup>9</sup>.

Despite the fact that the bridge of Canaveses cannot be ascribed with certainty to any of the two queens, it was surely a work intended to play a specific role: channelling the commercial traffic that flowed on a parallel to the Douro (on the north bank). With all the major works that needed maintenance and constant repairs, the bishops of Porto were still making donations in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a mix of piety and political affairs, or the need to maintain the spiritual and temporal control over their diocese (Monteiro, 1948a: 63)<sup>10</sup>. It is likely for its construction, which began still during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, to expand over the following centuries, despite the rejection of António Monteiro, who compares the Medieval crossing of Canaveses with the Roman bridge of Chaves and the short period allocated for its construction: for this 18-arch structure, "just" 19 years would have been enough.

So, we stand before a late Romanesque construction, whose nature is revealed by the facts reviewed above and by the analysis of the remaining visual documents related to the structure itself: although most of the arches are round, one of the central spans is already broken, probably revealing the "end" of a work that had been started many centuries before. Not even the fact that there was an inn reveals the bridge's antiquity, but only the frequency and intensity of the traffic that once circulated here, even before the Roman crossing was reused<sup>11</sup>.

Although in terms of paths and roads there is a complexity that does not always allow a linear systematisation of their evolution, because we have no information on the pre-existing scenario that would help us to explain the development (and direction) of the human circulation channels, the fact is that the bridge of Canaveses, more than a local work or an individual intervention, duly framed within a short period of time, was a larger and temporally more dilated project that allowed creating an urban centre divided into two parishes, which were also a reflection of that extemporaneousness.

8 On this crossing, please read what we wrote in the entry on the Bridge of Veiga (Lousada).

9 In fact, we have already highlighted the strategic importance of this bridge within a regional context (Soeiro, 2009: 187).

10 The author integrated these donations in a "second restoration".

11 Inns, hospitals and leper houses were not necessarily located close to bridges, but in areas with heavy road and river traffic, as the geographically close cases of Aregos and Moledo.

## THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS OF CANAVESSES

Originally located close to the Medieval bridge of Canaveses, between two old accesses on the left bank of the Tâmega, to the north of the river, the Church of Saint Nicholas is geographically very close to the Church of Sobretâmega, located on the opposite bank. Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, a scholar who focused on the deep relationship between the Romanesque buildings and the territory they were part of, advocated that only the importance of the old road mentioned above could explain the location of these Churches, only separated by the river (Almeida, 1986: 97).

It is curious that these Churches are architecturally very similar and present an identical chronology which fits into a late Romanesque Period, characterised by a persistence (or resistance) of Romanesque shapes in a period that historiography already identifies as Gothic. A chronology as late as this is rather common in the churches of the Tâmega and Douro basin. We may recall the case of Escamarão (Cinfães). So, the Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses shows a late aesthetic nature and was surely built after 1320.

Thus, it is a small temple composed of a single nave and a rectangular chancel, but with wooden roofs. It is very closed in on itself and the north façade is only illuminated by a very narrow crevice. On the opposite façade, in the nave, there is a large rectangular window framed by a broken arch suggesting the existence of a primitive access door. The chancel features larger rectangular windows, surely from a later period.

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Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas. Aerial view.



Church of Saint Nicholas. General view.





Church of Saint Nicholas. North façade. Nave. Portal.



Church of Saint Nicholas. West façade.

But it is in terms of the composition of the main and north portals that we find the most obvious legacies of the Church's late chronology, proven by the absence of columns and capitals. The north portal, with its flat tympanum surrounded by a broken archivolt, is completely embedded in the thickness of the wall itself. Above this portal there is a tomb stone with an inscription quite difficult to read. The main portal is more elaborate and composed of two broken archivolts with sharp edges. The tympanum, also flat, is supported by corbels without any decorations.

In the Romanesque Period, the bell towers could be free-standing elements placed on the side or in front of the church, they could flank one or both façades, or they could even be built above the main façade. In Saint Nicholas, the bell tower is placed above the protruding cornice and surmounted by a cross, while topping the façade and emphasising its verticality. Below it, the wear of the ashlar on the façade's wall shows the constant ringing of the bell that kept the time of God and the time of men, celebrated joys, lamented sorrows and warned of imminent dangers.

The Church's interior is dominated by granite walls. The elements that characterise it tell us of several campaigns carried out after the Middle Ages. First of all, we highlight the triumphal arch whose profile reveals a composition of an already Classicist flavour, showing well-faceted isodomic ashlar with similar dimensions and protruding panels on the intrados. A plain impost stands out as a decorative element. The arch of the baptistery, which keeps a granite font with an octagonal bowl and a faceted leg, shows a similar structure. In a frame, on the Gospel side, there is an inscription alluding to the sacrament administered by Saint John the Baptist: IUANUASACRAMENTORIUM (Basto, 2006b).

The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries are represented in Saint Nicholas by two suggestive elements: a tomb chest and a mural painting. In 1726, Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 374), in his work



Church of Saint Nicholas. West façade. Bell tower.



Church of Saint Nicholas. General interior view from the nave.

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called *Memórias ressuscitadas...*, states that “on the epistle side, in front of the transverse door on the gospel side, there is a raised arch and, inside it, a very well-crafted tomb with the following inscription”: S[EPULTUR]A. DE. ALVARO. DE CARVALHO. E. DE. /SEUS. [H] ERD[EIR]OS. FALESEO. NO ANO. DE. 1565 [THIS IS THE GRAVE OF ALVARO DE CARVALHO AND HIS HEIRS. DECEASED IN 1565].



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave. South wall. Tomb.



Placed in an opening carved in the thickness of the wall that also frames the large rectangular window surmounted by a broken arch, which we have identified on the outside, this stone tomb with gabled lid shows this inscription on its front face, surrounded by a Classical frame.

According to Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 374), this was not the only tomb that existed inside the Church, “which served as matrix for the town of Canavezes”. As he explains, “there are thirty tomb stones with inscriptions (some of which rather worn out) in the church’s body, divided into five rows”<sup>12</sup>.

We should also highlight the mural painting from the Church of Saint Nicholas. Fernando de Pamplona (1977a: 3) was the first person to study this painting, discovered in 1973 during an intervention to electrify the Church, to which we shall refer further ahead. Several authors have been examining them since then. Once again, it is based on the proposals made by Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 436-440) and Paula Bessa (2008: 213-218) that we shall analyse the remaining traces of frescoes found on the walls of the triumphal arch and the nave.

Despite some reservations, these authors identify three different campaigns in this Church, although they were all carried out over the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or even during the previous century.

The state of repair of the mural painting fragments makes it hard for the observer to understand them. Let us start by the painting on the nave. On the Gospel side there is a depiction of *Saint Anthony the Great* that surely corresponds to the oldest campaign; he is identified by the attributes with which he is normally represented (the book and staff he is holding in his hands and the pig at his feet, with a bell hanging from a collar). There are still the remains of an inscription – “[...] [e]sta obra mandou fazer [...]” [this work was commissioned] (Bessa, 2008: 214) – and other decorative details. As the inscription proves, without providing any further information, we are standing before a private commission. In this mural painting section, we can identify several overlapping paint layers. Various similarities have been identified between the remaining traces found here and the ones of Valadares (Baião), which date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century), meaning it is possible for this campaign to have been carried out still during the last quarter of that century (Bessa, 2008: 214). Agreeing with the proposal that had been previously made by Joaquim Inácio Caetano (2011), Luís Urbano Afonso suggests the possibility that this campaign may have been carried out by the same master who worked in the Churches of Gatão (Amarante), Santa Eulália of Arnoso (Famalicão) or Covas do Barroso (Boticas), among others (2009: 438-439). There are several stylistic features that justify this proximity, from which we highlight the pattern of the reddish tapestry that works as a background for the depiction of *Saint Anthony the Great*, with irregular cloud-shaped quatrefoils.

According to Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 437), on the wall above the triumphal arch, also on the Gospel side, there are traces of this older campaign, considering that the characteristic reddish pattern of the tapestry that worked as a background for the depiction of *Saint Anthony the Great* is also found in this area of the Church, under a later iconographic depiction. On the same side, but on the wall of the nave, there are also some remaining fragments of an *Annuncia-*



Chapel of Saint Lazarus.  
Sepulchral headstones.



Church of Saint Nicholas.  
Nave. North wall.  
Mural painting.  
*Saint Anthony the Great*.

<sup>12</sup> The author identifies each of the inscriptions by rows, from the Gospel side to the Epistle side (Craesbeeck, 1992: 375). Several tombstones with inscriptions that had once belonged to the Church’s pavement, as well as a funerary stela, were placed in the porch of the chapel of Saint Lazarus (Basto, 2006: 2).



Church of Saint Nicholas. Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side. Mural painting. Fragment of an *Annunciation*.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave. North wall. Mural painting. Fragments of a flying angel and a kneeling figure placing its hands in a praying gesture.



Church of Vila Verde (Felgueiras). Nave. North and south walls. Mural painting. *Quatrefoils*.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave. South wall. Mural painting. Fragment of an *Annunciation*.



*tion*: a flying angel and a kneeling figure placing its hands in a praying gesture seem to suggest such a scene (Bessa, 2008: 214).

Paula Bessa (2008: 215) noticed the good design of this representation and considered that, for showing similarities with those of other workshops – from which we highlight the first one of Saint Mammes of Vila Verde (Felgueiras), in terms of the model of the quatrefoils painted here –, was carried out after 1507, because the paintings of Vila Verde were commissioned by João de Melo, whose abbacy in Pombeiro (Felgueiras) is documented between 1507 and 1525<sup>13</sup>.

On the south side of the nave's wall, we see a representation of *Saint Catherine* (Bessa, 2008: 216). It seems that both figures were framed by an architectural space and the Saint from Alexandria is next to an upright sword with straight guards and a notched wheel whose outlines are marked by direct incisions (Afonso, 2009: 437). The inscription, still partly legible – [D] EVAÇÃO DE M[ARI]A. RIBE[IRO?] DE G[ONÇAL]O MADEIRA [DEVOTION OF MARIA RIBEIRO DE GONÇALO MADEIRA] (Bessa, 2008: 216) –, seems to indicate that this panel, of devotional nature, might have been the result of a commission made by Maria Ribeiro and Gonçalo Madeira, although Fernando de Pamplona suggested it was associated with the name of the painting's author (Pamplona, 1777b: 37).

To Paula Bessa, the treatment given to the figure of *Saint Catherine* suggests a chronology from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, despite not hinting a Mannerist taste (Bessa, 2008: 216). On the other hand, based on the drawing, Luís Urbano Afonso places its design around 1600 (Afonso, 2009: 437). Besides, if the name of the devoted commissioner is that of Maria Ribeiro, who was born in 1598 and got married in this temple (Sanhudo, 1989: 9, 15), the chronology of the painting actually gets closer to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*Saint Catherine* is wearing a crown. Curiously enough, and because what we can fully appreciate today was not known in 1977, it was even believed that this “crowned female head” was a “depiction of Mafalda, given the close relationship between Afonso Henriques's wife and Canaveses” (Pamplona, 1977a: 3). As we have already seen, Mafalda of Savoy, the first queen of Portugal and not the daughter of King Sancho I, was the one who was actually more associated with the history of this region.

In an area closer to the triumphal arch we see the traces of a *Holy Benedictine abbot*, because besides wearing a black habit, he has a book and a crosier (Afonso, 2009: 437). In this wall of the nave we also see traces of an *Annunciation* on an overlapped layer. A small phylactery with the inscription “AVE” (Afonso, 2009: 437) appears from behind a small standing angel with a staff. We are also able to identify a dove above the Virgin (?) who has an open book by Her side (Bessa, 2008: 217). We are certainly before a painting from a later period, perhaps from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, considering the type of border depicted, whose composition is based on a straight outline with acanthus leaves rolled around it (Bessa, 2008: 217).

Although there are sources telling us that there were several altarpieces in this Church, the truth is that, today, only the main altarpiece remains. According to Francisco Craesbeck,

13 For further information on the mural painting of Saint Mammes of Vila Verde (Felgueiras) please read, in addition to the above mentioned authors, Botelho (2010: 62).





EVACAO DE M<sup>ã</sup> RIBE

DE G<sup>o</sup> MADEIRA





in 1726, in addition to this altarpiece, “which is gilded, it features, on the gospel side, Saint Nicholas and, on the epistle side, Saint Sebastian, with two collateral altarpieces, also gilded; on the one on the gospel side there is Saint Lucy; and on the one on the epistle side an old image of Our Lady of the Rosary, made of very well-upholstered gilded wood”.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave and collateral altarpieces, before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1977).  
Source: IHRU archive.

These altarpieces, disassembled when the plaster that coated the Church’s interior was removed and the fragments of mural paintings we have just analysed were discovered, were probably Mannerist considering the insertion of painting in their structure (which was more visible in the collateral altarpiece on the Gospel side) and also the strength that the Classical architectural elements have in their definition. These are currently stored inside the Chapel of Saint Lazarus. The main altarpiece, National Style [1690-1725] woodwork, focuses its structure on the Eucharistic throne and, in its lateral axes, it features the panels that still accommodate the figures of Saint Nicholas and Saint Sebastian (Rodrigues, 2009)<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> The author alludes to the doctorate paid by the Canaveses Town Council in 1717.

In terms of imagery we should highlight the 15<sup>th</sup>-century image of Saint Lucy (*c.* 1450), made of polychrome limestone and executed in the workshops from the Mondego region<sup>15</sup>. This may be the image referred by Francisco Craesbeeck in 1726, although the chronicler did not record its material or mention its shape or antiquity. We would like to recall that the mobility of the images often constraints their long-term relationship with the building.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Chancel. Main altarpiece.

<sup>15</sup> We highlight an image of Saint Agatha at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga [National Museum of Ancient Art] which is artistically similar. It was part of the exhibition *A espada e o deserto* [The sword and the desert], 2002 (Carvalho, Porfirio & Carvalho, 2002: 23).



## The chapel of Saint Lazarus and the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage

Close to the Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses there are still two structures whose existence expresses the importance of the place as a traffic channel. We are referring to the cross dedicated to the Lord of the Good Passage and to the chapel of Saint Lazarus.

Unfortunately, the deep changes the location was subject to, mainly the shift of both structures from their original position, or the replacement of the original pavement marking the path of the Medieval corridor (perhaps built over the Roman road), do not allow us to perceive what the space looked like to a someone who would walk down from Fornos to the bridge of Canaveses. First he would find the inn from which only ruins remain together with the chapel of the Holy Spirit; then he would see the Church of Saint Nicholas, on his right, and finally the chapel of Saint Lazarus and its porch, located close to the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage and protected by a small construction or temple.

The chapel of Saint Lazarus is an 18<sup>th</sup>-century building, but it may be a reconstruction of an older building. In the Middle Ages, the worship of Saint Lazarus was associated with lepers and beggars because, in a curious fusion of the figures of Lazarus from the parables and the bishop from Marseille (from which the worship spread across Europe), it recalled the miracle of the resurrection performed by Christ. It was assumed that, through Saint Lazarus, the Saviour performed other prodigies, so that sanctified leper was invoked in lazar houses or sanctuaries located outside the urban fabric (like in the case of Lamego) or close to roads travelled by lepers, beggars and other outcasts, like in the case of Canaveses.

Furthermore, the small town's devotional pantheon, located close to the bridge, is, in its whole, a call to charity, assistance and physical salvation. From the patron saint himself – Saint Nicholas of Bari, who, due to his hagiography and the miracles he performed during his life, is often associated with travellers and with those who ask for shelter and food<sup>16</sup> –, to the invocation of the Holy Spirit – whose name was given to the chapel located next to the inn and expresses the double meaning of receiving spiritual and physical nourishment –, including the crucified Lord – who was invoked for a good passage in a place that was always prone to the dangers of transience.

The small temple dedicated to this devotion is a typical 18<sup>th</sup>-century structure, a period in which the Christological invocations with specific vocatives (of the Afflicted, of Support, of the Good Fortune, etc.) invaded the margins of the paths as a memory of a prodigy or of the wish for salvation. A porch-like structure with three openings shows the devotees a granite image of



Chapel of Saint Lazarus.



Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage.

16 Saint Nicholas of Bari, a 4<sup>th</sup>-century bishop and confessor, is one of the most famous thaumaturgies and hagiotherapists of Eastern and Western Churches. As patron saint, he is associated with sailors and travelers and, during his life, he is said to have performed a series of miracles that determined the importance he achieved after his death. One of them – associated with an inn and, therefore, with travelers – was the resurrection of three young students who had been chopped into pieces by an innkeeper. Saint Nicholas was responsible for several charitable actions, giving dowries to maidens or bread to those who needed to be fed, thus asserting himself as a saint particularly associated with welfare activities in the Middle Ages (Sousa, 1955).

crucified Christ with traces of polychromy, repainted by several artisans in order to emphasise the dramatic strength of the scene. The small temple faced the bridge's entrance or exit (depending on where the traveller was coming from) and was located close to a few houses, demolished as part of an urban intervention carried out after the construction of the Torrão dam.

## THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY OF SOBRETÂMEGA

**B**eing characterised by the late nature of its Romanesque lines, the Church of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega was built on a hilltop on the right bank of the Tâmega, close to the submerged Medieval bridge of Canaveses. With a similar structure to that of the Church of Saint Nicholas, this building is another good example of the resistance of typical Romanesque building solutions well into the Gothic period; it was built already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (surely after 1320), as proven by the absence of columns and capitals on the portals, which in turn are carved into the thickness of the walls, and by the square shape of the plain modillions.

With a very simple structure free from any decorative flare, the Church of Sobretâmega is composed of a single nave headed by a rectangular apse; both volumes are topped with wooden roofs. The presence of two corbels halfway up the main façade tells us that its portal, composed of two broken archivolts and including a flat tympanum resting on corbels decorated with semi-spheres, was protected by a porch-like structure.

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Church of Sobretâmega. General view.





Church of Sobretâmega. North façade and bell tower.

The free-standing bell tower, placed to the north of the chancel and parallel to it, is composed of a wall surmounted by a round-arched double belfry with a straight cornice; it is also topped by pinnacles and a cross. The access to the belfry is made through a west-facing door. Between the chancel and the belfry we find the sacristy.

Sobriety prevails on Sobretâmega's external exposed granite walls; the Church is closed in on itself and only occasionally marked by narrow crevices that illuminate its interior, which is also quite sober. The whitewashed wall faces are interrupted by the granite frames of the doors and windows. Sobretâmega's interior does not tell us of the Romanesque Period, but rather of the Modern Period. The arrangement of the triumphal arch, rather high, proves it so. This is a round arch resting on pilasters and whose intradosum is decorated with protruding panels.

In an inspection carried out on October 24<sup>th</sup> 1656 there was an order to replace the panelled altarpiece with the image of Christ found on the chancel arch of Sobretâmega by a new one (Brandão, 1984: 329-330). That work was the parishioners' responsibility, as specified by the inspector. On October 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year it was already being manufactured and the inspector knew that "since he had commissioned it and it was his fault that it was not finished, he suspended the penalty imposed and ordered it to be finished".

A few years later there was an order to renovate the painting of the altarpiece of the chapel of the Stigmata, located "under the collateral altar of the church of Sobretâmega" (Brandão, 1984: 423, 880). In September 1674, the inspector provides the builder with specific guidelines: "whiten and renovate the altarpiece's painting, which are all urgently needed works" (Brandão, 1984: 423). Given that this recommendation was not followed, in the inspection carried out on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1699 the inspector determined that this chapel "was much in need of an altarpiece, a frontal, towels, of a roof renovation and of the internal whitewash of the



Church of Sobretâmega. General interior view from the nave.

aforementioned Chapel, whose construction is the responsibility of Reverend João Moreira, rector of Soza”.

As far as we could ascertain, the main altarpiece was one of the main concerns of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century inspectors. On May 11<sup>th</sup> 1689, the inspector deemed that, “since the altarpiece of the main altar was very old, orders were given to build a new and Modern one and, together with it, there was the commission for a full-body image of the patron saint, which was placed in a niche next to the sacarium, on the same altarpiece, because it should not be where it is now” (Brandão, 1984: 671). Although the inspector’s guidelines are very clear, the truth is that at the time of the inspection carried out on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1702, these still had not been met, so there was an order for their implementation within a six-month period (Brandão, 1984: 131-132). But the Church would still have to wait. During the inspection carried out on September 8<sup>th</sup> of the following year, the parish priest received a new order to “commission an altarpiece for the chancel because it was necessary... to remove the [image of the Patron Saint]” (Brandão, 1984: 131-132).

We assume that only then the order to replace the main altarpiece with a new and more Modern piece was abided by. In 1726, Francisco Craesbeeck says that although the Church’s chancel is very “old”, it features “a stepped plinth that is very well gilded” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 372). The National Baroque [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)]





Church of Sobretâmega. Chancel. Main altarpiece.



Church of Sobretâmega. Chancel. Main altarpiece on the Gospel side. Sculpture. Saint Mary.

main altarpiece houses an opulent Eucharistic throne in the middle (Rodrigues, 2009). Provided with a tabernacle, it features consoles to display images on the lateral registers, where we currently see a Virgin and Child and Saint Joseph, one on each side and both holding the Child. The image of a standing “Saint Mary” holding the Infant Jesus on her left hand is a polychrome limestone sculpture emerging from the Medieval Period while showing signs of the Renaissance’s naturalism in its design. The stiffness of the faces and the bodies themselves, as well as the design of the Virgin’s rigid hands, with long and slender fingers, are already announcing the delicateness of the Gothic style that tried to free itself from the hieratism that marked sculpture until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. So, we believe this to be a sculptural work from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and that it might be the symbolic and miraculous depiction of Saint Mary that caused the change of the Church’s patron saint.

In 1758 this Church had five altars (Capela, Matos & Borralheiro, 2009: 407): “the main altar, with its golden tribune, where we find the Blessed Sacrament with its brotherhood. It features two other collateral ones, the one on the Gospel side, of Saint Blaise, where we find the brotherhood of the God Child. And on the Epistle side, the one of Our Lady of the Rosary. On the same side, in the church’s body, it features another altar with the image of the Crucified Lord. On the Gospel side, in the body of that same church, there is another chapel with an altar, known as the altar of the Stigmata, whose construction is the responsibility of House of Telha, in the parish of Vila Boa de Quires, which manages it”.

## SAINT NICHOLAS AND SOBRETÂMEGA IN THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD: THE ENSEMBLE'S VALUE

Regarding the most recent centuries, these Churches should be studied together. There are several reasons for this. In addition to the history that quite obviously connects these two buildings, as we have already seen, we should also bring up their geographic specificities. This is why, on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1970, the Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior e das Belas-Artes [General Directorate for Higher Education and Fine Arts] mentions the proposal for the classification – as a Public Interest Building – of the “ensemble comprising the churches of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas, as well as the Chapel and the Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage, located in the municipality of Marco de Canaveses, together with the definition of its protection zone”<sup>17</sup>.

However, Decree no. 516, issued in the Governmental Gazette of November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1971, only classifies the “ensemble comprising the churches of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas”. The reason behind the exclusion of the bridge of Canaveses – a key element for the understanding of these two Churches – from this ensemble is quite clear.

In April 1940 we find the first facts that led to the demolition of the primitive bridge by the Junta Autónoma das Estradas (JAE) [Portuguese Road Authority]. In April that year we have the information that this bridge, classified as a National Monument, “was in need of several repair and cleaning works, especially with regard to the parapets and the merlons, which have disappeared in some areas; they probably fell into the River as a result of the circulation of some kind of heavy vehicles”<sup>18</sup>. Despite the protests that broke out at the time<sup>19</sup>, it was decided to rebuild the bridge “and to broaden it in order to allow the normal circulation of two cars; however, its current shape should be entirely preserved together with the crenellated parapet that characterises it and the now walled-up primitive arches should be reopened”<sup>20</sup>. It was argued that the decision to rebuild the bridge found its justification in the fact that it needed to be adjusted “to its true function, thus enabling it to make the current circulation easier”<sup>21</sup>. Although it has been regarded as being of strictly Medieval origin, we find that even before its demolition it was noted that this bridge “is not Medieval unlike what has generally been assumed. Of the Medieval bridge, only one of the small arches and the foundation of one of the large arches remains”<sup>22</sup>. The surveys conducted at the time also clarified that its structure “rests on masonry works from an older bridge, which was possibly Roman according to the elements that were found”<sup>23</sup> and as we have already seen.

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17 Ofício da Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior e das Belas-Artes, 9 de dezembro de 1970 [SIPA.TXT.01494351] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0029 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [N.º IPA PT011307230014]. [N.º IPA PT011307230014].

18 Ofício n.º 156, 27 de abril de 1940 [SIPA.TXT.01494351]. PT DGEMN:DSID-001/013-1836. Idem.

19 Please read, by way of example, Missiva de Francisco de Oliveira Pereira, 27 de abril de 1941 [SIPA.TXT.00627804]. Idem.

20 Ofício n.º 1620, s.d. [1940] [SIPA.TXT.00627809]. Idem.

21 Idem.

22 Comunicação n.º 108, 15 de março de 1943 [SIPA.TXT.00627815]. Idem.

23 Idem.



Therefore, in 1944 the JAE demolished this bridge and rebuilt a new and similar bridge, but “wider and a few meters downstream from the old one” so, on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1947, architect Baltazar de Castro drew a proposal to the Director General for National Monuments, Henrique Gomes da Silva, regarding the elimination of the bridge from the “List of Public Properties part of the National Artistic Heritage, because it no longer existed as a National Monument”<sup>24</sup>. This aspect clearly justifies the non-inclusion of the “Medieval” bridge in the classification of the ensemble, of which we only find reports nearly 30 years later, within the context of the company Energias de Portugal (EDP)’s project for the *Tâmega hydroelectric power station at Torrão* and the “possible interference of its reservoir with the Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage [and not of the Good Journey] and with the Chapel of Saint Lazarus, both located next to the National Road no. 211, close to the intersection with the Bridge over the River Tâmega, in the parish of São Nicolau, municipality of Marco de Canaveses”<sup>25</sup>. At the time there were plans to raise the bridge’s platform (and not its complete submersion, as it in fact occurred) and for the possible shift of the buildings that were part of the ensemble under study. Despite the “local interest” of the cross of the Good Journey and the small chapel of Saint Lazarus it was deemed important that “they were protected in order to ensure their preservation”<sup>26</sup>.

The DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]’s services were called to supervise this process by the EDP and, despite considering that “the ensemble comprising the two churches of St. Nicholas of Canaveses and Saint Mary of Sobre Tâmega, the chapel of Saint Lazarus and the Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage, all classified as Buildings of Public Interest, together with the river Tâmega, its banks and the crenellated bridge of Canaveses (a poor imitation of the fortified Romanesque bridge that once existed there...)” had an “unusual interest”, the fact that “other topics were more important and that this undertaking had to be implemented”<sup>27</sup>

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Torrão dam. View of the reservoir.

24 Ofício n.º 5601, Baltazar de Castro, 15 de dezembro de 1947 [SIPA.TXT.00627818 and SIPA.TXT.00627819]. Idem.

25 Ofício n.º 731, 30 de junho de 1970 [SIPA.TXT.00627822 and SIPA.TXT.0062723]. Idem.

26 Ofício n.º 2120, 3 de julho de 1970 [SIPA.TXT.00627824]. Idem.

27 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM 2521. Igreja de S. Nicolau. Marco de Canaveses (May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1930). S2/E47/P.6 Cx.0048, Ofício 08308, 10 de março de 1981.

were eventually accepted. At the time, there were plans to move the chapel and the cross to a location that was as close as possible to the original one, and to consolidate the supporting walls of the two Churches. As we can see, the aspects discussed here and this issue are still extremely topical. Although we should consider, “as a general principle, that moving classified buildings from their original location is not acceptable, due to the relationship they have with their surroundings and because they are indeed landmarks associated with collective memory”, in this specific case it was decided to completely relocate the chapel and cross, “whose submer- sion would be inevitable”<sup>28</sup>.

## THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS: CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

**F**ollowing the classification, the parish priest of Canaveses, José da Silva Dias, con- tacted DGEMN’s services asking them to promote “the renovation of the electrical installation and the sound amplification” in the Church of Saint Nicholas, accord- ing to its style<sup>29</sup>. The specifications and quote for the electrical installation to be implemented in this Church date from July 17<sup>th</sup> 1973. At first sight, this intervention would not be worth mentioning here, were it not for the fact that it resulted in the discovery of the mural painting in the Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses.

A report published years later explains how the discovery occurred: “considering that the church is officially «property of public interest», the parish priest requested an authorisation to the Direção dos Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for National Monuments] to carry out the work; that institution sent a technician who drew the line that the stonemason should follow and then left. The fact is that, on that day, the parish priest had to go to Porto, so the stonemason, a man without enough knowledge to deal with the unforeseen, did his destructive work as best he could, ignoring the discovery” (Pamplona, 1977a: 3). But when his conscience spoke louder, the narrator continues, “he went to the parish priest’s house and warned one of his relatives about what had happened”.

Although the “completion of the improvements to the electrical installation”<sup>30</sup> was awarded in September 1973, the truth is that in 1977 the relevant authorities still had not taken any appropriate measures to protect the recently discovered frescoes (Pamplona, 1977a: 3). However, with the existence of just a few visible fragments and assuming that under the stucco there were large compositions, it was argued that “only qualified technicians should undertake the delicate task of revealing the compositions, as well as consolidating, cleaning and anchoring them”<sup>31</sup>.

28 Idem, Parecer do Instituto Português do Património Cultural, 8 de janeiro de 1982.

29 Dias, José da Silva – Missiva, 24 de março de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.01493043]. PT DGEMN: DSARH-010/139-0016 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307210024].

30 PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0016, SIPA.TXT.01493075 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307210024].

31 [S.a.] – Canaveses: terra milenária que guarda preciosos frescos: tarefa para técnicos qualificados. *O Comércio do Porto*. (January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1977) 22.



So, still in 1977, the José de Figueiredo Institute included that task “in the programme of interventions to be implemented”<sup>32</sup>, which began between May 16<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup> that year<sup>33</sup>. However, they concluded that the water infiltration issues in the Church – both due to rainwater and to the fact that part of the area stretches close to the building’s façade<sup>34</sup> – were hampering the progress of the conservation of the frescoes. So, there was a decision to carry out building works in order to stop this problem. These works were included in the DGEMN’s work plan for 1978<sup>35</sup>.

Regarding the 1990’s, we have reports on the conduction of several conservation works in the building, encompassing different areas. Some of them were carried out by the parish itself, namely a few works related to the internal walls and the nave’s pavement<sup>36</sup>. At the time there were efforts to proceed with the restoration of the main altarpiece’s woodwork<sup>37</sup>.

Under the scope of its integration into the Route of the Romanesque in 2012, the Church of Saint Nicholas was subject to protection, preservation and valuation works. The project was developed with the aim of renovating the roofs and preserving the external walls (Malheiro, 2010: 16-19). For the future, there are plans to intervene in the mural paintings found in the Church, the chapel of Saint Lazarus and the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage, for which there a preservation and restoration project (Pestana, 2010) has already been developed, as well as in the altarpiece of the chapel of Saint Lazarus (Duarte, 2010).

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## THE CHURCH OF SOBRETÂMEGA: CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

There are very few news about interventions carried out in the Church of Sobretâmega after its classification in 1971. That is justified, not only by the late nature of its classification, but also by the above mentioned controversy surrounding the project for the *Tâmega hydroelectric power station at Torrão*, with obvious consequences for the ensemble Saint Nicholas/Sobretâmega and its corresponding Protection Zone.

We only found information regarding the following year: “it was found that there was a luminous cross composed of a box placed above the Romanesque granite cross on the main façade, as well as two loudspeakers placed on the crown of one of the angles of the belfry’s bell openings”, thus disrupting the ensemble’s appearance<sup>38</sup>. Besides, there was an iron pole attached to the main façade supporting the electrical power lines for the aforementioned cross. It

32 Ofício da Direção-Geral do Património Cultural, [fevereiro de 1977] [SIPA.TXT.01493081]. PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0016 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307210024].

33 Ofício do Instituto de José de Figueiredo, 23 de maio de 1977 [SIPA.TXT.01493089]. Idem.

34 Idem, SIPA.TXT.01493097 and SIPA.TXT.01493098.

35 Idem, SIPA.TXT.01493107 to SIPA.TXT.01493116.

36 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM N 2521. Igreja de S. Nicolau. Marco de Canaveses (May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1930). S2/E47/P.6 Cx.0048, Informação de 93-02-11.

37 Idem.

38 Ofício n.º 666, 28 de junho de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.01494356]. PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0029 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307230014].

was immediately removed. Although the speakers were still in place in December that year, the truth is that the cross had already been removed<sup>39</sup>. In the 1990's, similar to what happened in Saint Nicholas, there were plans for several conservation works related to the building and its immediate surroundings. These were later implemented (Basto, 2006a).

In 2012, the Church of Sobretâmega became part of the Route of the Romanesque. [MLB / NR]

<sup>39</sup> Comunicação n.º 4445, 13 de dezembro de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.01494362]. Idem.

## CHRONOLOGY

12<sup>th</sup> century: beginning of the reconstruction of the bridge of Canaveses;

14<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter): the Churches of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses and Saint Mary of Sobretâmega were only built from this period onwards.

1355, August 5<sup>th</sup>: peace was declared between the King Afonso IV and his son Pedro I in the town of Canaveses;

15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century (transition): mural painting campaigns in the Church of Saint Nicholas;

1565: date engraved on the tomb of Álvaro de Carvalho and his heirs;

1656/57: replacement of the panel-shaped altarpiece with the image of Christ in the chancel arch's altarpiece;

1674: decision to renovate the painting of the altarpiece of the chapel of the Stigmata;

1699: new decision to renovate the altarpiece of the chapel of the Stigmata, together with several interventions in the chapel itself;

1944: demolition of the bridge rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which was reconstructed a little farther downstream;

1971 (November 22<sup>nd</sup>): classification of the ensemble composed by the Churches of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas as having a "Public Interest";

1973: discovery of mural painting section in the Church of Saint Nicholas;

1977 (May 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>): the José de Figueiredo Institute included the frescoes of Saint Nicholas in the programme of interventions that should be carried out that year;

1980s: submersion of the bridge of Canaveses (rebuilt in 1944) and displacement of the chapel of Saint Lazarus and of the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage;

1990s: several conservation works were carried out in the Churches of Saint Nicholas and Sobretâmega, under the DGEMN's supervision;

2010: the Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas of Canavese became part of the Route of the Romanesque;

2013-2014: renovation of the roofs and preservation of the external walls of the Church of Saint Nicholas.



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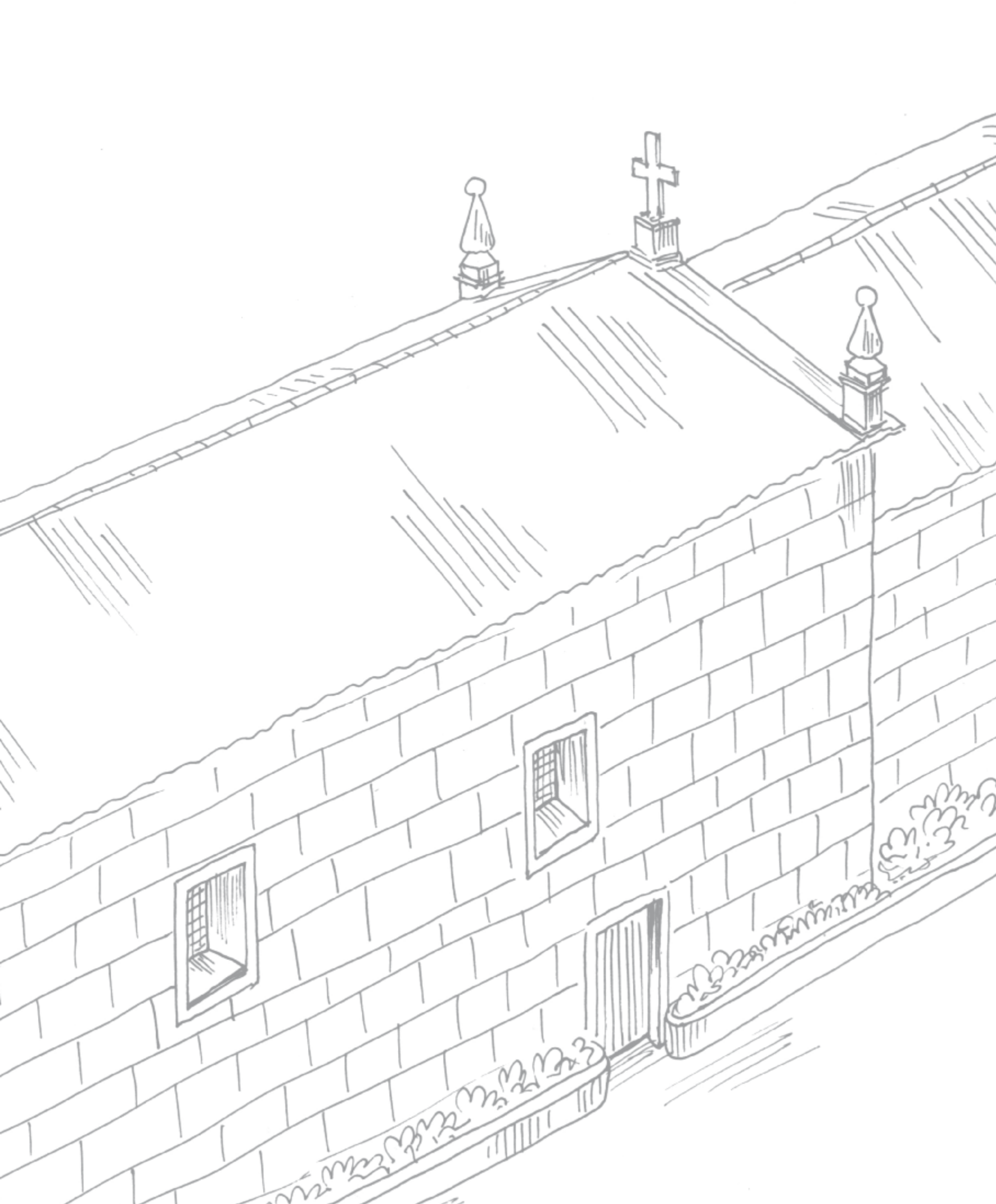
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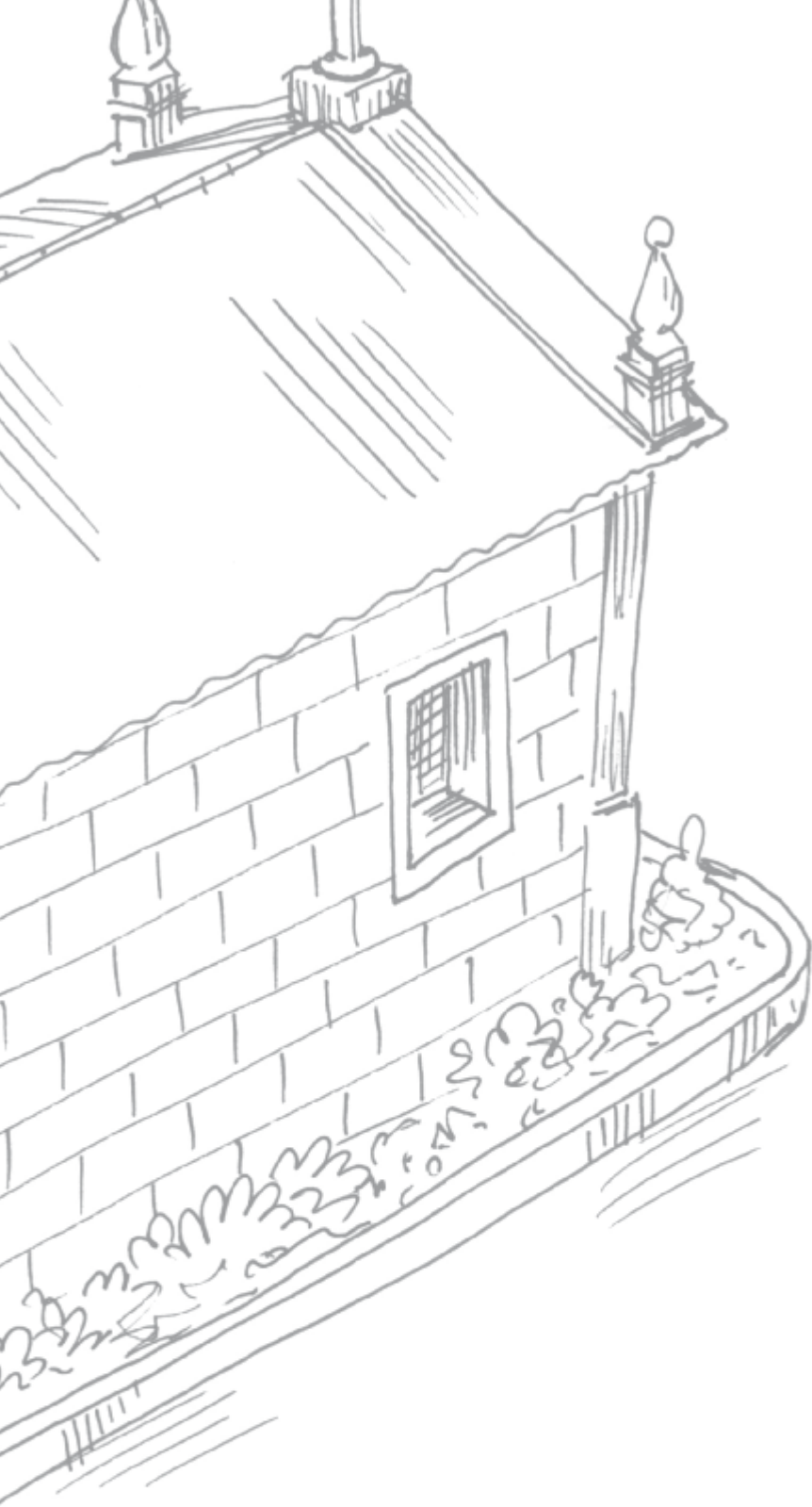
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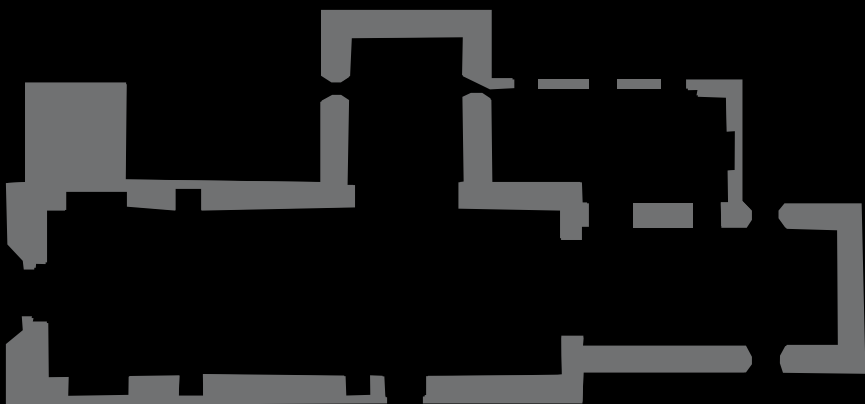


# CHURCH OF SAINT MARTIN OF SOALHÃES

MARCO DE CANAVESES



**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
MARTIN OF  
SOALHÃES  
MARCO DE CANAVESES



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Soalhães is located within a territory that was particularly coveted by the Portuguese Medieval nobility. The author of *Corografia portuguesa...* even associated the origin of the name with the manorial onomasticon, stating that Soalhães came from a nobleman's surname (Costa, 1706-1712: 408). Although this statement is based on legends, it is quite possible that the importance of the land led its lords to use its name as their surname, such as in the case of João Martins, called “of Soalhães”, the bishop of Lisbon and archbishop of Braga. Actually, it is among the kinship relationships within this 15<sup>th</sup>-century prelate that we find part of the historical path of this municipality and prelacy, because these families' descendants and the fates of the land were always connected. A. Carvalho da Costa even associates the legitimacy of its royal donation<sup>1</sup> to the bishop with the fact that the prelate's ancestors had been powerful lords from the region: the Portocarreiros, a family “to which” [D. João] “belonged”<sup>2</sup>.



Aerial view.

<sup>1</sup> In the agreement between the Bishop Pedro Salvado and King Sancho II, the latter gave the bishop of Porto “and its Church the patronage of Soalhães, and Bedoído, and the tithe of the tithe, which he, and the Kings his predecessors received from all that came to the city of Porto” (Amaral, Almeida & Pegado, 1945: 96).

<sup>2</sup> About this presumed kinship, please read what is mentioned by Sottomayor-Pizarro (1997: 311): “we believe it would be more of way of addressing someone to indicate a “functional kinship” – João Martins was a clergyman who worked for Fernão Anes [de Portocarreiro], so he was a member of his house - than a biological kinship, as in the case of his “actual” nephews”.

Among the several rights granted to the bishop, which he bonded to a majorat in 1304 (whose management was assumed first by his son, Vasco Anes “of” Soalhães and then by his descendants), was the patronage of the tempting abbey. The succession within the majorat seems to have been a peaceful issue until the arrival of Joana de Vasconcelos Menezes e Noronha (1625-1653), who married the 7<sup>th</sup> viscount of Vila Nova de Cerveira, “in whose time much was taken from this house and from the one in Mafra, and Enxara included in this church’s patronage” (Costa, 1706-1712: 408).

Showing a path very similar to the one of the Church of Tabuado (Marco de Canaveses), the authors unanimously consider that the main parish Church of Soalhães had a monastic origin, pointing to references from the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The *Catalogo e historia dos bispos do Porto* refers (not substantiating) that this was a monastery of the Knights Templar (Cunha, 1623: 425) and the author of *Corografia portugueza...* mentions a Benedictine foundation; José Anastácio de Figueiredo, in *Nova história da ordem de Malta*, adds that this was a “duplex” (Figueiredo, 1800: 383, note 153) foundation. More recently, Domingos Moreira (1989-1990: 7-119) confirms this antique path, documenting it: the current Church may actually be founded over a basilica where there would be relics from martyrs in 875. In 1120 the “monastery (...) of Suilanis” is also mentioned, but references are scarce and would eventually disappear over the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the Church took on a secular condition, thus completing the parish formation process.

In the listing of Churches from 1320, Soalhães (“Solhães”) is mentioned along with the one of Mesquinhata (“Macinhata”) and Santa Cruz as paying, all together, a tax of 400 Portuguese “libras” [former Portuguese currency unit]. This territory was the prelacy of Soalhães, an ecclesiastical boundary, outside the diocesan jurisdiction (and was, therefore, called “nullius diocesis”). As the author of the *Portugal sacro-profano...* refers, in 1768, the prelacy of Soalhães had “an almost Episcopal jurisdiction [i.e., with the powers of a Diocese], being fully owned by the Clergy, and the people, with no knowledge of the causes of the people from that church, other than him, and the Metropolitan by way of Appeal” (Niza, 1767: 225).

Soalhães received its foral charter on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1514. The municipality’s limits were almost the ones of the parish, although part of the land of Gouveia would belong to this parish, as Jaime da Silva Teles, the prelate-abbot of Soalhães explains in 1758. He also adds that the municipality had one ordinary judge (who was also the orphan’s judge), two council members, one weights and measurements inspector, one proxy and two notaries (a public one and one from the council), a bailiff and a doorkeeper. There was only one military company with a captain-major, a second-lieutenant and a few subordinates. Besides this officership, there was also a gamekeeper who was paid by the kingdom’s chief gamekeeper. At the time, the abbot received an “exact” income of 4000 “cruzados” [former Portuguese currency unit] (Teles, 1758).



## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

**D**espite the historical importance associated with this Church of Soalhães, especially regarding the centuries of the so-called High Middle Ages, there are very few traces telling us about that period. Even a less trained observer notices almost immediately that we stand before a building which was profoundly changed during the Modern Period. First of all, the large size of its single nave and the depth of its rectangular chancel are not typical of the Romanesque Period; as we shall see further ahead, their origin lies in a transformation that sought to update the interior of the temple according to the Post-Tridentine aesthetics and liturgy. The large rectangular windows also confirm this theory. While the Romanesque Period is characterised by the mystical nature of its interiors, which are only illuminated by narrow crevices, the Modern Period, and especially the Baroque, foster and worship authentic “floods of light” instead.

So, from the Medieval Period there are three remaining elements, which we believe were only preserved as proofs of an antiquity that was willingly reasserted in this monument. These elements are the main portal, the inner frame of the oculus on the main façade and the arcossolium with a tomb chest located in the chancel.

The main portal, which already features a proto-Gothic arrangement, probably dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Almeida, 1978: 270). The absence of a tympanum, associated with the broken profile archivolts, attests to it quite well. While the inner archivolts are torus-shaped, the outer one features an intertwined rope-shaped motif carved in relief, as if drawing inverted “ee”. In addition, the capitals, which include botanic and animal (birds) themes, are also proto-Gothic, feature a clear naturalist character and a certain elegance in the design of its echinus. This chronology is hardly surprising if we take into account that it was only in 1304 that João Martins “of Soalhães” received the abbey and bounded it to a majorat.

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West façade.



West façade. Portal.



West façade. Portal. Capitals.

Also the tomb built into an arcosolium which was found in the chancel, on the Epistle side, confirms this chronology. Although there is no knowledge on who is actually buried there, because the grave does not have an inscription, the truth is that someone tried to keep a memory of the deceased through a series of eight coats of arms. But the passage of time does not allow any kind of reading today. The existence of traces of polychromy leads us to assume that it would only be possible to know the coats of arms of the person who rests here by their colour, because the coats of arms would be probably flat. The fact that this tomb is located in the chancel immediately suggests us that this would be someone from the high nobility, surely related to the Church's patronage.

The coats of arms are sheltered by micro-architectures with a clear Gothic flavour: an arcade, composed of three-lobed arches, provided with capitals. Above the arcade, there are micro-gables surmounted by a clover-shaped element. The tomb's lid, with an hexagonal cross-section and gabled volume, features a cross and a series of floral motifs surrounded by a multiplied phytomorphic motif.

Finally, on the inside of the opening that surmounts the main portal, illuminating the nave's interior, of already Modern design, we still see a frame dotted by pearls with an undeniable Medieval flavour. Its presence confirms that, at least, the structure of the Romanesque façade was kept during the works carried out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. All the other elements that shape this Church tell us about a different age, a different liturgy, a different spirit, a different aesthetics and, finally, a different taste.



Chancel. Wall on the Epistle side.  
Arcosolium and tomb chest.





Chancel. Wall on the Epistle side. Tomb chest.

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West façade. Oculus (interior view).





General interior view from the nave.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

The Church of Saint Martin of Soalhães was, then, profoundly renewed during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The tower adjacent to the north side of the main façade, with its bulb-shaped top, the curvilinear oculus that surmounts the main portal, the large windows that in the main (and lateral) façade flood the Church's interior with light, the Classicist pinnacles that top the angles of the Church's different volumes, tell us about the same Baroque-flavoured language, despite its regional nature and a certain restraint which is clearly associated with it.

Opposite to what one might have expected, the first impression the visitor has, while entering the main parish Church of Soalhães, is that of a profusion of colour and materials. Here, we may say that the Baroque style, which the bulk of this decorative grammar belongs to, does justice to the axiomatic expression *horror vacui* [horror to emptiness]. In fact, since the Church had, as it already had in 1758, five altars distributed between the larger chapel and the nave, the space between each of the altarpieces from the ecclesial body is lined with tile panels and carved wood. As José Carlos Meneses Rodrigues refers, "this is a temple marked by several woodwork campaigns: the main altarpiece shows a Neoclassical style; the altarpiece moved to the lateral chapel on the Gospel side (the former main altarpiece) and the columns of the collateral altarpieces show a National Style [1690-1725]; the lateral altarpiece on the Epistle side,



Nave. High choir. Cartouche.



the frontispiece of the chancel arch and the nave's corbelled pilasters show the transition from the National to the Johannine style [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)]" (Rodrigues, 2004: 259). The intervention in the Church's body may have been carried out in 1733, a date carved in relief in a medallion placed at the centre of the high choir's balustrade. From this space it is possible to obtain an overall view of the investment made in the decoration of the nave's body – a somewhat eccentric investment when compared to other main parish Churches, particularly if we take into account the fact that the highest contribution for works carried out in this space was given by the parishioners. However, the eccentricity of the work, the value or the ornamentation and the profusion of materials, techniques and even tastes may be justified by the Church's status, which we have mentioned before.

The large narrative tile panels cause a great visual impact. The scenes depicted here, which are typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are framed by monumental casings and have an almost autonomous importance, which introduces a clearly Baroque vocabulary: wreaths with flowers and fruits, *putti*, architectural motifs, etc. In terms of scenographic composition, the theatricalisation of the gesture created by the depicted figures is quite obvious. Santos Simões identified the scenes depicted in the Church's nave (Simões, 1971: 108): on the left, from the entrance to the chancel, we have *Moses and the Bronze Serpent* and the *Samaritan Woman and Jesus talking to the Disciples*. On the opposite side, we see a large panel depicting *Moses springing water from the desert's fountain*. This specialist in tile art highlights the panel's size (20x48 tiles) and quality; the panel emphasises, with ornamental motifs, the accidents that interrupt it, i.e., the confessional and the pulpit (1971: 108). The tile work probably dates back around 1740-50.

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Nave. North wall. Tile panels.





Nave. South wall. Panels carved in relief.

From the choir we can see that the tile lining continues with a set of medium-relief panels, polychrome with *chinoiseries*, surrounded by woodwork decorated with botanic motifs and human figures. The panels have an asymmetrical arrangement, corresponding to different strategies used by the artisan or artisans, on the north and south walls, in order to integrate the panelling in the available space of the surfaces. So, on the south wall – reading from the chancel arch towards the high choir –, the first panel, which depicts Saint Martin wearing the episcopal vestments, is an independent element, thus separated by the lateral altar that, in 1758, would be probably dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary. Next, there is another panel with a depiction of the offer given by Saint Martin to the poor man, when he was a soldier. Again, the horizontal line is interrupted by an opening (a lateral door) and by the pulpit. The frieze continues with three panels whose iconographic programme is not related to Saint Martin's hagiography but to scenes from the Passion of Christ – the *Ecce Homo* (Jo 19, 4-7), the Crowning of Thorns and the Torture (Mt 27, 27-30). This ensemble should be read together with the one symmetrical to it, beginning in the north wall, in which the author (or authors) depicted the scenes of the Prayer and Agony in the Garden (Mt 26, 36-46), the Arrest (Mt 26, 50-56) and the Mocking of the Saviour (Mt 27, 27-30) and, finally, a Calvary, the last panel that decorates the chancel arch.



This composition, despite being heterogeneous from an iconographic standpoint, seems to suggest a catechetical and spiritual homogeneity, drawing attention to the sacrificial path and to the charitable world. The woodwork ornaments create a unity that includes the lining of the chancel arch (topped by a Crucifixion) and two collateral altarpieces, one of Saint Peter and the other of Saint Paul, both represented with their corresponding attributes.

The panelled section is, as we have seen, interrupted on the south side by the lateral altarpiece, currently dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Saint Anthony of Lisbon and to Saint Francis of Assisi and which, in 1758, was dedicated to the Virgen of the Rosary, according to the information written by the abbot of the time. The grammar of its decoration fits into the transition from the National to the Johannine style, including later interventions of Neoclassical flavour, at the level of the altar table's base.



Triumphal arch.



Nave. South Wall. Altarpiece.

To the north, the chapel dedicated to Saint Michael opens towards the nave. In fact, and although the altar was deprived of the image that named it, the tile lining recalls the patron saint mentioned in 1758 (Teles, 1758)<sup>3</sup>. On both lateral walls there are tile sceneries with depictions of Michael, the archangel, as a psychopomp, acting simultaneously as a judge and a guide of souls. The abbot Jaime da Silva Teles does not clarify whether this chapel was under a private jurisdiction, but it is likely that it was and that the patron family was responsible for its foundation and management. The uniformity with the nave's decorative grammar could

<sup>3</sup> The image that dominates the altarpiece could actually be the one that is now displayed in a niche, in the nave.



Nave. North wall. Chapel of Saint Michael.

then be explained by the sponsorship of the lords of the patronage who, in 1733 (the probable date of the building campaign), were Tomás Teles da Silva and Maria Xavier de Lima, the 12<sup>th</sup> viscountess of Vila Nova de Cerveira (Gaio, 1938-1941).

The central body of the altarpiece of this chapel, in National Style, despite changed in later periods (being currently dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary), is flanked by two paintings that represent, on one side, Saint Anthony and Saint Agatha and, on the other, Saint Gonçalo and Saint Lucia. Under the altar, a glazed urn, added at a later date, shelter the body of the lying Christ.

Compared with the nave, the chancel looks particularly deprived of ornaments<sup>4</sup>, thus contradicting the idea that this nobler space, under the patron or the abbot's responsibility, should have received higher investments. However, the only sign of the patron's prestige is the aforementioned tomb, which was probably intended to receive the body of one of the first heirs of the majorat or his descendants between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> According to the information provided by Santos Simões (1971: 108), when he visited this Church in December 1970, the prior stated his intention of "having the chancel tiled, since it was unbelievably deprived of all these artistic treats".

<sup>5</sup> Despite bearing no inscription, João Belmiro Pinto da Silva (1990) considers it as the grave of Vasco Anes de Soalhães. The first man to inherit the majorat was Vasco Anes de Soalhães, who murdered his wife, Leonor Rodrigues Ribeiro, due to betrayal. Rui Vasques Ribeiro, the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager of the majorat of Soalhães, was born from this marriage; he was the father of Teresa Rodrigues Ribeiro, the 3<sup>rd</sup> lady of the title. Around this time, in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, the Vasconcelos became co-owners of Soalhães, because Teresa married the governor of Coimbra, Gonçalo Mendes de Vasconcelos. On this family, connected to the monastery of Grijó, please read Sottomayor-Pizarro (1987: 294).





Chancel.



Chancel. Roof.

The Neoclassical altarpiece shelters the images of Saint Martin of Tours and Saint Lucia<sup>6</sup>. Above the throne, an image of crucified Christ annuls the empty space that was intended to display the Blessed Sacrament.

The chancel's ceiling is also different in terms of decoration and woodwork, when compared to the Church's body. Here, the coffered ceiling shows clear chromatic and design variations, despite not having the iconographic richness of other churches, whose vaults are large hagiographic handbooks (such as Saint Christopher of Nogueira, in Cinfães, for example). Besides the central row of panels where we can read the depictions of Saint Theresa of Ávila (?), Saint Anthony of Lisbon, Saint Dominic of Guzmán (?), Saint John the Baptist, Saint Martin of Tours, Saint Benedict and Saint Anthony, among other venerable entities we weren't able to identify, the remaining panels feature botanic decorations, alternating figures of boys with Marian symbols and others, of an allegorical nature, that the painting's bad state of repair does not allow deciphering. Although we can admit that the chancel underwent major transformations during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which changed its decorative appearance by replacing the lining and plaster – thus eliminating a campaign that probably occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century –, the existing decoration of the coffered ceiling is guided by a chromatic and design sobriety which is nothing comparable to the one that covers the nave's space.

The sacristy, adjacent to the north side of the chancel, features a tile lining framed by acanthus leaves, separate figures, stars on the corners and motifs that include boats and birds, among other depictions (Simões, 1971: 108).

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Sacristy. Tile lining, washbasin and altarpiece.

<sup>6</sup> The interpretation of the decorative language in this altar may be read in Rodrigues (2004: 397).







## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

With the Republic and, especially, with the Separation Law of April 20<sup>th</sup> 1911, the new regime considered the Catholic Church a simple private association, eliminated all State expenses associated with worshipping and dispossessed the institution of all its movable, immovable and contributory assets (leases, rents, pensions, etc.) – a contrivance already used in 1834 in order to raise the necessary funds to pursue the political purposes and social reforms aimed by the new leaders of the regime.

Article 62 of the Separation Law states that all movable and immovable assets, including benefits and excluding only very specific “property from an individual or a corporation with its own legal personality”, should be listed and inventoried. And because the action should be made swiftly, the same article states that the inventory should be drawn up “without the need to carry out valuations or to place stamps, temporarily placing all valuable movable assets, upon which there were fears of mislay, under the custody of parish councils or taking them to public storehouses or museums” (Lourenço, 1943: 139). A municipal committee for such inventory should be set up; it should be presided by the council’s head, who would be assisted by the Treasury’s registrar – given that, more than an ideological issue, this was actually a matter of Finances. However, the corporations and clergymen in charge of cathedrals, churches and chapels “who had been serving the public practice of the Catholic worship” were entitled to keep the objects considered strictly necessary to liturgy (Lourenço, 1943: 139).

The first sign that the severity imposed by this legislation might be eased was given in 1917. In a Decree dated December 9<sup>th</sup> that year, Sidónio Pais orders the punishments imposed as a result of disobediences to the law of 1911 to be annulled, as well as the prohibition to practice worship in State-owned buildings. In 1918, the Central Committee for the Enforcement of the Separation Law was extinct; as a branch of the Portuguese Republic, it had been controlling without surveillance, nor external or superior control, the process of nationalisation of ecclesiastical assets begun in 1911. On February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918 there was a new Separation Law that amended some of the notoriously anticlerical attacks that Afonso Costa and the republican radical wing had drafted in the first version (Lourenço, 1943: 197).

It’s in the context of the new legislation (article 5 of the law dated February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918) that we can frame part of the documents related to Soalhães. In fact, this and other parishes could use the temples and implements confiscated in 1911, “by means of an inventory and reserving the right of integrating them [the furnishings and implements] in the National treasury’s assets should, for three consecutive years, no corporation use them for worship purposes” (Lourenço, 1943: 199).

In this sense – on May 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> 1919 and pursuant to “article 62 of the law of the separation of the Churches from the State”<sup>7</sup> – the committee of Soalhães presented the “list and inventory” of the parish Church, with a detailed description of the assets meanwhile transferred to the State, but which were used for liturgy and worship, as we now summarise.

7 PORTUGAL. Ministério das Finanças – Secretaria-geral – Arquivo – Comissão Jurisdicional dos Bens Culturais, Porto, Marco de Canaveses, arrolamento dos bens culturais, Soalhães, ACMF/Arquivo/CJBC/PTO/MDC/ARROL/024 (Process).



Regarding the altarpieces, the information was that the “main altar with an altarpiece, a throne and a partly gilded wood tabernacle” displayed a crucifix, the images of Saint Martin and Saint Lucia, in addition to “a panel of little value”<sup>8</sup>.

On the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows, the image with the same name stood together with an Infant Jesus, a crucifix and the Heart of Jesus. This altar, besides the image it invokes, sheltered two other images: an image of Saint Anthony and another depicting Saint Francis. The altarpiece of the Virgin of the Rosary, besides Her own image, featured an image of Saint Anthony and another of Saint Joseph. The altar of the Lord of the Passion, with its corresponding image, was also documented. Finally, in the Chapel of Souls and on the altar of Saint Martin, stood his image, besides the images of Saint Michael, Saint Blaise, Saint Lucia and another called “Saint Santana”<sup>9</sup>.

Besides the altarpieces, with their corresponding images, several pieces related to worship and Eucharist were listed, such as candlesticks, lamps, monstrances, etc., divided into “bronze and metal objects and silver objects”<sup>10</sup>. Naturally, the “vestments” were added to these items<sup>11</sup>.

With the movement of May 28<sup>th</sup>, supported by a considerable part of the Catholics, the religious issue took on a different path, which was less aggressive and more favourable to the Church. By Decree no. 11887 of July 6<sup>th</sup> 1926, by Manuel Rodrigues, the Church recovered its legal personality, the regularization of the assets affected by the republican dispossession and the freedom of religious worship, association and teaching. Article 10 of the referred law mentioned the return of the movable and immovable assets “intended for Catholic worship”, but only in terms of use; however, there was an amendment to the law produced under Sidónio Pais’ ruling, which stated that the objects that, in the meantime, had been allocated to museums could be requested in order to be used in liturgy (Lourenço, 1943: 228). Those which had not been allocated to public utility services should be kept in the hands of the Portuguese Republic. It was only in 1940, through article 6 of the Concordat between Portugal and the Holy See that “the Catholic Church regained the ownership of the assets that it previously held” and which, at that time were owned by the State, as long as, according to the legislator, “the deed of transfer” would be “signed within six months of the rectification exchange defined by that Concordat”(Lourenço, 1943: 351).

According to a document dated August 7<sup>th</sup> 1930, and pursuant to article 63 of the Separation Law, the Municipal Committee for the Inventory drew up a new list<sup>12</sup> certainly in order to safeguard the usufruct of the plundered assets. The inventory process began with a reference to the “parish church built of stone and lime”, covered with Marseille roof tiles, with all its hardware and all its belongings, which featured a tower with two bells and a clock by its side. It is a comprehensive inventory that, despite the fact that it neither describes the pieces nor identifies their origin or chronology, clarifies the quality and importance of the materials, objects and implements: silk damask vestments and a silk satin cloak. There were also chalices, image

8 Idem, fl. 83-83 v.º.

9 Idem, fl. 83 v.º.

10 Idem, fl. 85.

11 Idem, fl. 85 v.º.

12 Idem, fl. 88, 88 v.º, 89 e 89 v.º.

crowns, monstrance, thuribles, vases and a processional cross, all made in silver. Next came the sculptural collection, already mentioned in 1919.

As we may infer from what has been mentioned above, although the Church of Soalhães has clear Medieval roots, belonging to a period that history has been defining as Romanesque, the truth is that the material traces from this period still visible in the existing building are very scarce. When this building was classified as a National Monument, that fact gave rise to a certain controversy amidst the competent bodies.

The Church of Soalhães – or rather, the set of its Romanesque elements – was classified as National Monument by the Decree no. 129 from 1977. Immediately afterwards, the *Direção dos Monumentos do Norte* [Northern Directorate for Monuments] issued an opinion in which there was an emphasis on the richness of its interior, “both due to its woodwork and the magnificent narrative tile panels that decorate it, but these elements are not included in the referred classification”<sup>13</sup>. Its inclusion was then immediately proposed.

The Organizing Committee of the *Instituto de Salvaguarda do Património Cultural e Natural* [Institute for the Safeguard of Cultural and Natural Heritage] quickly issued a report that favoured the rectification of the classification of Soalhães, considering that “it didn’t make much sense to classify external or internal elements that are part of a building, despite the fact that these might have been the main reason that led to its classification”<sup>14</sup>. So, by order of the Secretary of State for Culture, dated March 26<sup>th</sup> 1980, the classification was extended in order to include the entire Church of Soalhães<sup>15</sup>.

We only have information related to protection interventions carried out in this Church (Amaral & Sereno: 1994) – which is now a National Monument in its entirety – after that date. The classification of a monument is an essential step to establish improvement criteria for immovable heritage, “because it defines that a specific asset has an inestimable cultural value”<sup>16</sup>. In fact, the classification of a building is the first step towards its protection, recovery and improvement. This protection imposes a set of rules that aim at safeguarding the integrity of the building’s heritage, although we should highlight that the classification is not enough to preserve and improve the building.

The population of Soalhães, by establishing a Building Commission early on<sup>17</sup>, made the necessary contacts with the responsible entities in order to trigger an urgent safeguarding intervention in the religious building. A process that included several conservation works began in 1982 and went on, at least, until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2010, the Church of Soalhães became part of the Route of the Romanesque. [MLB / NR]

13 *Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais/Direção dos Monumentos do Norte* – “Igreja de Soalhães: processo de classificação do seu interior” [SIPA.TXT.00671469] [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA 00006475].

14 Parecer, 26 de março de 1980 [SIPA.TXT.0142940 and SIPA.TXT.0142941]. *Idem*.

15 *Ofício do IPPC*, 6 de junho de 1980, [SIPA.TXT.0142942]. *Idem*.

16 LAW no. 107. *O.G.* [Official Gazette] *Series I-A*. 209 (2001-09-08) 5808-5829, art.º 18 (1).

17 *Comissão Fabriqueira de Soalhães – Missiva*, 25 de maio de 1981 [SIPA.TXT.0142934 and SIPA.TXT.0142935]. PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0012 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307220015].



## CHRONOLOGY

875: reference to the basilica where there would be relics from Saint Martin;

1120: reference to the monastery of Soalhães;

1304: establishment of the majorat of Soalhães;

1320: Soalhães, together with Santa Cruz and Mesquinhata, pay a tax of 400 Portuguese "libras";

1514, July 15<sup>th</sup>: date of the foral charter of Soalhães;

1733: the date that marks the renovations in the Church's structure and integrated heritage (indicated in the high-choir);

1740-50: probable chronology of the tiling campaign carried out in the nave of the Church of Soalhães;

1977: classification of the Church of Soalhães as a National Monument (Decree no. 129).

1980, March 26<sup>th</sup>: order for the extension of the classification scope of the Church of Soalhães considered on the Decree no. 129 from 1977;

1997, December 31<sup>st</sup>: decree establishing a new wording for the official designation of the Church;

2010: integration of the Church of Soalhães in the Route of the Romanesque.

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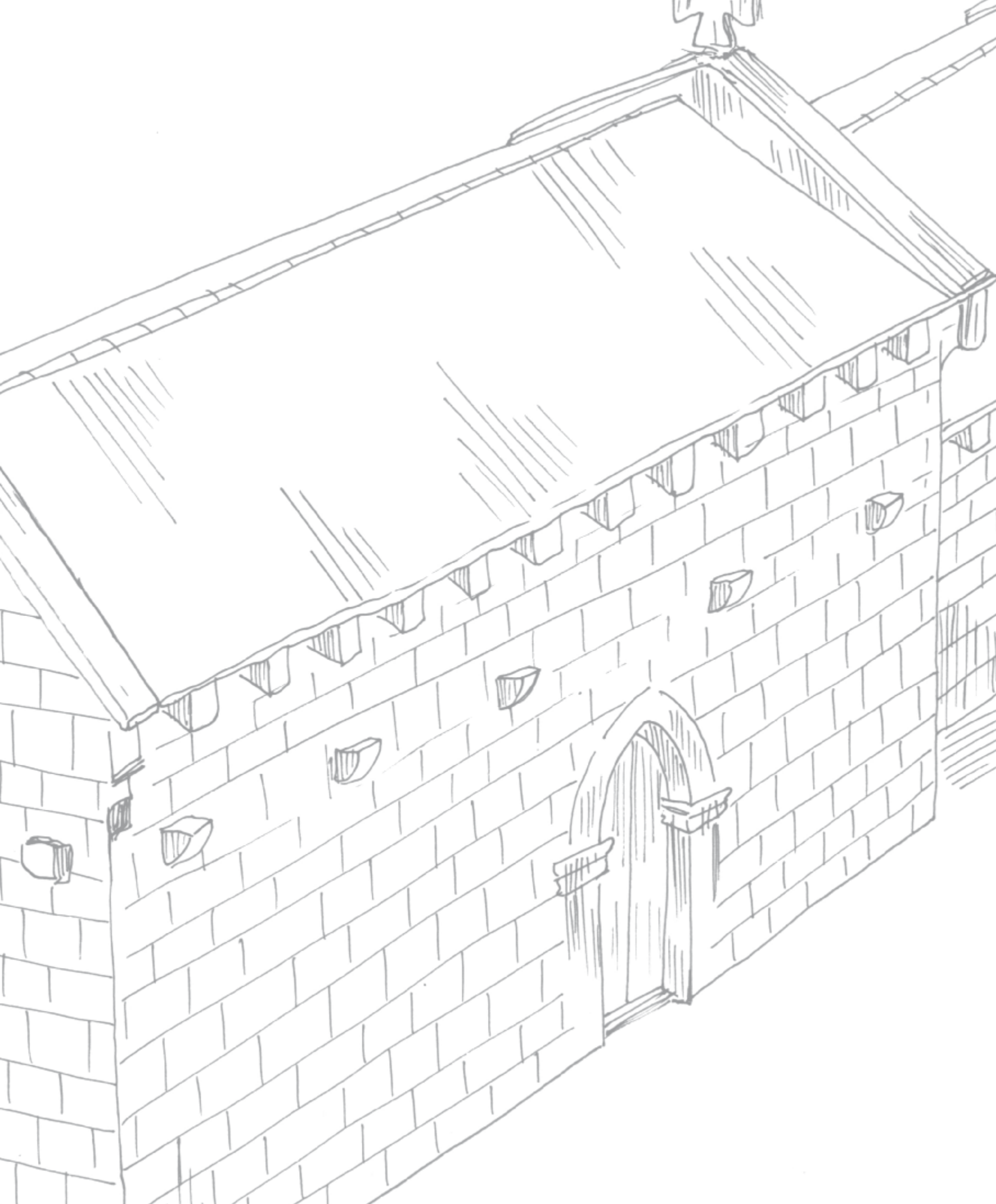
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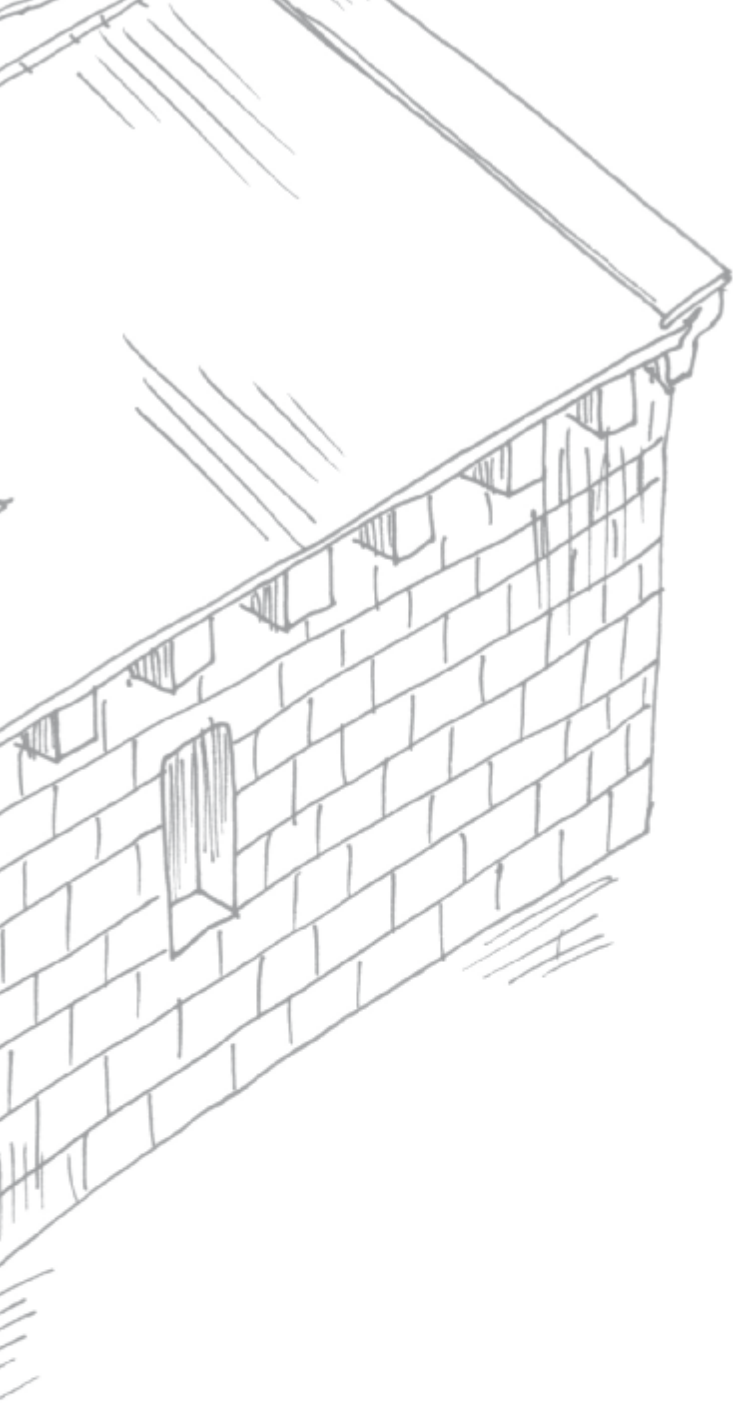
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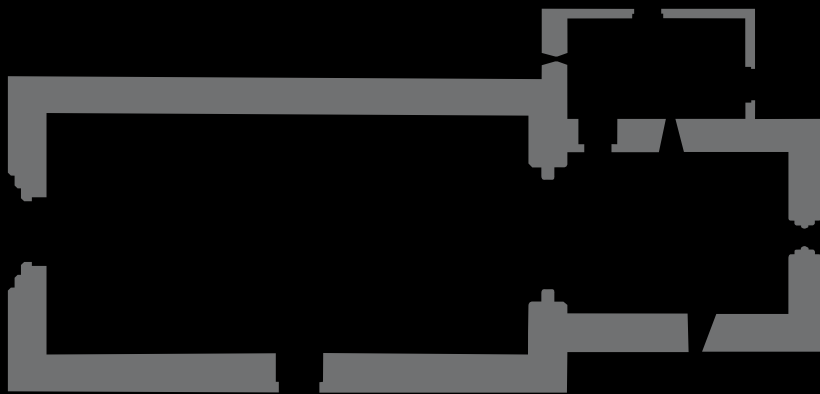




**CHURCH**  
OF OUR LADY  
OF NATIVITY  
OF ESCARAMÃO

CINFÃES

**CHURCH**  
OF OUR LADY  
OF NATIVITY  
OF ESCARAMÃO  
CINFÃES



Plan.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

In 1258, the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Vila Meã belonged to the monastery of Saint John of Pendorada (Marco de Canaveses) and, according to the deponents, it had been donated by King Afonso Henriques (k. 1143-1185) to Sarracino Mendes, nicknamed “o Espinha” [the Spine]. Some authors believe that this nobleman called Sarracino Viegas (doc. 1123-1165)<sup>1</sup> was the lord of the castle of Benviver and one of the patrons of the aforementioned monastery, who was rewarded both by Queen Teresa of Savoy (1080-1130) and by her son for the services he rendered while fighting against the Moors. It was during the abbacy of the abbot Pedro (1121-1143) that, through an exchange, Vila Meã became part of the temporal domain of Pendorada, according to a strategy of dominial acquisitions made within the monastery’s line of sight. Moreover, during the same period, there were a number of donations and property exchanges in Souselo, Espadanedo, Travanca, Sardoura, etc. It seemed more convenient to the abbots of Pendorada to cross the Douro in order to perform their duties than to surpass the mountainous foothills where their own monastery had been settled.



Monastery of Alpendorada (Marco de Canaveses). General view.

<sup>1</sup> The beginning and end dates are those indicated by Mattoso (2002).

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the “couto” was formed by the villages of Escamarão, Vila Meã, Merujais, Vila Pouca and Couto (which stood at the western boundary, right at the entrance). Escamarão, a town located on a hill over the confluence of the rivers Douro and Paiva, was an attractive area for passersby. On the one hand, it was close to an important pier and, on the other hand, it was located at the intersection of two roads that headed from the coast towards the inland: one followed along the southern margin of the Douro and the other turned south, running along the river Paiva. In order to mark, not only its temporal domain, but also its spiritual domain, the monastery of Pendorada made arrangements for the construction of a temple (or, at least, for its reconstruction): a small building which would ensure the religious independence of the small “couto” from the contiguous parishes of Souselo or Fornos, on the other side of the river.

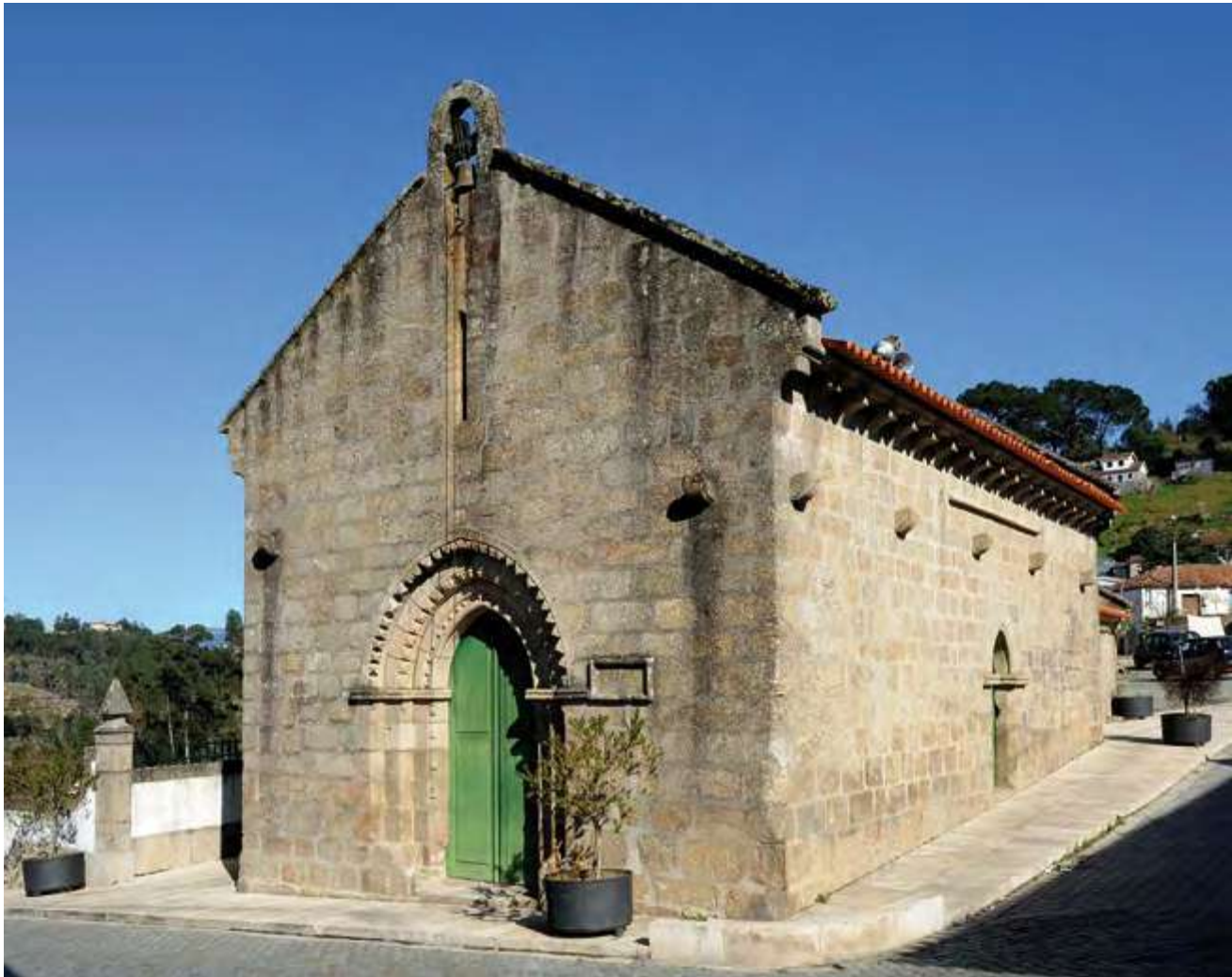
The Church was consecrated in honour of Saint Mary, according to monastic tradition, and in the Modern Period it took on the invocation of the Nativity, despite the fact that it was still called Saint Mary of Escamarão in the *Censual da sé de Lamego* (16<sup>th</sup> century, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter). It was exempt from confirmation since it was a monastery-related vicarage (Fernandes, 1999).

In 1527, the enumerators include the “couto” in the “julgado de termos” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Sanfins (to which it reported for legal matters) and, according to them, it included 13 residents distributed by Escamarão and Vila Nova, omitting the names of the places that had already been mentioned in 1258 (Collaço, 1931). These are only be mentioned again in the 18<sup>th</sup> century together with Várzea, Fonte, Cruz, Bouça and Granja, hamlets that certainly emerged as a result of the demographic pressure that characterised both the Portuguese and the European society during the Ancien Régime.

Indeed, the most faithful portrait of the then already old “couto” dates back to 1758: a small territory between the Douro and the Paiva rivers, with 10 hamlets, where the parishes of Fornos, Sobrado, Souselo, Pendorada, Várzea, Fornelos, São Miguel and Canelas de Entre-os-Rios have been found. To the rector António Pereira de Andrade, within the limits of the parish there wasn't any monastery, “misericórdia” [a welfare institution] or hospital. There was only a chapel dedicated to Saint John the Baptist in the hamlet of Vila Meã (adjoining the house of João Antunes de Guimarães, from Porto) and a few traces of a fortification on a hill at the mouth of the Paiva, between Escamarão and Fornos.

According to the memoirist, the Church had three altars: the largest one was dedicated to Our Lady of the Nativity, Saint Benedict and Saint Michael and the two collateral ones to Our Lady of the Miracles and Our Lady of Grace. There weren't any confraternities, brotherhoods or benefit holders; only the Rector assigned by Alpendorada who earned eight coins and a half.

The building's simplicity contrasted with a certain spiritual importance, since the Church was the centre of four processions that came from the parishes of Sanfins: one on the first Sunday of May, another on Passion Sunday, one in the second octave of the Holy Spirit and, finally, a last one in June. However, the rector pointed out the decay of the patron saint in terms of hagio-therapeutic worship, since he noticed a decreasing influx of pilgrims who came “more for the speech of time (...) but not as regularly as they used to”. And tradition says that it gave prestige and wonder to the Marian invocation, once (perhaps) the protector of motherhood and fertility: “and having heard the old people from this Parish, and from outside its borders



General view.

as well, say that the Lady of this church had brought a Christian, who had been captive in Moorish territory, to this land, in iron chains inside a box and with a Moor sitting on it, and that the chains had come to this church, and that the parish, due to the course of time, had ordered these to be transformed into nails; there is a round carved stone as long as three “covados” vertically raised, at the sight of this church which is called Cal do Luzio, in the parish of São Pelágio de Fornos, which people say standing in memory of this most evident miracle (...)”(Andrade, 1758).

Moreover, the same rector highlights the key economic aspects of the parish, such as the markets and the Douro, which was as an important channel of communication with the city of Porto. Of the two fairs that were held in Escamarão, the tax-free fair of Saint Michael was the most significant one and lasted for a whole week. It was still an impressive fair in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, considering the influx of traders and buyers and the picturesque nature of its camp, which was immortalised by Alberto Pimentel (1872). The other fair, which was smaller and held on a monthly basis, included cattle trading, a major source of income for the region.



Located over the mouth of the Paiva, the strategic position of Escamarão and of the “couto” of Vila Meã surely did not escape the manorial power’s attention. That is proved by the fortification of Outeiro do Castelo (turned into an islet after the river was dammed up) and, of course, by the interest of the Medieval nobles who held several interests here, even after the “coutamento” [transformation into a “couto”]. So, rector Andrade’s note about the 60 barrels of wine that boats were able to carry down the Douro, despite its impassioned tone, is not surprising. This was a place for docking and crossing, as evidenced by the repeated references in Portuguese cartography to the site of Escamarão, Santa Maria do Escamarão or other toponymic distortions that are still easily relatable to the borough which was located close to the junction of the two rivers.

The “couto” and the parish were extinct by the arrival of liberalism; the parish was attached to the one of Souselo by Decree no. 24 of May 16<sup>th</sup> 1832, even though the site has remained as a place for passers-by which is closely connected to river traffic until the present day.



Island of Castelo (Castelo de Paiva).



General interior view from the nave.

## THE MONUMENT DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

When Pedro Dias studied “the archaic constructions [Gothic] from the Entre Douro e Minho, Trás os Montes and Beira regions”, he mentioned the Church of Escamarão, among other examples, as a model of persistence of a repertoire that was very attached to the Romanesque style and kept on being used during the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Dias, 1994: 151). Following the same common scheme, churches such as the parish churches of Tarouca (Lamego), Azinhoso and Algosinho (both in Mogadouro) or Gatão (Amarante), are usually composed of a low body covered by a single wooden roof. The single nave is generally poorly lit, with oculi and narrow crevices as sources of light. The decoration has a popular nature, showing an attachment to the Romanesque bestiary and, sometimes, small and rough buttresses on the outside (Dias, 1994: 151).



Church of Gatão (Amarante). Chancel.

It is in this sense that we should understand the Church of Our Lady of Nativity of Escamarão, as an evidence of the persistence of Romanesque formulas in a period that is already associated with a new aesthetic movement. The French Gothic, which emerged in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century in the Île-de-France region and underwent a great expansion over the two following centuries, was seldom reflected in the Portuguese religious architecture through the opening of large lighting windows or through the creation of large, diaphanous and interconnected spaces (Rosas, 2008: 164). Moreover, since the Portuguese Gothic style is more connected to Southern Gothic solutions, which favour wall masses, it is by the massive look of the walls that it actually stands out. As Lúcia Rosas reminds us, a style cannot be characterized just by its shapes, but also by the relationship between the parts of the building, by the use of the built space, by the way it is embellished and symbolized and by the different ways to meet the requirements of its own period (Rosas, 2008: 164).

Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida justifies the diversity of the Portuguese Romanesque style with the fact that it lasted over a long period of time (Almeida, 1971: 87). Chronological variants are more persistent than geographical differences. While mentioning the new approaches to historical-artistic research, Vítor Serrão – evoking Carlo Ginzburg, Enrico Castelnuovo e Carlo Poni (1991)<sup>2</sup> – refers the operative notion of “high” and “low”, a method that examines all the creative behaviours of a specific time and space in an equal way, either the “peripheral” ones, which are marked by a more intense timelessness, by rurality and by the freedom of local imageries (the “low”) or the ones from the so-called of “high culture”, which were generated in the “centres” by a world imbued with imageries with erudite references (the “high”) (Serrão, 2001: 220-221).

Besides, Lúcia Rosas reminds us that the issue of the concept of “style” and of the temporal scheme that includes beginning, progress and decline moments – which allows inferring a linear mechanism that explains the influences and the ways how shapes are conveyed – is one of the issues that are too rooted in artistic historiography (Rosas, 2011). That is why this author believes that the operative notions of “high” and “low” are very useful for the study of Medieval Portuguese art and, especially, for the study of its “peripheral” and/or “late” expressions that we usually call “epi-Romanesque”, “late-Romanesque”, “proto-Gothic” or “rural Gothic” expressions.

So, the Church of Escamarão fits into the classification of the so-called “rural Gothic” style. First of all, we are standing before a Church composed of a single nave and a rectangular chancel, both defined by massive walls. Except for the Gothic mullioned window which cuts the chancel’s back wall and the small rosette that tops the triumphal arch at the nave’s level, the lighting of this small Church’s interior is made through narrow crevices opened on both elevations of the nave and chancel.

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East façade. Oculus and window detail.

<sup>2</sup> The model developed by these authors had its starting point on a microgeographic analysis focused on Italy.





West façade. Portal and inscription.

The Church's portals confirm its late chronology. The main and south portals are cut in the thickness of the wall, showing no tympanum, and their archivolts lean directly on the walls. Therefore, we stand before a building that is devoid of column-shaped supports (Graf, 1986: 88). Both the naturalism of the floral motifs that adorn the main portal's central archivolt and the one inside the chancel's Gothic window, as well as the nave's square-shaped corbels and the shape of the ones in the chevet's forepart contribute to the theory of a late chronology that can even be placed sometimes during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. However, we should notice the persistence of Romanesque ornamental motifs, as shown by the pearls that decorate the external archivolts which surround the chancel's mullioned window and the triumphal arch. Resistances and innovation come together in this Church built in Escamarão.

Although there are authors who advocate the earliness of this building, considering it as a specimen built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century – the period when the “couto” was donated to the monastery of Alpendorada (Graf, 1986: 88) –, the truth is that, in addition to the structural and artistic aspects mentioned above, there is another reason that contributes to corroborate this idea of a much later chronology. We are specifically referring ourselves to the inscription written in Gothic characters that is located next to the main portal. Despite being barely legible, Mário Barroca suggests the following reading: “+ : ERA : M : CCCC : XX : III [...] / [...] / [...] / [...] / [...] / [...] / [...] / [...]”<sup>3</sup>.

Epigraphic inscriptions are a first-hand resource to learn about the aspects related to the construction of any Medieval building. Indeed, any inscription represents a contribution to the knowl-



South façade. Nave. Portal.

<sup>3</sup> It reads: Era 1423.



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South façade.



South façade. Chancel. Corbels.

edge about the evolution of a building, even when it is not directly associated with a specific construction-related event or when it becomes clear that it is a result from the reuse of an older inscription (Barroca, 2000: 308). Even when these inscriptions do not show a specific date, the analysis of their formal elements, from the type of characters to the abbreviations, including the relationship between their layout and the available space, allow us to infer a somewhat relative and approximate chronology.

These inscriptions provide us with different information levels, ranging from a simple chronological indication to the identification of the bishop who consecrated a given building, as in the Church of the Saviour of Unhão (Felgueiras), located in the Sousa basin (Botelho, 2010b). But there is an aspect of paramount importance that is associated with its location within the building. In other words, knowing that, as a rule, Romanesque and Gothic constructions began by the chevet and then progressed to the façade, could this inscription in Escamarão indicate, even if not explicitly, that the completion of the Church's construction occurred in the Era of 1423, i.e., in 1385? Regardless of the event that this inscription intends to commemorate, the fact that it shows this date and also that it was placed on the façade corroborates our thesis because, so far, nothing indicates that it is the result of a reuse or an inscription made after the construction of the Church.

We should also note that in the south elevation there was a single-gabled porch-like structure that sheltered the lateral portal, as denounced by the five corbels placed approximately halfway up the two narrow crevices. Because these structures were built using ephemeral materials (such as wood and tile) they did not reach the present day. However, the existence of the porches is still luckily evidenced by corbels that appear in almost all of our Medieval buildings. Within the context of Portuguese Romanesque buildings, the purposes of these porch-like spaces may have been many: from a meeting place to a simple shelter for devotees.

Inside the Church, dominated by the worship of pure granite, the liturgical furnishings already belong to the Modern Period. However, we have several published reports and a photographic evidence from 1944 to prove that this Church had, at least, one specimen of mural painting. The first reference we have for this fresco dates back to 1910 and is reported by José de Figueiredo (1910: 121). While seeking the origins of pictorial representations in Medieval Portuguese architecture, this author believes that we may quote “the church of Saint Michael of Escamarão, bishopric of Lamego, as a typical example” since the fresco had disappeared under a whitewash layer, “as it certainly occurred to most of the frescoes painted in Portugal”. He adds nothing more about this fresco, besides referring that it is “relatively recent”; the same fresco is mentioned years later, this time by Manuel Monteiro (1936: 1).

While not adding any information about the fresco of Escamarão, this author refers this painting in the context of his approach on the state of 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese mural paintings found in Romanesque churches. Although the specimens he mentions form “a rather significant ensemble”, the author regrets the fact that these paintings are “almost all barbarically mutilated and insulted by the installation of carved wood partitions that cover them – an artistic scourge that has epidemically spread across the entire country since the 17<sup>th</sup> century” (Monteiro, 1936: 1).



So, by going through the photographic record that is kept on file at the extinct DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments], we can say that it was a male figure wearing the Franciscan habit. On his left hand he was holding a book and, on the right, he was carrying a staff (?). It could be an unusual figuration of Saint Anthony, which was often depicted, by osmosis, as Saint Anthony the Great.

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Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side. Collateral altarpiece before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1944). Source: IHRU archive. It is possible to see in the image a mural painting that no longer exists.



Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side. Collateral altarpiece after the intervention carried out by the DGEMN.

## THE MONUMENT DURING THE MODERN PERIOD



Triumphal arch. Wall on the Epistle side.  
Collateral altar.

One of the noteworthy aspects of this Church are the Mudéjar tiles that decorate the front of the collateral altars, which are also identifiable in other geographically close Churches: Jazente (Amarante), Fandinhães (Paços de Gaiolo, Marco de Canaveses) or Cête (Paredes). During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Mudéjar world naturally had a strong aptency for the use of tiling materials and developed specific techniques, such as the “alicatado”, the dry rope or edging technique or the “cuenca”. We believe that the technique found on the altar fronts of Escamarão is the latter one. It was developed around 1500 onwards and its tiles were the most common ones in Portugal. After defining a hole, the recessed moulds will print the motif on a raw clay plate, thus defining small edges between the different colours and creating a sort of protruding profile that prevents the glazed surfaces from mixing during the firing process (Meco, 1989: 38-39).

Although Seville was the most important production centre in terms of edged tiles – decorated with Renaissance themes and used until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century –, other centres such as Toledo also produced this type of tiles; these could be distinguished from the Sevillian ones by their thinner and more refined edges and by the preservation of Moorish ornamental schemes. We do not know the origin of the tiles from Escamarão, which could only be revealed by documentary sources. But their presence in a small Church located on the south bank of the Douro shows how the influence of Islamic and “Moorish” art reached the northern territories of Portugal, adjusting the Islamic art to the Christian art. Of course, we should not forget that this Church was attached to the monastery of Alpendorada, a privileged centre of knowledge and a meeting point of ideas and tastes. Besides, our country reflects the Spanish tradition of lining the “antependia” with tiles imported from Seville (Simões, 1971: 211), the exclusive supplier of the Portuguese market during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Simões, 1971: 56).

The polychromy of these panels, based on ochre, green and blue shades on a white background, creates standardized compositions with phytomorphic and floral motifs, thus anticipating the “carpet-type” tile trend that was very popular in Portugal during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Using the patterning technique, through the development of geometric compositions and the combination of tiles to form surfaces, we see repeated motifs that lead to the emergence of patterns or serial compositions of surface repetition. The module is repeated and an interconnection (diagonal) emerges between the decorative motifs, since the patterns rarely take up a single tile.

However, we should note that on the frontal located on Epistle side we may easily identify the presence of two tiles whose pattern is not interconnected with the rest of the ensemble. We believe that this fact can be explained based on information reported during the inspection held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1775, in which the rector António Pereira de Andrade informs that “the construction not only of the Chancel, but also of the Church’s Body belongs to the Tither, ie, the Monastery of Alpendurada. The Reverend Rector orders the Abbot Priest to fix some of the Tiles, that would be missing in one of the side Altars”<sup>4</sup>.

4 ADL – *Visitações*, Escamarão, fl. 2 v.º.





Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side. Collateral altar. Tiles.

These inspections are one of the most important sources for the study of the legacy bequeathed by Medieval and Modern Period in terms of art. As pastoral inspections, they were a mechanism of episcopal monitoring of the state of the parishes under its jurisdiction. Although, in some cases, they were carried out by the chapters of the dioceses, by collegiate churches, monasteries or military orders, pastoral inspections produced significant information about the material, moral and religious state of the parishes, their inhabitants and members of the local clergy (Carvalho & Paiva, 2000: 365-370). In Portugal, the documentary traces of pastoral inspections from the period prior to the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century are not abundant. The Council of Trent opens an intense period of pastoral inspections, considering that in the last two decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were many prelates, or their delegates, who conducted inspections on a regular basis, as determined in 1545-1553.

According to information produced by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century inspectors, we learn that, besides the lack of tiles on the altar frontal of one of the collateral altarpieces – the one on the Epistle side –, the Church of Escamarão was “poorly decorated”<sup>5</sup> in 1755. The inspection of May 28<sup>th</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *ibid.*



1784, conducted by the Abbot of Freigil, João Baptista Pereira, alludes to the state of neglect that the Church under study already presented, all the more because the “Festivity of Our Lady of Nativity, the church’s Patron Saint”, wasn’t even celebrated there any more. These were the inspector’s words:

“It was with incomparably great pain and spiritual feeling that I visited this Church, the most decaying one I have found in this Inspection, which does not even have the appearance of a temple, a house of God, by not featuring any altars, or altarpieces, or any Holy images that may move Christians’ devotion, nor anything decent enough to house and celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (...)”<sup>6</sup>.

Is then ordered to the abbot of the monastery of Alpendorada to celebrate the festivity of the patron saint, “with sermon and sung Mass and the necessary candles; should he refrain from doing so, he shall be fined every year = 4800 Reiz [former Portuguese currency unit], and shall give the two customary wax candles to burn in convent mass services; And for the said festivity and further solemnities, the said Father Abbot has ordered the preparation of a white silk damask and dalmatic vestment for the Chancel”<sup>7</sup>.

As a result of the same inspection, we learn that in the altarpiece of the Church of Escamarão there was an image of Saint Benedict, something which is easily understandable considering its connection to the Benedictine monastery of Alpendorada. But, considering its poor condition, considered indecent, the same inspector order it to be buried as determined by the constitution. A note published by Domingos de Pinho Brandão leads us to assume that this image was originally placed in the Benedictine monastery, located on the opposite bank of the Douro, and was renovated at the time of its placement in this adjoining Church, because a document from the Benedictine collection of Tibães, dated April 30<sup>th</sup> 1752, mentions the gilding of the “altarpiece from chancel of the church of Escamarão” and the renovation of the “image of Our Lord Father Saint Benedict that had served before and was placed in our church of Escamarão” (Brandão, 1987: 59).

The Church’s main altarpiece was designed according to the so-called National Style [1690-1725], surely before mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. This type of Portuguese woodwork began taking its first steps at the end of the previous century, corresponding to a nationalization of gilded woodwork (Sobral, 1986: 13-14). In general, the artistic historiography has been associating this new language with the structure of Northwestern Romanesque portals and with the naturalism of Manueline [style also known as Portuguese late Gothic, which develops during the reign of King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521)] decorations (Sobral, 1986: 107). Among the fundamental elements that define this new language of the altarpiece structure, we identified in altarpiece of Escamarão the spiral columns (pseudo-Solomonic) and the semicircular archivolts. Sure we have to take into account the regionalized nature of this specimen in national carving, here

6 Idem, fl. 19.

7 Idem, ibid.



Chancel.

attested by its polychrome traits, somewhat vernacular. It bears, to the centre and as finishing, the coat of arms of the Benedictine Order.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of Escamarão still presented itself in the eyes of the inspectors in a state of abandonment. On April 29<sup>th</sup> 1788, the Bishop João António Binet Pincio was of the opinion that he “had never seen such serious and virtuous congregation as the one in Saint Benedict and how it had its church of Escamarão, from where the Convent of Saint John of Alpendurada received its Tithes, in the state we have seen it and which stood as awkward news to us”<sup>8</sup>. But in the inspection carried out on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1814 by the abbot of Travanca, Joaquim José de Carvalho, the Church is already considered “well repaired and rather significantly provided with recent vestments”<sup>9</sup>. Is this already an allusion to the new collateral altarpieces with a Neoclassical flavour?

Despite the fact that currently we can only see the clearly Neoclassical pelmets, in which there are refined golden floral motifs on a raw background, the truth is that the photographs taken by the architect José Marques Abreu Júnior in 1944, before the most recent restoration interventions, show us that the collateral altars had their corresponding altarpieces. There was a simple panel flanked by Classicist pilasters and surmounted by a triangular tympanum on each side, which framed the images of the Virgin of the Rosary of Fátima, on the Epistle side, and of the Virgin and Child (the Virgin of Miracles?), on the Gospel side.



Triumphal arch and collateral altars before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1944). Source: IHRU archive.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Idem, fl. 22 v.º

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

The information we have about the Church of Our Lady of Nativity of Escamarão during the 20<sup>th</sup> century are very sparse. The process for its classification as a Public Interest Building was initiated in 1944 because, at the time, it was considered that this monument was “one of the few Romanesque works whose structure is still intact”<sup>10</sup>. The proponent of this classification was Armando de Mattos<sup>11</sup>, one of the most important theorists who dealt with the Portuguese Romanesque style<sup>12</sup>. Considering the temple as part of the “ogival-Romanesque” style, this expert valued the apse’s window and the “much-quoted inscription, despite being almost impossible to read”, which is located next to the main portal. Inside the Church, he highlighted the “remains of frescoes that had already been mentioned by José de Figueiredo and a few noteworthy tiles”<sup>13</sup>.

We were not able to look up the entire process that led to the classification of the Church of Our Lady of Nativity of Escamarão as a Public Interest Building by Decree no. 37 728, of January 5<sup>th</sup> 1950.

Depending on their relative value, and according to Law no. 107/2001, of September 8<sup>th</sup> (Article 15), properties may be classified as having “national interest”, “public interest” or “municipal interest”. The instruction of a classification process and its subsequent conclusion determine that the building, ensemble or site that are classified, or submitted to classification, automatically obtain and associated protection zone or a special protection zone; the latter may include *non aedificandi* areas, as provided by Law no. 107/2001, of September 8<sup>th</sup><sup>14</sup>. It is in this sense that we should understand the inventory drawn up in May 1948 by the owners of the buildings included the protection zone of Escamarão<sup>15</sup>.

The classification of this Church was accompanied by a photographic file made by José Marques de Abreu Júnior. Since they show the state of the Church of Escamarão in 1944 in a detailed way, it is through these photographs that we get to know the elements that no longer exist in the building, such as the fresco or the Neoclassical structure of the collateral altarpieces, which we have already mentioned. It is also through these photographs that we can see that all the internal and external wall faces of the Church were whitewashed.

According to a document issued by the DGEMN<sup>16</sup>, the local Building Commission carried out several building works at its own expense in the early 1960s without consulting the DGEMN’s technical services about them, as required by the classification of the monument as a Public Interest Building. The works began with “external wall-cleaning procedures, remov-

10 Idem, *ibid.*

11 Comunicação n.º 279, 25 de abril de 1944 [SIPA.TXT.00821235]. PT DGEMN: DSID-001/018-003-2383/1 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011813020003].

12 Cópia, 1 de outubro de 1947 [SIPA.TXT.00821238]. Idem.

13 Please refer to what we wrote about this author in Botelho (2010a: 208-212).

14 Cópia, 1 de outubro de 1947 [SIPA.TXT.00821238]. PT DGEMN: DSID-001/018-003-2383/1. Idem.

15 LAW no. 107. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I-A*. 209 (2001-09-08) 5808-5829, art.º 43.

16 Cópia, 23 de junho de 1948 [SIPA.TXT.008212445]. PT DGEMN: DSID-001/018-003-2383/1. Idem.





West and south façades before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1944). Source: IHRU archive.



East façade before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1944). Source: IHRU archive.

ing the existing whitewash layer and re-sealing the joints”, which resulted in the accumulation of cement-based mortar applied in wide and non-concave joints, as well as the sharpening of the ashlar from the arches of the lintels of the main entrance, with loss of their natural patina<sup>17</sup>. Later, the same Building Commission applied a new wooden floor on the nave’s pavement, which the DGEMN considered “inappropriate due to its type and characteristics”<sup>18</sup>. The DGEMN’s specialized services regretted the fact that the Building Commission had not filed a request for their technical assistance before carrying out the aforementioned works<sup>19</sup>.

Finally, between 1974 and 1975, there were more restoration works (Graf, 1986: 88); however, we were not able to ascertain their scope and impact.

In 2010, the Church of Escamarão became part of the Route of the Romanesque and, under this scope, it has been subject, since August 2014, to conservation, protection and valuation works. The project’s ultimate goal is to “provide the building with better conditions for the function it keeps alive – being a place of worship and organization of ceremonies” (Silva, 2012: 5). The intervention shall be based on the principle of reversibility to ensure the building’s continuity, resorting both to traditional and current techniques in order to achieve so; many different actions shall be carried out, focusing on the building’s internal and external elements, including also the manufacture of liturgical furnishings (Silva, 2012: 17). [MLB / NR]

17 Ofício n.º 1022, 12 de agosto de 1963 [SIPA.TXT.00821262]. Idem.

18 Idem.

19 Ofício n.º 4993, 19 de agosto de 1963 [SIPA.TXT.000821263 and SIPA.TXT.000821264]. Idem.

## CHRONOLOGY

1121-1143: during the abbacy of the abbot Pedro, Vila Meã joined the sphere of the temporal domain of Pendorada [Alpendorada];

1258: belonging to the Monastery of Saint John of Alpendorada, the "couto" of Vila Meã had been donated by King Afonso Henriques to Sarracino Mendes;

14<sup>th</sup> century: construction of the Church of Our Lady of Nativity of Escamarão;

1385: date of the inscription engraved in the Church's main façade;

1<sup>st</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: Mudéjar tiles from the frontals of the nave's collateral altars;

1527: the "couto" of Vila Meã appears integrated in the "julgado de termos" of Sanfins;

1<sup>st</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century: design of the main altarpiece;

1752, April 30<sup>th</sup>: gilding of the main altarpiece and intervention in the image of Saint Benedict, from the monastery of Alpendorada;

1755, May 23<sup>rd</sup>: commissioning of the replacement of the missing tiles in the frontals of the nave's collateral altars;

1784, May 28<sup>th</sup>: in an inspection conducted by the abbot of Freigil, João Baptista Pereira, there is a reference to the Church's state of neglect;

1788, April 29<sup>th</sup>: the inspectors continue to consider that the Church of Escamarão is in a state of neglect;

1814, July 26<sup>th</sup>: references to the improvement of the church's interior;

1944: opening of the process for the classification of the Church of Escamarão, by Armando de Mattos;

1950: classification of the Church as Public Interest Building;

1960s: conduction of several conservation works in the Church at the expense of the local Building Commission;

1974-1975: conservation and restoration works;

2010: the Church of Escamarão was included in the Route of the Romanesque;

2014-2015: general preservation works both on the inside and outside of the Church.

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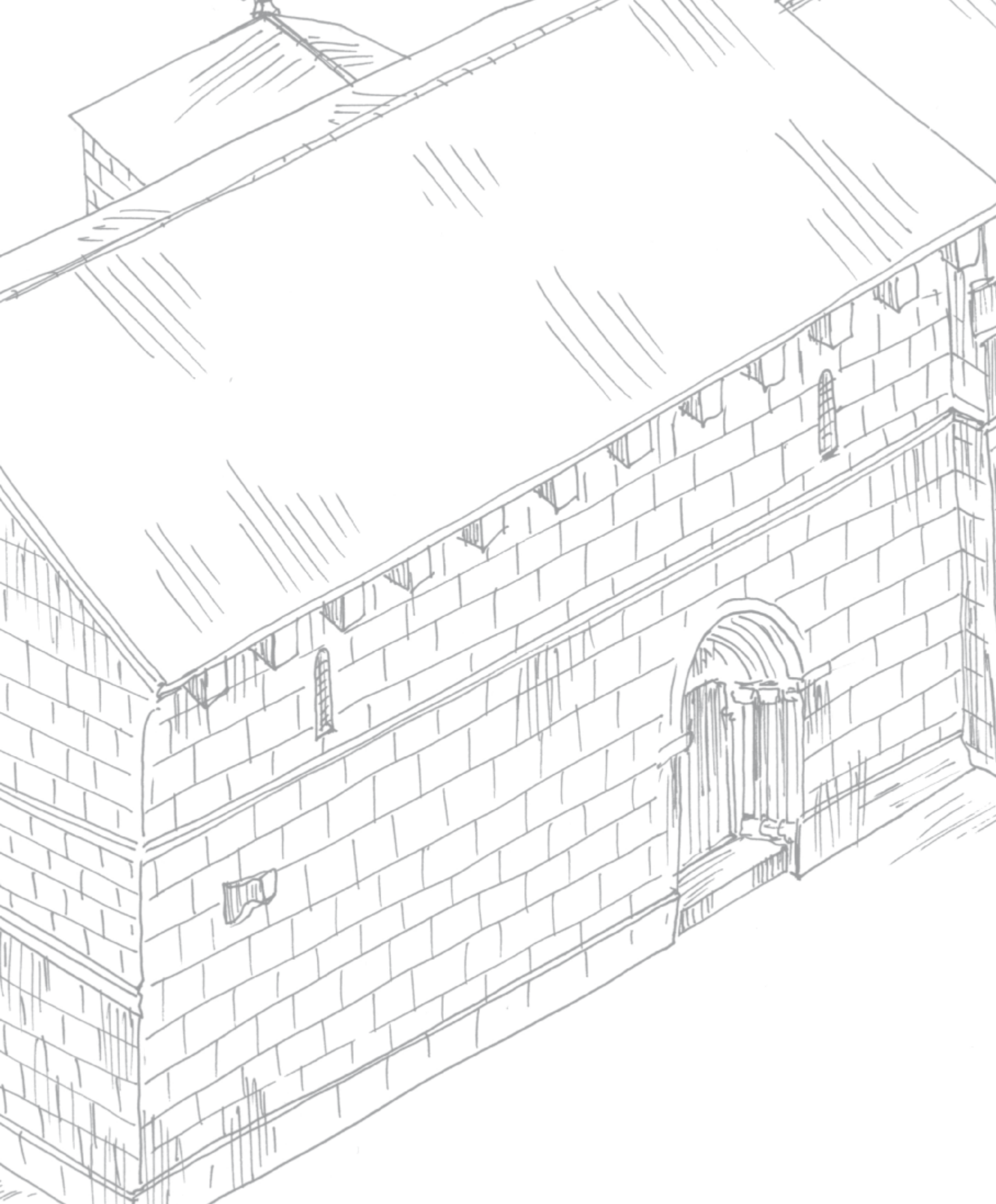
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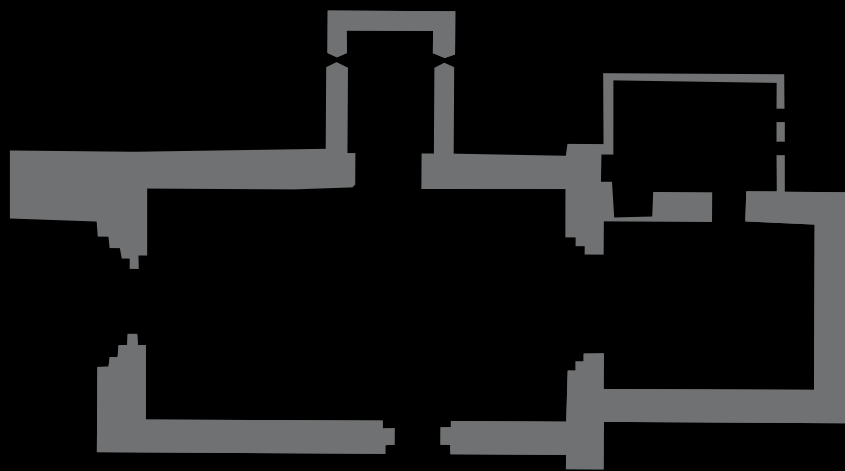
**CHURCH**  
**OF THE SAVIOUR**  
**OF TABUADO**  
MARCO DE CANAVESES



**CHURCH**

**OF THE SAVIOUR  
OF TABUADO**

MARCO DE CANAVESES



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The references to a strong manorial presence stand out from the numerous geographical and chorographical descriptions of Tabuado. Although it was considered as a “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division], a name that it would have received from the hypothetical foundation of a monastery dedicated to the Saviour, some authors insist on emphasizing the ruling predominance of certain families within this small territory located on the outskirts of the province of Minho. In fact, as explained by Crispiniano da Fonseca, the name “couto” applied to Tabuado collided with the strength of the manorial power that dominated the area and seemed to fit better into the legal attributes applied to the “honras” [a type of Portuguese administrative division], a terminology that, in fact, would appear during the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Fonseca, 1957: 353-379). However, this variability in jurisdictions, statutes and powers seems to conceal the interests of many different parties within this small territory, whose value may be explained by its toponym: tabuado, derives from the word “tábua” [board], a common expression used in the Middle Ages to designate wood that was suitable for construction<sup>1</sup>.

In 1258, there is reference to Saint Mary of “Tabulata”, indicating the “couto” and stating that the Church belonged to patrons from the Gosendo Alvares’ family. The fact that, in that year, there is reference to a “Chapel of Tabulato” and to a “Chapel of Saint Mary of Tabulato” (Herculano, 1936: fasc. 8), and that the patron saint, called at the time as the “Holy Saviour”<sup>2</sup> do not appear in the inquiries commissioned by King Afonso, seem to show that the main parish church was yet to be defined, thus giving expression to the tradition that indicates the existence of a monastic community (perhaps based in the Church of the Saviour, which then replaced Saint Mary’s).

Once the “honra” became a “couto” (by the hand of Prince Afonso Henriques<sup>3</sup>) and the presumed monastic church became a secular abbey, the interests of both the church and the lay people and the confrontation between them were felt until quite late, as evidenced by the on-going claims and demands regarding jurisdictions over the territory and the Church. In 1320, the Church paid a tax of 105 Portuguese “libras” [former Portuguese currency unit], an amount that tells us very little about the importance of the building and of its income within the regional context (Almeida & Peres, 1971: 96). However, the subsequent references to the Church’s properties, scattered across the region, are quite expressive (Fonseca, 1957: 358-359).

Tradition refers, therefore, that the “couto” would have been founded by the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, as was the case of other institutes nearby. Still, on this issue, there are very few facts collected in subsequent references by the Church that always fought against the interference of

1 Crispiniano da Fonseca (1957: 355-356) and other authors (Correia et al., 1963) insist on the idea of “tavolado, as military exercise or a wooden tower”, while ignoring that, more than the activities or objects, the material that allowed the construction (which could be abundant in the area), could be the in origin of the toponym.

2 On the issue of the Holy Saviour and the Saviour, please read what we wrote in the Church of Ribas, Celorico de Basto.

3 Please note the similar case of the Monastery of Ancede, Baião.

laymen in the ecclesiastical assets and rights of Tabuado. According to C. da Fonseca, “in 1475, the bishop of Porto, José de Azevedo, authorised by Pope Sixtus IV, downgraded the “couto” to a secular abbey” (Fonseca, 1957: 355). Nevertheless, the patronage rights belonged to local families. There are several local genealogists and monographers who name them, such as Father Carvalho da Costa (1706: 138)<sup>4</sup>, who mentions the Farias, Montenegros, Sousas and Correias, or Francisco Craesbeeck (1992) who highlights the importance of the Barros family. On these, Felgueiras Gaio mentions the lineage of commanders from Tabuado, lords of the house of Novões, which began with Gonçalo de Barros, adding – on the beginning of this lineage and its mother-house – the following:

“(…) the information we have on this House is that its estates were taken from the Moors by one of its owners, who might have given them to the Canons of Saint Augustine from which the Church of Tabuado had been a Monastery: the remaining ruins of the House depict its antiquity rather well: this House had 3 Towers, and only two stand today (…)” (Gaio, 1938-1941).

Over several generations, the Barros held the patronage rights that were later coveted between lineages, to such an extent that there were disputes and political moves, one after the other, aimed at obtaining that privilege and dignifying the abbey, for example, through the annexation of the church of Saint John of Grilo. In 1758, when the Church’s patron was António Gonçalo de Sousa Correia Montenegro, there was still an on-going dispute about who, among his heirs, should provide the abbot for Tabuado (Vasconcelos, 1758)<sup>5</sup>.

As Francisco Craesbeeck (1992) explains, “if the “couto” was transferred to the church, their abbots would be its lords and joint consultants of the “couto” in civil matters, a situation that gave rise to many disputes which went on for many years; but the decisions always favoured the abbots, meaning that the only privilege the Lords of the House had was the one of presenting the Abbey (…)” . Together with this circumstance was the fact that the residents of Tabuado were bound, within the scope of criminal law, to the municipality of Gouveia.



Aerial view.

<sup>4</sup> Francisco Craesbeeck (1992) contradicts him, not knowing the reason why he mentions “Farias”.

<sup>5</sup> About this dispute read Fonseca (1957: 370-371). The patrons’ right to be buried in the chancel and to use this space during their lifetime (together with the claim of sitting on the stalls) are some of the statutory issues mentioned in several disputes.



Located on a plateau between the Ovelha, Galinhas and Lardosa rivers – on the foothills of the mountain of Aboboreira – at the end of the Ancien Régime Tabuado was part of an intricate patchwork of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. As we have seen, it was part of the boundary of Gouveia, of the province of Minho (although the abbot Alberto de Vasconcelos calls it Entre-Douro-e-Minho in 1758) and of the judicial district of Guimarães. For ecclesiastical matters, the abbey of Tabuado belonged to the “comarca” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division] of Sobre-Tâmega (Cunha, 1623: 425)<sup>6</sup>, which was part of the diocese of Porto.

### THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

**B**uilt halfway up the hillside and according to the canonical orientation, the Church of Tabuado fits into an ecclesial deployment model very common in the Middle Ages, which follows certain logics, not always understood in later periods. The study of the property at the time when it was built would provide us with very important elements to assess the reasons underlying the construction of many churches from the Medieval Period<sup>7</sup>. While, in the case of a few monastic churches, we may stand before a trace of the hermitic phenomenon, then duly shaped according to the ecclesiastical guidelines, in the case of ecclesial buildings, whose patronage remained in the hands of laymen (persistence of the private or family church model), we may be standing before a legacy of the intervention of an individual

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General view.

<sup>6</sup> In this case, we should understand “comarca” as “ecclesiastical boundary”.

<sup>7</sup> By way of example, please read the study by Mattoso, Krus & Bettencourt (1982: 17-74).



West façade.



Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel). Church.  
West façade.

or lineage on the landscape was under construction during the post-Reconquest period. In any case, its permanence became the spiritual, social, economic and cultural axis that would define the landscape and the urban design of the following centuries.

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The artistic assessment of the Church of the Saviour of Tabuado, with strong Medieval roots, should be made in a critical fashion, because we should bear in mind that this Church was subject to a major purist intervention, carried out mainly from the early 1960's onwards, although the author of DGEMN – *Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais* [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]'s Bulletin no. 125 considers that the works were limited to "small readjustment details, aimed at restoring the dignity and harmony it once had, without the concern of performing any sort of comprehensive restoration task" (Freitas, 1972: 18).

Vergílio Correia pointed out that, unlike what occurs in the churches of the Douro valley, the Church of Tabuado was built on a slope, in a direction that is parallel to its inclination (Correia, 1924: 107). Its plan features a longitudinal shape, being composed of a single nave and a lower and narrower quadrangular chancel. This difference in height is quite visible from the outside due to the staggering of the volumes. Adjoining the north wall there are two rectangular volumes, the volume of the sacristy, at the same level as the chevet, and the volume of a chapel that was initially consecrated to Jesus, at the same level as the nave.

Although the available documents mention the existence of one or two temples in Tabuado, whose foundation occurred before 1131, as we have seen, the truth is that the remaining architectural traces in this Church of the Saviour tell us about a more recent chronology, which should already be placed after the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, as several authors seem to agree (Almeida, 1978: 272; Graf, 1986: 98; Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 107). It is, therefore, considered as a valuable example of one of the evolution stages of Romanesque architecture in this region, already belonging to a transition period (Graf, 1986: 98). The main façade of this temple proves it well through the oculus that tops the portal and shows similarities with the solutions adopted in the Church of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel) (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 106), which already dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Its composition



West façade. Portal.



Church of Sousa (Felgueiras). West façade. Portal.

shows a stonework grille drawn with small circles, a central one and six surrounding ones. The oculus is also adorned by an inner frame with rosettes carved in relief.

Manuel Monteiro draws our attention to the late chronology of the buildings built within Paço de Sousa's sphere of influence – 13<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Almeida, 1971: 93) –, as the specific characteristics from the “school” that came to be historiographically known as the “nationalised Romanesque” style (Monteiro, 1943: 5-21) so justify. This author acknowledged very early on the unitary nature of the Romanesque style from the Sousa region, defining it in its unity and in terms of its influences since the very beginning<sup>8</sup>. The late chronology of the Romanesque style from this region should be understood taking into account the prior construction of monuments in Coimbra that, in general, were built over the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>; so, these would be “finished works” (or in a rather advanced construction stage) in a period when they could actually influence the constructions that began to be built in the following century<sup>10</sup>. Besides, because the construction sites from Coimbra were already in more advanced building stages, the need for workforce was naturally decreasing, and so their artisans surely felt the need to look for work elsewhere. And we must bear in mind the economic preponderance that the Vale do Sousa region was boosting at that time because, besides the hegemony of the monastic orders that were settling themselves in the area, it relied on important supports from the nobility, shown in the example of the relationship between the Sousões and the Monastery of Pombeiro (Felgueiras) or the connection between Paço de Sousa

<sup>8</sup> So, Manuel Monteiro (1943: 5-21) identified the existence of all the features of what he defined as the “nationalised Romanesque” group in the monuments of the city of Coimbra, thus listing a series of features he considered as being typical from the Romanesque style of “terra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Sousa, such as the arcatures that support the cornices, the composition of the portals, the almost complete absence of the human figure in terms of sculptural representation and the erudite nature of the sculpted ornaments' plasticity.

<sup>9</sup> Miguel Salomão's episcopate (1162-1176) was probably the most active building period of the old Coimbra cathedral.

<sup>10</sup> On the subject, please read Botelho (2010a: 405).









Bell tower.

and the Ribadouro lineage through Egas Moniz, also known as the governor and schoolmaster.

On the main façade of Tabuado, the portal stands out. Composed of three already broken archivolts, decorated with pearls and defined by an elegant torus, it is surrounded by a rich braided frieze shaping a net of rhombi, which we may also find in Paço de Sousa. The capitals feature bevelled carvings and several themes, from bovine animals, to palmettes and knot-works. On the impostas, a refined outline draws foliages that extend themselves along the façade in the form of a flat frieze, a variation from the “stylised fleur-de-lys ivy”, to which Joaquim de Vasconcelos assigned no 46 (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 72). The columns already show an alternation between plain and prismatic shafts, a sign of a fairly advanced chronology and a direct evidence of the influence that the Romanesque from Coimbra – particularly the church of Saint James – had on this wide region of Vale do Sousa and, even, of the Baixo Tâmega. The flat tympanum is supported by corbels shaped as bovine heads. Again, the elements that shape this portal show similarities with the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 206), or even with the Church of Sousa (Felgueiras), considered by Manuel Monteiro as one of the best specimens of the so-called “nationalised Romanesque” style<sup>11</sup>.

The belfry, which draws a perpendicular axis with this façade, takes the shape of a massive granite block. Seen from the north it almost looks like a defensive tower, strong and massive, in its thick ashlar masonry (Freitas, 1972: 14). The fortified and military nature of religious architecture during the Portuguese Romanesque Period, more rhetorical than actually military, was heavily glossed by the historiography that addressed the matter<sup>12</sup>. At the top of the belfry, which is surmounted by a gable topped by a cross, there are two broken arches sheltering the bells. On the side that faces the portal, three corbels set at the height of the capitals confirm the pre-existence of a porch.

In the body of the nave, and at the chancel arch's level, two buttresses persist. We believe that their existence can be justified taking into account the sturdy nature of the wall mass that surrounds the building. The diameter of the arch, in relation to the size of the nave, protects the space of the chancel that, in Romanesque times, should be intimate and sheltered from the eyes of the devotees.

But let's return to the outside. On the north façade, despite the attached volumes, we clearly see two narrow crevices opened above the frieze that runs along the entire Church, as well as a cornice supported by plain corbels. In general, the south side repeats the scheme found on the north side, to which we add the presence of corbels that confirm the existence of a porch-like structure.



North façade.



South façade. Nave. Portal.

<sup>11</sup> On the subject, please read Botelho (2010b).

<sup>12</sup> On the subject, please read Botelho (2010a: 379).

With two broken archivolts, the portal that allows accessing the building's interior repeats a similar "modénature" to that of the main portal, though simplified, because it does not feature the pearls motif of the bovine heads that support the flat tympanum, which, in this case, rests on two protruding imposts. The capitals rest on plain shafts that feature bevelled botanic motifs.

The flat treatment given to the sculptures is a constant feature in the Romanesque style from the Vale do Sousa region, so geographically close. This plasticity is the exact opposite of the plastic treatment given to Romanesque sculptures in the Braga-Rates axis, which is thicker and more turgid, providing the sculptural motifs with an enhanced volumetry and creating a real chiaroscuro effect. In the Sousa river basin, the sculptural treatment reminds Reinaldo dos Santos of the treatment given to bas-reliefs on wood, which is more engraved than modelled, sometimes suggesting Visigoth or Byzantine art (Santos & Novais, 1955: 80).

On the back façade, over the frieze, there is a crevice formed by two plain archivolts with sharp edges and stained glass panels, shaping a diamond. A cross "fleury" crowns the chevet's gable.

The inside of the building also features the same simple nature of the architecture and the same severity of the external ornamentation. The exposed granite in the nave is only decorated by a base, also made in ashlar, and by a triple-framed cornice, placed at a higher level. We ought to bear in mind, as we shall see further ahead, that this somewhat bare look of the interior of the Church of Tabuado is the result of a restoration intervention carried out in the 1960's.

From the Romanesque Period, what stands out the most is the triumphal arch, with a very original arrangement, presenting itself like a portal. Two broken-arched archivolts are surrounded by a frieze featuring a composition based on corded and denticulate motifs. The archivolts rest on two columns and the imposts are decorated with saw teeth and chained circles; the latter included in the inventory from 1918 with numbers 2 and 5 (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 69).

On the Gospel side, we find capitals with different compositions; one has birds with intertwined necks and another has the figure of a man attached to the capital's basket by a rope, showing how Romanesque art adapts sculpture to architectural elements (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 106). Actually, we should mention that, according to Gerhard N. Graf (1986: 99), we could be standing before a representation of the detention or torture of an evildoer, in which case



Aerial view.



General interior view from the nave.







this capital would have the purpose of intimidating the sinner. On the Epistle side, we see the rather common theme of the outraged and single-headed quadrupeds, and a large bird, perhaps a pelican, that Vergílio Correia called the “avejão [big bird]” (Correia, 1924: 112). Over the triumphal arch, there is an oculus opposite the one on the main façade.

The chancel is accessible by climbing a single step and, on its back wall, we find this Church’s only remaining trace of a mural painting, which is organised around the figure of the Church’s patron saint, the Saviour.

Christ as a patron saint has a very wide meaning or semantic field in terms of motivations or invocations: The ancient worship of the “Holy Saviour”, also known as “The Blessed”, “Saviour” or the “Divine Saviour” and the “(Holy) Saviour of the World”, can be found across the entire Portugal, but especially in the North (Moreira, 2000: 237). Christ, the second figure of the Trinity, is known by many names, some of which derive from Hebrew names – Jesus, Emanuel or Messiah –, and other from Greek and Latin names, although many of them are nothing else other than the tradition of Jewish terms (Réau, 1957: 5). However, names like the “Saviour”, the “Our Lord the Redeemer” or the “Verb” derive directly from the Greek and Latin (Réau, 1957: 6-7). The Greek word “Sôter” was the epithet of Asclepius, the warrior god<sup>13</sup>. This name was translated into Latin as “Servator”, “Conservator” and later, after Tertullian, as “Salvador [Saviour]” (Réau, 1957: 6-7). This title is especially relevant as a reference to Jesus Christ, whose Hebrew name “Jehosuah” is translated precisely as “Jahweh is the Salvation”<sup>14</sup>, meaning Christ “Messiah”, the anointed<sup>15</sup>. In this context, we should use the name Jesus when we are referring ourselves to the historic figure that lived in Palestine and has been associated with the quality of being a man, while the name “Christ” should be preferably used when we are referring ourselves to His definitive Resurrection state (Pedro, 2000: 216-218).

Jesus Christ is praised as the “Saviour” right after his birth. The shepherds are informed that “today the Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2, 11). Jesus Christ also proclaims himself as Saviour during His public ministry: “For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost” (Mt 18, 11). That is the meaning of a few parables, such as the one of the “Lost Sheep” and the one of the “Prodigal Son”; this was the reason why the apostles preached Jesus as Saviour<sup>16</sup> and the Gospel of the Lord was preached as the principle for Salvation<sup>17</sup>. It was under the name “Holy Saviour” that, during the Middle Ages, the churches dedicated to Christ were called. In fact, we should mention that this patron saint was one of the most popular during the Romanesque Period.

13 The most well-known legend regarding Asclepius is a legacy from Pindar. The legend tells us that, after the nymph Coronis got pregnant with Apollo’s child, and fearing that this love would not last, she had decided to marry a mortal. The god, infuriated, decided to take his revenge, punishing her with death. But when the body of the young woman began to be consumed in the funeral pyre, Apollo, full of remorse, rescued his living son from his mother’s womb. And he became Asclepius, his favourite son. Regarded by humans as the god of medicine, who kept or restored the heat of life and the light of day to mortals, Asclepius was seen with great devotion across the entire ancient world, both Greek and Roman. And his worship was not just for religious purposes, but also therapeutic (Hacquard, 1986: 48-49). Latin name *Aesculapius* (Esculápio) derives from his Greek name *Asklepios*.

14 “Salvatore” (Mercati & Pelzer, 1958: 684).

15 “Gesù Cristo” (Pedro, 2000: 216-218).

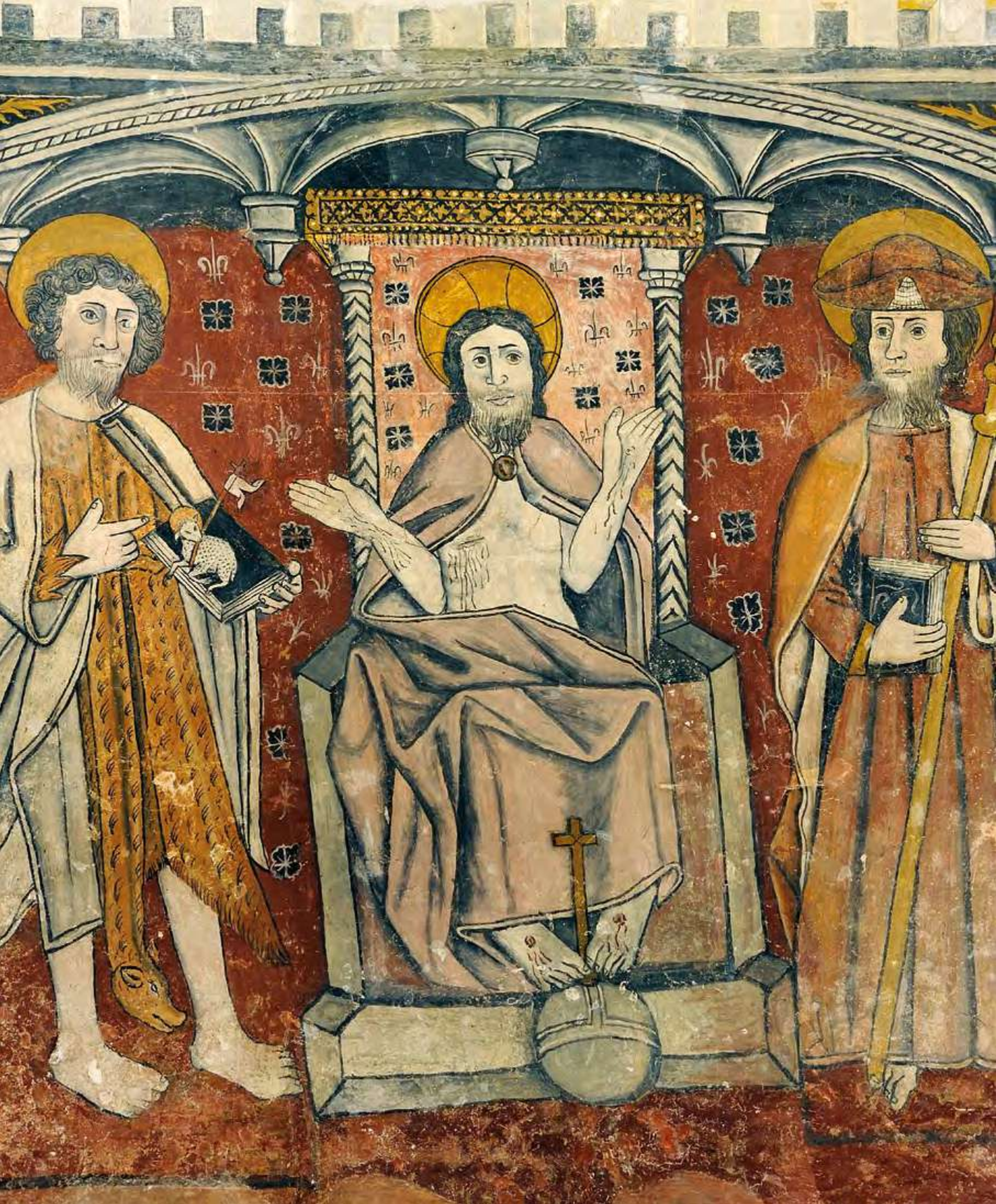
16 By way of example, we mention the following passages: At 4, 11-12; I Ts 1, 10; I Tm 1, 15 or Tt 2, 10-15.

17 Please read also: Rm 1, 16; I Co 1, 18 or At 13, 47.



Triumphal arch. Capitals.







## The chancel: the mural painting

The only mural painting remaining in this Church features a single layer of polychromy, which is in a good state of repair. It is one meter above the existing pavement meaning that, if there ever was a painted skirting, taking into account the sections of plaster that are still preserved below the decorative and figurative painting, such was not preserved (Bessa, 2008: 367). Vergílio Correia, who believes that Tabuado was entirely covered by frescoes, much like the Romanesque churches of Our Lady of the Holm Oak of Outeiro Seco (Chaves) or the parish church of Barcos (Tabuaço), highlights the fact that the “reformers” forgot “to cover” this composition “with the inevitable layer of lime or mortar that almost obliterated all other compositions” (Correia, 1924: 113-114).

According to the same authors, the surveys conducted in several areas confirm that the rest of the Church had also been painted with figures taken from the sacred history or from hagiology (Correia, 1924: 114). Around 1660, the genealogist Cristóvão Alão de Morais mentions that Gonçalo de Barros, lord of the “couto” of Tabuado and of the tower of Novões, was “depicted in the Church of the Saviour of Tabuado; riding a horse with a spear in his hand and wearing a white suit armour, slaughtering the Moors: and the painting was under the Choir” (Morais et al., 1673: 289). The author of the DGEMN’s Bulletin no. 125 questions if, instead, we were actually standing before a depiction of Saint James fighting the infidels (Freitas, 1972: 16). In 1924, the professor from Coimbra already mentions an “image of St. Christopher – a large Saint Christopher crossing the stream leaning against a pine tree and carrying the Infant Jesus over his shoulders –, that occupies the wall on the Gospel side until the trim, which was painted over the primitive figure” (Correia, 1924: 115).

Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 737) rejects the existence of a large-scale fresco painting campaign carried out in Tabuado, thus refuting Vergílio Correia’s words as follows: “there wasn’t one centimetre left in the church that wasn’t painted, including the sculptures from the portals” (Correia, 1924: 115). According to that researcher, the oldest photographs found in the archives of the DGEMN (Basto, 2006) (from the period when the main altarpiece was disassembled) only show whitewashed plaster on the nave’s walls, close to the triumphal arch, in the area corresponding to the backside of the altarpieces from the altars, thus not allowing the detection of any figures.

So, let’s base ourselves on the analysis that Paula Bessa (2008: 366-475) and Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 735-741) propose for the remaining picture. The image of *Christ the Saviour* appears in the central area, under a ribbed vaulted ceiling, enthroned in a chair with a backrest and a fringed canopy; it’s the figure of the *Pantocrator*. This depiction of Christ-Judge is flanked, as a sort of *Sacra Conversazione* (Bessa, 2008: 367-368), by *Saint John the Baptist*, the Precursor, who is pointing towards the direction of the Saviour with his right hand, and by *Saint James*, depicted as a pilgrim, featuring a scallop on his hat and holding a walking staff in his left hand. Featuring a red-painted background dotted with fleurs-de-lis and roses, these three images are framed within ribbed vaults. The lateral areas are occupied by a decorative pattern of geometrical nature shaped by several vertical axes, a sort of diamond-shaped wreath.

Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 736) draws our attention to the fact that this mural painting was adjusted to the built space of the Romanesque chancel, since it respects the line of the stone frame that divides the chancel halfway up the wall, leaving the Romanesque crevice open. In addition, the centralised layout of the figurative panel, together with the small scale of the figure, should coordinate with a small-sized altar placed against the back wall. In fact, we should not forget that the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, within a context that was common to different areas of the country, marks the existence of a series of altarpieces commissioned to combine painting with sculpture or only sculpture (Rosas, 2003: 441). This means that mural painting should be understood as a less expensive way to answer the same liturgical, devotional and iconographic motivation.

In fact, the stylistic characteristics of this painting might indicate a campaign carried out still during the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, the fact that the patron saint is depicted to the centre of the back wall may indicate that this programme corresponds to the guidelines defined by Diogo de Sousa (episc. 1496-1505) in his synodal resolutions for Porto from 1469. But the motif with a wreath of rhombi, which runs along stripes that frame engravings of the *Epistole and Evangeli* printed by Pacini in Florence, in 1495, indicates that, in fact, the paintings from Tabuado already belong to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (Bessa, 2008: 370). The use of a flattened vault to crown the space along which the three figures are distributed, moreover when there are discoidal corbels with spherical pendants, is also a solution already found in the Manueline period [style also known as Portuguese late Gothic, which develops during the reign of King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521)] (Afonso, 2009: 740).

The mural painting of the Church of Tabuado is a unique specimen, as there are no other known paintings made by the same atelier; its main characteristics are the schematic nature of the design and the white-based palette of flesh tones, which originated livid faces with well-defined outlines, purple lips and rounds eyes whose eyebrows quickly drop towards the bridge of the nose that almost draw right angles (Afonso, 2009: 740). According to Paula Bessa (2008: 368), the design is expressive, but rigid; it is substantially more careful in the faces than in the remaining body parts and it does not show any intention to produce a drawing based on the model. Instead, the artist intended to represent the idea of each of the holy figures so as to make them easily identifiable. A feature that justifies a somewhat archaic nature in terms of composition is the slight inclination to the left shown by the ensemble, a sign that this was freehand work, made without any preparatory drawing or other kind of aid in the spacial definition of the composition (Pestana, 2010: 6).



Chancel.



## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

**E**clipsed by the voraciousness of the intellectuals and technicians who, over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, wanted to retrieve the Medieval purity of the Romanesque churches, the Modern Period was almost obliterated by the perception of what “faithful” meant in that period. It is necessary to resort to the available documents in order to reconstruct the ecclesial space.

In the case of Tabuado, we have a few historic sources that cover the long period between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and that allow, though partially, understanding the organisation of the church’s different micro-spaces, each of them governed by a different jurisdiction or by various jurisdiction levels.

One of these sources is the *Inventário de peças e ornamentos* [Inventory of pieces and ornaments], which resulted from the inspections conducted by bishops from Porto to Tabuado between 1592 and 1672<sup>18</sup>. It is appended to the mixed parish record books of this parish, whose first entry dates back to 1587.

As we have mentioned, the first inventory dates back to 1592 and results from the instructions given by the bishop Jerónimo de Meneses (episc. 1592-1600), who visited Tabuado that same year (on September 2<sup>nd</sup>)<sup>19</sup>. The result of the series of precepts he defined (and about which we have no knowledge) was an inventory of the Church’s implements and vestments. A list of objects intended for liturgical offices was drawn up by the hand of the priest Melchior Álvares, before the abbot Manuel Miranda de Sousa, the Church’s proxy Domingos Fernandes and the parishioners Simão de Basto and Jerónimo Dias, from São Mamede. The fact that it is organised according to jurisdictions and their corresponding holders allows us to know the distribution of the objects within the Church.

The first heading regards the set of the “Abbot’s pieces”, which included 2 silver chalices, 1 white and red damask frontal; 1 coloured camalote<sup>20</sup> frontal; 1 black “bocassim”<sup>21</sup> frontal, for Lent; curtains<sup>22</sup> from the main altar; 2 damasked linen cloths from the main altar; 1 linen cloth “to place under the other”; 1 old cloth; 1 cloth to give the Blessed Sacrament; 5 corporal tables with their protections; 7 purificators; 4 “small cloths” from the altar; 1 thurible from the altar; 3 surplices (a cotton one and 2 woven linen ones)<sup>23</sup>; 1 yellow damask vestment with its alb and amice; 2 other white damask vestments with red valances<sup>24</sup>; 1 other new purple camlet vestment with its alb; another black camlet vestment with its alb and amice; another red camlet vestment with its alb and amice; another crimson velvet vestment, used, with alb and amice; a vestment<sup>25</sup> made from the coloured cloth of the main altar; 2 new brass candlesticks; 2 pairs of flagons; 2 bells for when the Lord is carried; 1 box for the holy oils with dish and cloth; 2 new mass books; an “Old-Roman

18 ADP – *Paroquiais, Tabuado, Inventário de peças e ornamentos*. Livro 009, fl. 206 ss. [Online]. [Visited on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011]. Available at [www: <URL: http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/>](http://pesquisa.adporto.pt/).

19 From the inspections conducted during that period, we have collected the following dates: 2-9-1590; 14-10-1603; 17-10-1604; 7-11-1607; 27-9-1609; 22-10-1615; 22-10-1620, 22-11-1621; 30-11-1622; 8-10-1623; 3-10-1627; 4-12-1629; 15-9-1633; 4-5-1637; 22-11-1638; 18-6-1639; 18-10-1644 (Idem, *ibid.*, fl. 217).

20 Camlet, a wool fabric, sometimes ornamented with silk.

21 A cotton fabric.

22 Curtains.

23 It was crossed out by a different hand.

24 Added using a different handwriting.

25 Idem.

mass book”; 1 manual from the new practice; 1 new constitution; 1 catechism; 3 altar stones; 1 safe to carry the Blessed Sacrament with an altar stone and a corporal and 1 box of corporals.

We assume that the abbot and the Church’s patron were responsible for purchasing and repairing these items, which were part of the chancel’s assets.

After the abbot’s pieces came the parishioners’, which included 1 large silver cross; another silver cross (smaller, with a brass foot); a brass cross; a silver chalice; 4 brass candlesticks and 2 iron candlesticks; a red camlet vestment; altar cloths for Lent; a shroud for the deceased; 1 chandelier for the crossing; 2 camlet frontals for its altars; 2 other cloth frontals for Lent; 4 altar cloths; two curtains on the altar of Saint Sebastian and 1 holy water vessel. According to the analysis of the listed objects, the parishioners were responsible for the decoration of the altars located on the Church’s body and for the purchase of the implements used in mass and in collective rituals, namely processions, which were led by the people’s cross. The Church judge and proxy were responsible for representing the parishioners in the procurement, purchase and management of those assets.

Finally, there is a list of the pieces related to the associations, first the ones that were owned by the brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament and then the ones belonging to the brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The former’s assets included 1 silver monstrance with its leather-covered box; 1 damask cloak<sup>26</sup>; 1 crimson damask pallium; an Indian silk pallium; curtains with their canopies; a green taffeta canopy for the tabernacle; a red taffeta banner; a velvet cloth for the Tabernacle, with approximately 60 cm [?]; 2 red cloths intended for the tabernacle<sup>27</sup>.

The assets of the brotherhood of Our Lady included pieces that composed an outfit intended for the image that was dressed, namely: 1 silver crown; 1 yellow damask robe; a red taffeta robe; 1 blue taffeta mantle; a blue camlet mantilla; linen curtains<sup>28</sup>.

In the following visits, even though the inspectors carry out some surveys, not very much is revealed on management of these 16<sup>th</sup> century assets. During the episcopate of Rodrigo da Cunha (episc. 1618-1627), the priest Gaspar Pinheiro declared the purchase of two new “lathed” chalices, a red and white damask frontal and a golden and silvery “woven leather” frontal – the latter offered by the abbot (called Martim de Sousa) out of devotion. Next, there is the list of pieces that were used in the Church of Tabuado in the second quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although the ones used in the chancel and in the nave were not any different, both in number and materials, from the ones that had been inventoried in 1592, we should highlight the fact that the collection of the brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament was enriched. In fact, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries we witness the growth of this association’s assets; the ecclesiastic interest, which was in line with the “increase of the Eucharistic worship promoted by the Catholic Reformation, was surely focused on this association” (Azevedo, 2000: 392).

Although the inventory of the ornaments allows us to have an idea on the arrangement of the integrated assets in the Church’s plan – three altars, the larger one and two lateral or collateral ones dedicated to Saint Sebastian and to the Virgin, divided between the chancel and the nave – we can only find a more elaborate description in 1758. To the triad of altars, the then

26 Added using a different ink.

27 Idem, *ibid.*, fl. 218 v.º.

28 Idem.



abbot adds a chapel, located in the Church's body, which integrated the assets from the Church of Tabuado's patronizing lineage. Referring himself to the latter he explains:

"(...) it had four altars from which one, the largest, is where we have the Blessed Sacrament inside the Tabernacle with its own brotherhood, and the image of the Saviour, the parish's patron saint, and also a God Child and Saint Lucia, and two collateral altars, one of Our Lady of the Rosary with its own brotherhood, and another of Saint Anne and Saint Sebastian with its own brotherhood and a Chapel of Jesus inside the same Church with its own brotherhood where we find Our Lord of Agony and Our Lady at the Foot of the Cross. This Chapel belongs to the Patrons of this Church, who are the nobleman Antonio Gonçallo Correia de Souza Montenegro's heirs" (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 18-19).

So, the three altars were from the 16<sup>th</sup> century – the largest one (dedicated to the Saviour), the one of Saint Sebastian (accompanied by Saint Anne in the meantime) and the one of the Virgin, which, in 1592, would already be related to the invocation of the Rosary, despite the fact that the inventory makes no mention to it. The old Medieval invocation, which had already superseded the Marian patron saint mentioned in 1258, was followed by new devotions, more in line with the popular taste and according to people's individual and collective needs, such as the protector Saint Lucia, or Saint Anne, invoked for easing physical ailments and family problems.

From the inventory resulting from the nationalisation of 1911, drawn up by the republican leaders, we collected a description of the integrated assets that were still from the end of the Ancient Regime and from the Contemporary Period. At the time, it was said that the Church was "built of stone and lime" with a sacristy and a belfry with two bells<sup>29</sup>.

The main altar, with an altarpiece and a throne, sheltered the images of the Saviour, Saint Lucia and the Holy Family and featured a tabernacle. The altar of the Rosary, also made of wood, featured the image of Our Lady of Sorrows and another one of the Infant Jesus (inside a "glass dome"), as well as a painting of the "Heart of Jesus".

The altar of Our Lady of Sorrows, with a wooden altarpiece, sheltered, besides its own image, the sculpture of a crucified Christ (with a "silver diadem and a blue satin mantle in a poor condition"), a pedestal upon which rested Saint Sebastian "with a silver diadem" and also an image of Our Lady of Conception.

Finally, the assessor reports an altar of Our Lady of Piety with a crucified Christ, a "full-size" image of that Virgin, all enclosed by "an iron door with the inscription PA".

Next, there was a list of mobile pieces from the Church, from the sacristy, in bronze and metal, silver, vestments and, finally, the description and inventory of the assets from the parish's chapels and parish residence. All of it was handed to the Republic, represented by the Jurisdictional Committee for Cultural Assets, according to an agreement signed on September 18<sup>th</sup> 1912. In 1929, an additional inventory was drawn up<sup>30</sup>.

29 SGMF – Comissão Jurisdicional dos Bens Culturais, Porto, Marco de Canaveses, Arrolamento dos bens culturais, Taboado, ACMF/Arquivo/CJBC/PTO/MDC/ARROL/024 (Process) [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://badigital.sgmf.pt/Arquivo-CJBC--PTO-MDC--ARROL---024.fls.1-1.v.º>](http://badigital.sgmf.pt/Arquivo-CJBC--PTO-MDC--ARROL---024.fls.1-1.v.º)

30 *Idem*, *ibid.*, fl. 4.

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

In 1945, the parish priest of Tabuado, Joaquim Pereira da Cunha, addressed the Civil Governor of Porto informing that the Church “required urgent repairs because its state did not offer safety”, so that “he could not morally be held accountable for what might occur during the acts of worship, which were very well attended, as a result of a disaster”<sup>31</sup>. Then, as far as we could ascertain, began an intense campaign in favour of an intervention by the DGEMN, because, sometimes, it even rained inside the building<sup>32</sup>.

So, at the time, taking into account its state of repair, it was considered that the Church needed “general preservation works” (which included a complete renewal of the existing roofs to avoid rainwater infiltrations inside the temple), “together with several restoration works, in order to improve its existing conditions and to retrieve its primitive architectural profile”<sup>33</sup>.

It was not until the late 1950’s that the works began, reaching a period of particular intensity in the early 1960’s. This process ended with the focus of the DGEMN’s Bulletin no. 125, from 1972, on the intervention carried out in the Church of Tabuado. Although, as we have already mentioned above, it was considered that only “minor readjustment details” had been implemented, because “the Church of Tabuado reached our days with very few grafts and mutilations” (Freitas, 1972: 18), the truth is that through the text and the iconography included in this bulletin, we are left with the feeling that this was not the case.

Despite the clear intention of showing the works that were carried out, the 131 Bulletins published by the DGEMN play a significant role as an important documentary source for the study of Romanesque architecture, considering its iconographic richness. In fact, they have numerous photographs and graphic elements that, along with the texts, illustrate the monument in three different moments of the interventions carried out by DGEMN, i.e., “before”, “during” and “after”.

Taking into account the wide changing scope of most of these safeguarding interventions, these Bulletins let us realize to what extent are what we currently know as Romanesque legacies a result of the more or less intense reintegrationist policy applied by the DGEMN nearly until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. We should bear in mind that it was approximately between 1929 and 1940 that the DGEMN went through one of its most intense moments in terms of restoration activity, at the service of a specific policy and ideology<sup>34</sup>. The “evident” preference that the DGEMN showed for the Medieval elements of the buildings in which it intervened, to the detriment of legacies from the Modern Period, especially the Baroque ones, eventually became so obvious that a few authors rose against this circumstance<sup>35</sup>.

The national Mannerism and Baroque styles only began to be seen differently after the XVI International Art History Congress was held, despite the fact that there was still some prevailing



Reproduction of the cover of DGEMN’s Bulletin no. 125 (1972), focused on the intervention carried out in the Church of Tabuado.

31 Cunha, Joaquim Pereira da – [Cópia] Missiva, 13 de janeiro de 1945. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM 2522. Igreja de Tabuado. Marco de Canaveses (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1941 to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972). S2/E47/P.7 Cx.0049.

32 Tabuado, Marco de Canaveses. *O Comércio do Porto* (January 24<sup>th</sup> 1945). Idem.

33 Ofício 469, 26 de julho de 1945. Idem.

34 Regarding this subject, please read Neto (2001).

35 On the subject, please read Botelho (2010a).

disregard for the style until the mid-1960's (Pereira, 1989: 223). So, it is still within this context that we should understand the series of interventions carried out in the Church of Tabuado between 1955 and 1972 (Basto, 2006) that, “despite having no concerns of performing any full restoration tasks”, were aimed at giving back to the Church “the dignity and harmony it once had” (Freitas, 1972: 18). And the restoration of that dignity and harmony involved, precisely, the valorisation of its Medieval – that is, Romanesque – architecture, and the “debaroquisation” of its internal space, thus retrieving what was considered as being its primitive image.



Nave before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



Nave before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

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The listing of some of the “Performed Works” is quite explicit regarding these issues (Freitas, 1972: 18-19):

“Removal of the choir [1960's], which is very recent and poorly implemented, being accessed through an external staircase found on the lateral façade.

Removal of the altarpieces from the lateral and main altars, which have no artistic value (...).

Demolition of the baptismal chapel [on Gospel side's wall], an uncharacteristic and unnecessary construction, locating the primitive font close to the temple's main entrance”.

Despite being carried out at the same time as other preservation works that included mainly the replacement of pavements and roofs, the truth is that the ones we have just mentioned show, in a unequivocal way, an urge to reintegrate this Church into its primitive style. Although the discovery of the mural painting, which is such a distinctive feature of the Church of Tabuado, was a result of the removal of the main altarpiece, “whose style was clashing with the one of the church”<sup>36</sup>, the truth is that there was also a decision to demolish the volume of the chancel's old altar. In a letter addressed to the DGEMN, the then parish priest of Tabuado, Joaquim Pereira da Cunha, asked on December 19<sup>th</sup> 1962, for the “replacement of the existing main altar, without any value, for one that matches the church's architectural style”<sup>37</sup>. And

36 Offício 469, 26 de julho de 1945. Idem.

37 Cunha, Joaquim Pereira da, 19 de dezembro de 1962 [SIPA.TXT.00627602] PT DGEMN:DSID-001/013-1835/2 [Nº IPA PT011307240010] [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt).





North façade before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

through the analysis of the administrative documents related to this monuments, we have a clear idea that the restoration intervention carried out in the Church of Tabuado, despite being “partial”, had as ultimate purpose the one of “restoring” this building “to its primitive style”<sup>38</sup>. In order to do that, the tasks that seemed more important were, precisely, “discovering the precious fresco concealed on the back side of the main altar and, simultaneously, replacing that altar with another one that would create a harmony with the church’s style – the Romanesque”<sup>39</sup>. However, a problem came up, raised by the parish priest Joaquim Pereira da Cunha, which proves the lay nature that this kind of intervention sometimes took on. Therefore, the priest asked for the installation, in the lateral chapel of “an altar matching its period with a tabernacle to place the Blessed Sacrament, since a tabernacle on the main altar would affect the view of the fresco”<sup>40</sup>. So, a new stone altar table was designed for the chancel, after the pavement of this sacred space had been levelled. However, the option adopted in the meantime was replaced years later, in 1989, by another one – the existing one – composed of an altar built on a platform, all in chestnut wood (Basto, 2006)<sup>41</sup>.

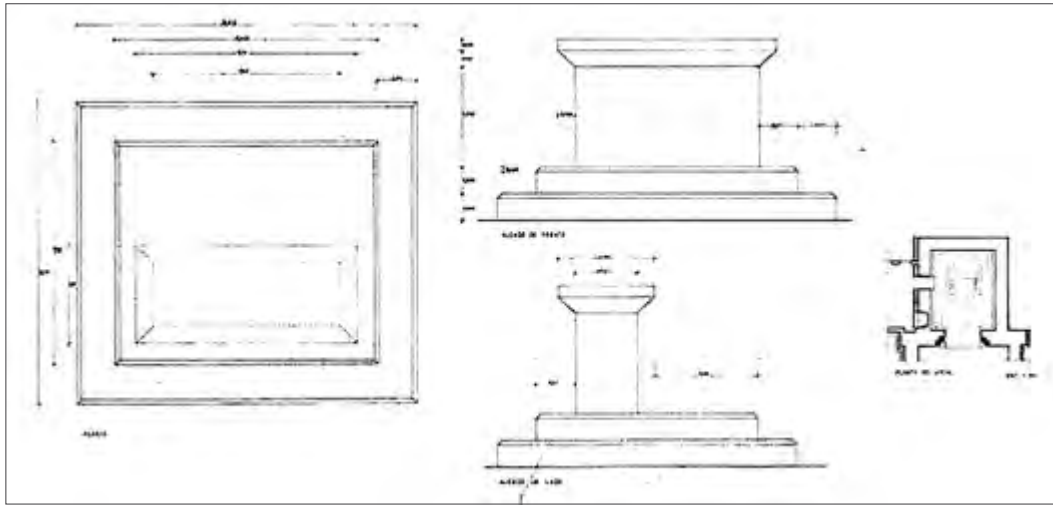
As for the collateral altars that flanked the triumphal arch, “assessing what was already implemented in the chancel and on the nave’s South wall, from which the existing ones were

38 [Cópia, 20 de abril de 1963], [SIPA.TXT.00627617]. Idem.

39 Idem.

40 Cunha, Joaquim Pereira da – Missiva, 3 de dezembro de 1964. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREMNI 2522. Igreja de Tabuado. Marco de Canaveses (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1941 to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972). S2/E47/P.7 Cx.0049.

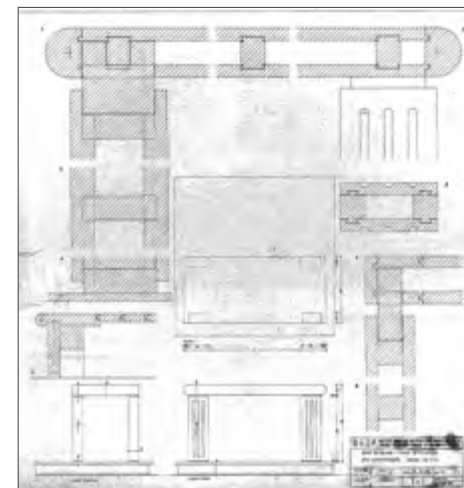
41 SIPA.DES.0002732 e SIPA.DES.0002743 e IRHU/ Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREMNI/DM – Igreja de Tabuado. Marco de Canaveses (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1941 to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972). S2/E47/P.7 Cx.0049, Ref.ª “Empreitada de Igreja de Tabuado – Marco de Canaveses – Ventilação e protecção dos frescos do altar-mor”.



Drawing of the altar table from 1967. Source: IHRU archive.

removed, and also in comparison with what has been made in other Churches, apparently it makes no sense to keep them<sup>42</sup>, so the decision was to disassemble them. It is within this context that we should understand the criticisms that had already been made in May 28<sup>th</sup> 1964, by priest Afonso Ribeiro Moreira in the newspaper *O Comércio do Porto*: “the lateral altars were moved in order to reveal the columns from the chancel arch, which had been concealed” (Moreira, 1964). Appreciating their woodwork and the fact that they featured a docel (that is, a lambrequin), he laments their destruction, adding: “the images venerated by the people should be preserved on their corresponding altars or in simple devices placed next to them”.

In the same chronicle, father Afonso Ribeiro Moreira eventually confesses two surprising features of the existing construction of Tabuado, which immediately lead us to consider to what extent the Romanesque elements we know are a result from the restoration interventions carried out in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>43</sup>. So, the three “flowery” terminal crosses that crown the gables were made by the stonemason of Saint Martin of Aliviada, Jerónimo Marinho, and were drawn by the parish priest himself “on cardboard, choosing from among the several models of crosses included in *A arte românica...*, by Marques Abreu, the one that pleased me [him, the parish priest] the most for its simplicity”. Instead, the chancel arch’s capitals and the decoration that runs towards the corner, i.e., the extension of the impost in the form of a frieze, “were made in cement by the accomplished author Miguel de Sousa”. This restoration work, completed on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1925, was carried out within eleven days. When the DGEMN began its restoration and preservation intervention in the Church of Tabuado, nearly twenty five years later, the alterpieces were already places against the nave’s lateral walls. These statements are essential for the legibility of this Romanesque Church but prove, above all, the importance



Drawing of the altar table from 1988. Source: IHRU archive.

42 Offício 1128, 2 de novembro de 1968. IRHU/ Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM 2522. Igreja de Tabuado. Marco de Canaveses (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1941 to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972). S2/E47/P.7 Cx.0049.

43 This is not the moment to debate this topic, however, it is our duty to draw attention to this rather paradigmatic situation within the context of our Romanesque architecture. For a further development of this topic, please read Botelho (2010a: 334).

that the study of the restoration and preservation of built heritage has for the understanding of our Romanesque heritage, which can't be separated from it.

The 17<sup>th</sup>-century sacristy – “whose state of repair did not allow a proper consolidation” (Freitas, 1972: 19) and “whose roof conceals a crevice in the chancel”<sup>44</sup> – was completely rebuilt. However, although it was decided to proceed with its “complete reconstruction on the same location”, the truth is that the fact there was a change in the position of its access door to the outside is curious enough; first it was facing west and opposite the outside of the chapel of Jesus and then it was opened facing east, thus gaining more free space.

It is interesting that two of the goals defined in 1945 were not achieved<sup>45</sup>: the relocation of the belfry “in order to provide some free space in front of the main façade against which it is placed and the total demolition of the adjacent chapel in order to open the nave's primitive lateral door that was absorbed by it and is partially destroyed”. However, years later, when the works were already being carried out, the technical department of the DGEMN objected to the demolition of that chapel, claiming that although “it is not an original construction”, it became an “element that was traditionally associated with the long evolution of its history”, since it was closely related “to the bond of the Church's Patrons”<sup>46</sup>. Besides these historic aspects, a few aesthetic factors were also taken into account, since it was considered that “its position on the lateral façade makes it volumetrically richer, being assumed that its elimination, which would lead to the construction of a new portal, would not benefit the small temple's expression”. Then the possibility of its restoration was considered<sup>47</sup>, and it was provided with an “altar to celebrate mass”<sup>48</sup>, as the parish priest had requested a few years before. [MLB / NR]

Under the scope of its integration into the Route of the Romanesque, in 2013 the Church of Tabuado was subject to protection, preservation and valuation works. The project was developed with the aim of renovating the roofs (roof and ceiling) and preserving the external walls (Malheiro, 2010: 14-16). In the future, there are plans to intervene in the mural paintings found in the Church, thus improving their reading as an ensemble and their aesthetic presentation; a preservation and restoration project has already been developed for such purpose (Pestana, 2010). [RR]

44 Ofício 469, 26 de julho de 1945. Idem.

45 Idem.

46 Informação, 21 de janeiro de 1964. IRHU/ Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM N 2522. Igreja de Tabuado. Marco de Canaveses (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1941 to April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972). S2/E47/P.7 Cx.0049.

47 Ofício n.º 1500, 15 de dezembro de 1964. Idem.

48 Igreja Paroquial de Tabuado (imóvel de interesse público). Relação dos trabalhos realizados com as obras de restauro e conservação do imóvel, 3 de julho de 1972. Idem.



## CHRONOLOGY

1258: first reference to "Saint Mary of Tabulata";

1320: the Church of Tabuado pays a tax of 105 Portuguese "libras";

1475: the "couto" of Tabuado is reduced to a secular abbey;

15<sup>th</sup> century (late): probable chronologic period regarding the development of the Church's painting campaigns;

1912: handover of the assets of the parish of Tabuado to the municipal commission for cultural heritage;

1955-1972: period of conservation and restoration interventions at the Church of Tabuado;

2010: the Church of Tabuado becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque;

2013: works for the renovation of the roofs and the preservation of the external walls.

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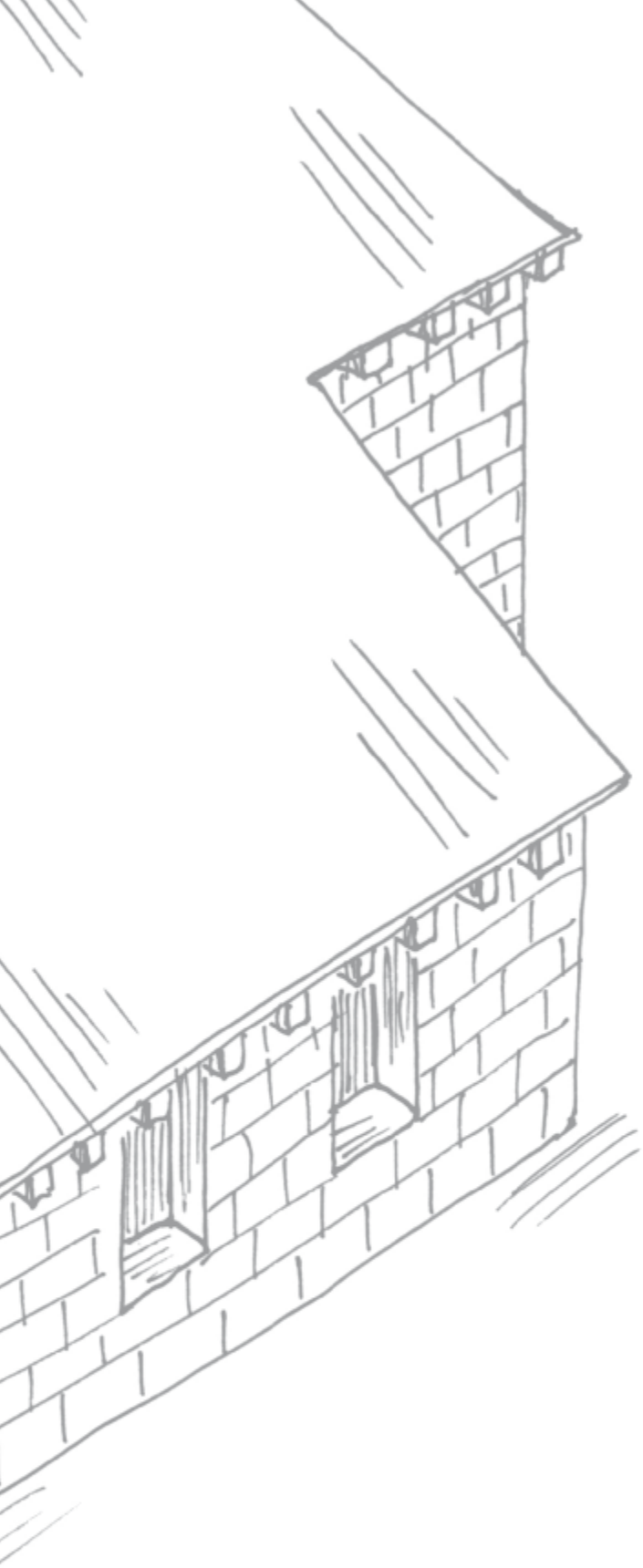
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**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
MARY MAJOR  
OF TAROUQUELA  
CINFÃES



**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
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CINFÃES



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The historic importance of Tarouquela, which is currently revealed only by the remaining Church of that which was one of the first female monasteries of the Benedictine Order to the south of the Douro river has been kept away from the main Portuguese historiographical lines. Despite this scenario of lack of interest, A. de Almeida Fernandes, with his in-depth knowledge on the genealogy and the documentary legacy of the Middle Ages, has already outlined the path of this religious community during its first centuries of existence, a period especially prone to poor chronological and factual interpretations. In the article “Tarouquela” of the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira*, that historian demonstrated, with irrefutable documentary proofs, the origin of the monastic complex and its relationship with the relatives of its founders and first patrons who, for generations, did not shy away from using the monastery and its revenues for their own benefit.

In this sense, the deconstruction of the theory conveyed after Viterbo on the family background of the first abbess, Urraca Viegas, who was said to be the daughter of Egas Moniz, the so-called Schoolmaster and Governor, and his wife Teresa Afonso, is particularly relevant. Between 1187 and 1220, Viterbo imputed her several deeds that were impossible to justify with the age and reason for certain acts, such as going to Tuías (actual municipality of Marco de Canaveses) to expel the Canons Regular, thus adopting the Cistercian rule in this monastery and return to Tarouquela to obey Saint Benedict (Viterbo, 1865: 258).

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Aerial view.

Egas Moniz de Ribadouro, who has been covered by historiography and myth with a special aura, is part of the formation process of Tarouquela, but in an indirect way. In fact, in 1134, Prince Afonso Henriques donated the estate of Tarouquela to Egas Moniz and his wife; the (extensive) limits of the estate show the territory's importance and value. In the same year, they sold a property that was part of the territory they had received from the prince to Ramiro Gonçalves and his wife Ouruana Nunes for the derisory value of a horse. This couple, possibly the heir or founder of a private church that surely existed there wished to add a monastery to it, in order to increase its revenues. A. de Almeida Fernandes explains this transaction with the following words:

“Everything suggests that since these spouses – eager to carry on with this foundation and actually being the heirs of the local church of Saint Mary – were not getting or feared not to get the Royal transfer of Tarouquela, agreed with Egas Moniz, who ruled over the area and lived nearby, that he should get that transfer together with his wife and pass in on to them afterwards for this pious purpose. Even the relative insignificance of the transaction price (however invaluable the rural property really was) is exaggerated by certain authors who are only guided by an absolute reasoning and do not consider what may lie behind an act of that kind” (Correia et al., 1963: 755-756).

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So, Ramiro Gonçalves, nicknamed the “Quartela”, and Ouruana Nunes became the founders of the new monastery (which was already recognized by the bishop of Lamego in 1171), and their descendants became the monastery's patrons and relatives. According to A. de Almeida Fernandes, in 1185 or 1187 their children or grandchildren confirmed the donation of the private church that had been previously founded to the monastery, endorsing it to Urraca Viegas, who was also a granddaughter of the founders, so she could manage it in spiritual and temporal terms. She was obliged to follow the rule of Saint Augustine and provide services in memory of the donors (Correia et al., 1963: 756). Urraca Viegas was the daughter of a man called Egas Moniz, in this case from Ortigosa, a village close to Tarouquela (in the parish of Travanca), the territory where the family had its main assets and probably a manor house. Still during her life there was a change of habit, an act that caused much confusion among ancient and Modern authors who suggested Urraca's escape to Tuías, her return to this monastery with a change of order and even its double nature, theories that were difficult to support. Everything seems to suggest that even before the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (between 1187 and 1194), the abbess (without us knowing the reason why) managed to bring about a change in the rule with her relatives' acquiescence. They did not cease to participate in the destinies of this institution, often turning it into a privileged space for the lineage's sustenance and social promotion.

One of the aspects that stands out from the historic path of this community is the way in which it was ran by dynasties of abbesses from the same family. Nepotism characterized the transition between abbacies almost until the monastery's extinction, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the relatives' descendants continuously contributed to increase the number of people who lived in the monastery, who were not always subject to the discipline they owed to the vows they had received. Medieval nobiliaries occasionally mention these nuns' lifestyle, who were more subject to the political motivations and habits of their lineages than to compliance



with the monastic rule. There is a curious reference to one of the daughters of Vasco Lourenço da Cunha and Tareja Pires (the great-granddaughter of Ramiro and Ouruana, the founders of Tarouquela), who remained anonymous but whose memory lingered in the *Livro velho de linhagens* due to her inappropriate acts (which we can only imagine): “a “touquinegra” [black cap] that was not good” (Herculano, 1860: 158)<sup>1</sup> (“touquinegra” is a reference to the Benedictine habit). Many were the abbesses who broke their celibacy vows and acted according to personal interests, running the monastery like a reserve of individual and collective wills.

The most blatant case is that of Aldonça Martins de Resende (Morais et al., 1673: 47)<sup>2</sup> referred between the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. The nobiliaries mention she had a love affair with Rui Martins do Casal, a troubadour, from whom she had two daughters who were legitimised by King Dinis (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997). Among the list of possible abbesses of Tarouquela we present below, we are aware that there were more or less active periods due to the available documents and to its connection with the local and regional elites (who always conditioned the relationships between the monastery and different types of power). Within this context, we can almost perceive the different stages in which Tarouquela was dominated by certain lineages from the abbesses’ surnames: Urraca Viegas (documented with certainty until 1198) (Correia et al., 1963); Maior Mendes (documented between 1255 and 1278) (Costa, 1979: 522-523); Aldonça Martins de Resende (documented between 1291 and 1349) (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 303-304; Saraiva, 2003: 813); Maria Martins de Moreira (documented in 1357) (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 1040, 1042)<sup>3</sup>; Brites Gonçalves Pinto (documented in 1445) (Morais et al., 1673: 442); Catarina Pinto (documented between 1473 and 1495)<sup>4</sup>; Leonor Pinto (documented between 1497 and 1506)<sup>5</sup>; Beatriz Pinto (documented between 1507 and 1531)<sup>6</sup>; Maria Ribeiro (documented between 1534 and 1536) and Maria de Melo, the last abbess of Tarouquela and the first of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary (Porto)<sup>7</sup>.

The above mentioned reforms and the first arrangements with the episcopal power (e.g. 1171) occurred during Urraca’s abbacy. The bishops of Lamego settled several disputes between Tarouquela and other powers, such as the one that took place in 1255 between Tarouquela and Alpendorada<sup>8</sup> or the one that broke out during the ruling of Aldonça Martins de Resende, in 1300, over the ownership of a few shacks in the hamlet of Covelas, municipality of Ferreiros de Tendais (Saraiva, 2003: 815-817). In fact, this was one of the most active abbesses with a long ruling period that allowed her to take advantage of the monastery’s assets within her family circle. With her the leading role of the Resendes in Tarouquela seems to have come to an end almost at the same time as in “Cárquere”, where her nephew Vasco Martins de Resende is buried.

<sup>1</sup> It is probably Teresa Vasques da Cunha who, according to A. de Almeida Fernandes (Correia et al., 1963: 757), professed on Tarouquela during the reign of King Dinis.

<sup>2</sup> Under the heading “REZENDES”, Alão de Morais (1673: 47) mentions that she is the daughter of Martim Afonso de Resende and Constança Rodrigues, adding that Rui Martins do Casal had two daughters.

<sup>3</sup> The author says that this abbess’s seal “is mentioned in a diploma from 1300, which we assume is the oldest description of the heraldic symbol of the Baião family:“(…) the seal of Aldonça Martins, abbess of Tarouquela, features two images of goats (...) one on top of the other and an image of the abbess with the crosier” (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 302, note 52).

<sup>4</sup> ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maço 25 (vários documentos) and Morais et al. (1673: 423).

<sup>5</sup> ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maços 26 e 27 (vários documentos).

<sup>6</sup> ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maços 27 e 28 (vários documentos) and Morais et al. (1673: 424).

<sup>7</sup> He died in 1580.

<sup>8</sup> The conflict was solved by the bishop Egas Pais (Garcia y Garcia, 1982).

However, if we are to believe the available documents, which lack information and are subject to faulty readings and misdatings (with no study on the existing original collection, kept at the Arquivo Distrital do Porto and at Torre do Tombo, to back up this essay), Urraca was also present when the land charter was granted by King Sancho I in 1224. This information is stated in the *Notícia da fundação do mosteiro de Tarouquela* [News of the foundation of the monastery of Tarouquela], which was diligently drawn up in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the registrar of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary<sup>9</sup>. Together with the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] formed by the union of the existing parishes of Tarouquela and Espadanedo came the privileges of confirming a judge who was annually elected by the parishioners, presenting the churches’ patronage and collecting rents from the tithes and rights that were known to be paid to the monastery.

In 1312, still during the abbacy of Aldonça Martins de Resende, it was concluded that the archbishop of Santiago (Spain) should not receive the collections owed to that church and three years later, in 1315, Rodrigo settled the dispute he had started with Tarouquela for a similar reason but regarding the cathedral of Lamego. The bishop of Lamego acknowledged the mistake (the monastery was exempt) and stood corrected before the abbess<sup>10</sup>. She was followed by Maria Martins Moreira, the daughter of Martim Anes Moreira, a lord who had many assets in the “couto”. Although we are not entirely sure about this abbess’ descent (Lara & Fernandes, 1999:79-106) it is natural that, after the influence of the Resendes came to an end, the abbacy ended up (even if temporarily) in the hands of another line of the founders’ descendants, that is, relatives or patrons of the monastery.

With Brites Gonçalves “Pinta” the monastery of Tarouquela fell under the sphere of influence of the Pintos of Ferreiros de Tendais (or de Chã, or de Bestança, as they are sometimes referred to) after the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, this lineage seems to have raid the leading role in the monastery by placing its daughters in it. Nieces succeed their aunts in an obvious “nepotisation” of power. Such happened to Catarina Pinto, Leonor Pinto and Beatriz Pinto, all of them associated with the lords of Paramos and patrons of the church of Real in the neighbouring term of Paiva.

Many relatives accompanied the abbesses in their solemn acts by taking part in monastic real estate deals or acting as witnesses in these processes. Such was the case, for example, of the ratification of a lease on March 21<sup>st</sup> 1787, which Álvaro Ribeiro, the nephew of the abbess Catarina Pinto who lived in Sobrado, attended<sup>11</sup>. Its close relationship with the city of Porto, even before the nuns moved to this city in 1535 seems to be emphasized in this period, given the connections between the Pintos and the urban elites.

9 Here it is said that Urraca is mentioned in 1223, 1232 and 1239, “the years in which the owners of the parish church donated its patronage to her so she could “turn it into a monastery for nuns”. She had probably donated all her assets to the new monastic complex in 1232 (ADP – Monásticos, São Bento da Avé Maria, *Livro da fundação do mosteiro de S. Bento de Ave-Maria*, fl. 10 v.º).

10 Aldonça must have had a hard time refraining the impulses of certain noblemen, heirs to the monastery, as we can infer from the letter sent by King Dinis to Vasco Martins, his first bailiff, regarding “certain knights who claimed to be heirs of the monastery brought harm and force to her “Couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division], taking advantage of services and lands, in a way that they certainly should not, that he ordered him that, if he thought that those Knights brought harm and force, or were taking advantage of the “Couto” without reason, he should be her ally, in order to prevent, from then on, anything from being done in the “Couto” without reason (...)” (ADP – Monásticos, São Bento da Avé Maria, *Livro da fundação do mosteiro de S. Bento de Ave-Maria*, fls. 73-73 v.º).

11 ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maço 25.



General view.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century is already the period of the Monastery's swansong, even though emphytheutical documents allow us to catch a glimpse of its daily life which was not that different from the one it led in the Medieval Period, at least in terms of asset acquisition and maintenance acts and strategies. These assets, in addition to the "couto" that was properly delimited during the reign of King Sancho I, included several properties in Travanca, Nespereira, Espiunca, Alvarenga, Oliveira do Douro, São Cipriano, Eiriz, Sequeiros, and other in the municipalities of Paiva and Benviver. The nuns managed a granary barn in Pindelo (near Nespereira, Cinfães) and a wine cellar in Tarouquela.

The acts of lease renovation or ratification and other worldly deals were done in the Church, to the sound of chiming bells. According to the documents, that was where the abbess, the professed nuns and other owners of the convent usually held their meetings. Relatives, servants and other employees, such as proxies, majordomos, magistrates, the private registrar of the clerics who worked for the monastery (usually chaplains or whoever the nuns defined in their patronages, such as the one of Espadanedo) witnessed the act. The study we carried out on the monastic life's final period in Tarouquela (1473-1536) allowed us to understand a little bit better the relationship between the abbesses and the management of the space (monastery and Church) and the territory ("couto" and dispersed properties). There were several agents who depended on Tarouquela and its owners, from guild representatives<sup>12</sup> to noble tenants including, obviously, relatives such as Fernão Ribeiro, the nephew of Catarina Pinto who, in 1494, acted as a witness and was then appointed as manager of the chapel "of Tarouquela, of course"<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> In 1482, a shoemaker from Fornelos called João Martins was present; in 1498, a tailor called Martim Álvares, who lived in the "couto", was present; in 1513, there is a reference to a carpenter called Afonso Anes; notes extracted from documents examined at the ANTT OSB, Tarouquela, maços 25 e 26.

<sup>13</sup> ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maço 26 (doc. 1494, fev., 22).



In 1514 we see the first signs of the autophagy process in which this monastery had been involved since the very beginning – an autophagy that resulted from its physical isolation, from its size and its intrinsically family-related nature. The Benedictine habit was not even ruling the nuns' habits anymore, as we may infer from the intervention of King Manuel I (1495-1521) who asks the abbess of Arouca (from the Cistercian order) to put an end to that situation of neglect. The connection to Arouca, despite the different rules, is probably a result of a geographical proximity that allowed surveillance and, after some time, the emergence of an almost filial status that was preserved in Tarouquela until its extinction. In fact, it is by mentioning the isolated nature of a place “where little was done to serve” God – a location and status that was similar to that of other female institutes (Vairão (Vila do Conde), Vila Cova (Vila Nova de Gaia), Tuías and Rio Tinto (Gondomar)) – that the sale king ordered their fusion in a single monastic house to be built in Porto.

The news was not well received in Tarouquela by those who, by commitment or convenience, considered that this decision inhibited the influence of the old lineages that had founded and maintained the monastery. Besides, more than the transfer itself, there were noticeable divisions between the nuns themselves who were possibly competing for the abbacy. There were frayed dissents and appeals that led to the deposition of Branca Vieira and to the admonishment of abbess Maria Ribeiro who was actually the last abbess of Tarouquela.

This tumultuous period was witnessed by the Cistercian inspector Edme de Salieu when he visited Tarouquela on his way from the monastery of Arouca to the one of Salzedas (Tarouca). His account is particularly expressive:

“After crossing the Paiva, he [Edme of Salieu] arrived at a miserable place called Tarouquela, where he was treated according to the beatitude of the location. However, the abbess of Arouca had sent him with two mules charged with food. § On this site there is a small convent with nuns of the Order of Saint Benedict, who fled during the night, fearing that the monsignor, acting under the powers received from the king, would not reform or transfer them to another monastery”<sup>14</sup>.

In 1535, one year before the transfer, a chairwoman settled in the monastery to calm the turmoil and prepare the change<sup>15</sup>. The Cistercian nun from Arouca, called Maria de Melo, accompanied the professed nuns on their trip to Porto, heading the procession that brought together nuns from the other monasteries along the streets of the city on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1536. She was the first abbess of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary and died in 1580<sup>16</sup>.

14 Translation from French by the authors (Bronserval, 1970). M. Gonçalves da Costa (1984: 619) misread it, stating that the nuns of Tarouquela feared that the inspector would introduce the reformation and move them away from that monastery.

15 The chronicle on the foundation of the monastery of Saint Benedict of Hail-Mary mentions Maria de Melo with laudatory words. Chosen by King João III to be the first abbess of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary, Maria de Melo “from the most honourable Mello family, one of the oldest in the Kingdom, who had taken the habit and professed in the Royal Monastery of Arouca, from the Order of Saint Bernard; a person so full of virtues and merits, as required, to rule four flocks of wives of Christ, who came from four mountains to join this new Paradise; and who, before reaching her fortieth birthday, had been elected to the position of Ruling Prelate of the Monastery of Saint Mary Major of Tarouquela / that, due to an election, was facing an enormous storm of worries that she abated with her great virtue, prudence, modesty and mood, for being very kind to everyone, discrete without presumption; humble without conceit; and beautiful without susceptibility; making everything peaceful and quiet (...)” (ADP – Monásticos, São Bento da Avé Maria, *Livro da fundação do mosteiro de S. Bento de Ave-Maria*, fl. 5 v.º).

16 The author of *Agiologia lusitano*, Jorge Cardoso (1666: 572), ascribes her a profile of sanctity, as stated in a list from 1659 that was handed to him and which intended to clarify the abbess's virtuosity.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

So, although the foundation of the monastery of Saint Mary of Tarouquela dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the remaining Romanesque traces that exist in the Church lead us to a later chronology, likely from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Besides, Mário Barroca (2000: 674-675) identified an epigraph which was reused in the southeast corner of the bell tower that refers us to 1214: E(ra) M e e/ 2 II.

According to this author, although it was displaced from its primitive context, this epigraph may be related to the temple's consecration or to a specific construction stage. We stand before a typology – “datationes” – whose letters should be interpreted as the indication of one of the building's construction stages, considering it only provides us with a date (Huerta Huerta, 2004: 43). So, in most cases, this inscription typology does not clarify the nature of the event it intended to commemorate or, merely, to mark (Barroca, 2000: 321).

However, despite the fact that Tarouquela's inscription was reused in a part of the Church that was built in the Modern Period, Mário Barroca draws our attention to the external space located between the first buttress on the chancel's north side and the beginning of the nave's wall (Barroca, 2000: 674). Here we find the remains of an inscription it is possible to read an “E” with a line indicating the presence of an abbreviation which, for that reason, should be extended as Era.

In general, the construction of Romanesque churches began by the chevet, the temple's core. We cannot guarantee an association between the date carved in the ashlar that was reused in the tower and the Romanesque construction of Tarouquela's chevet (Barroca, 2000: 674-675). However, it is possible to identify several signs in the chancel suggesting that its construction was interrupted at least once, surely due to economic difficulties, as we shall see further ahead. Besides, the expansion works it underwent during the Modern Period, which elongated the building, may explain the fact that the ashlar bearing the date 1214 is out of context, much like the ashlar that features an “E”.

So, according to this proposal by Mário Barroca, the beginning of the Romanesque building was the responsibility of Urraca Viegas, who is mentioned as being alive in 1232 and was also responsible for turning the monastery into an institution for women.

We believe that this thesis has both historic and artistic grounds. We should not forget that the transition between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries is rather well-documented on Tarouquela, showing that this was quite a rich period including a series of events. Besides, since we know that the convent of Tarouquella “kept the rule of Saint Augustine” (Viterbo, 1865: 84) at least since 1162, it is quite likely that the transformation or reconstruction of an older building began in a golden period (which may precisely coincide with the introduction of the rule of Saint Benedict and nuns in the early 1190's). In the absence of more clarifying documentary sources, only the conduction of specific archaeological studies will allow us to fully understand this issue. However, the presence of sculptural motifs from different periods has been suggesting the idea that this chevet is actually the result of the extension or reconstruction of a primitive, but smaller, Church (Graf, 1986: 274).

The aesthetic language we still find in Tarouquela's chevet tells us about a consolidated Romanesque style that was experiencing its fullness, while combining different plastic movements, matching them in that which has been considered as one of the best architectural specimens of the time. So, in our opinion, the Church's construction started in the transition between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Tarouquela's rectangular chevet was extended during the Modern Period, in the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, in order to accommodate its main altarpiece, although its Romanesque ashlars were reused, as proven by the many initials visible on the outside of the front wall. Together with the thickness of the walls, the existence of buttresses on the side elevations led Pedro Vitorino to raise the possibility that the chevet would be vaulted and, if such was the case, that maybe the vault was demolished on that occasion (Vitorino, 1932: 393). Other authors also defend that the vault might have been partially or entirely built and later demolished (Graf, 1986: 274). However, in our opinion, Tarouquela never had a masonry vault in the chancel because, although its construction was planned, an interruption in the construction process was enough to change that initial intention. Besides, there are several known examples in Portugal of extensions of Romanesque chancels carried out in the Modern Period – we could recall the geographically close example of Barrô (Resende) – in which the original vault was not only preserved, but there was also an intention to ensure formal continuity even when there was a spatial expansion. A careful analysis of the south elevation, which is currently hidden by the 14<sup>th</sup>-century funerary chapel, allows sensing the existence of several transformations in terms of the walls, as proven by the irregularity of its ashlars (Graf, 1986: 275) and, particularly, by the clear interruption of the buttress.

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North façade.





Chapel of Saint John the Baptist (current sacristy).

The fact that Tarouquela's chancel is one of the Portuguese Romanesque architecture works with more ornamental density both internally and externally is quite significant, providing us with a sample of the decorative richness it achieved in Portugal, depicting an indigenous, dense and voluminous nature with a few Baroque elements (Almeida, 1986: 106). Its side elevations also feature an ornamental composition that includes two levels of arcades divided by a wide frieze with twistings carved in relief. While on the lower level these are blind, on the upper one they frame elaborate and rather open crevices with decorated shafts.

The persistence of a major part of the chevet's Romanesque ornamentation leaves us with an idea of the Baroque character associated with this extremely rich building, which was surely dominated by a *horror vacui*. We should note that this monastery had always been connected to the region's most representative lineages. The crevice that still preserves all of its elements, whose exterior is visible from the Gothic funerary chapel attached to the south side of Tarouquela's chevet in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, shows dense decorations, thus being treated almost like a small portal. Judging by its appearance, we can surely say that the decorative richness of the old crevices must have been truly amazing, especially since Tarouquela was not, as we have seen, a simple abbatial church (Graf, 1986: 274).

On the outside there are two profusely decorated archivolts – an outer one with intertwined motifs and the inner one with zigzag motifs – are supported by richly carved columns. The inner columns are twisted, however, we should focus our attention on the narrative capitals. While on the observer's left side we may identify botanic motifs and the topic of affronted animals on the capital's corner, on the opposite side we find a very common representation within the Portuguese Romanesque style. Is the theme of the man who, upside down, is being devoured by four-legged animals. By way of example, when he identifies this topic on the triumphal arch of Saint Claude of Nogueira (Viana do Castelo), Father Manuel de Aguiar Bar-

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Chancel.



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist. Crevice.



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist. Crevice. Capital.

reiros associated it with the symbolic idea of punishing bad habits, specifying that this motif “is nothing more than a mythological adaptation to a moral teaching, and a perfect match to other motifs that were frequently used by Medieval artists” (Barreiros, 1906: 18).

It is a well-known fact that Romanesque sculpture conveys an intentional message, especially the one represented on the temples’ outside. The interpretation of the symbolism of narrative topics is quite recent in among us<sup>17</sup>. But, in general, we should not forget that in the Romanesque Period was usual to connote the church, the sacred space par excellence, with the House of God. Hence, the care taken in its ornamentation, which usually appears on the access openings, not only ennobles them, but also gives them a pedagogical purpose when there are representations of narrative ensembles. The specific case of this crevice reminds us of the importance that the mindset of the time gave to the buildings’ openings, which allowed light and other “influences” to enter (Almeida, 1986: 48).

We should also add that this topic has been considered by the subject’s historiography as having a Benedictine origin (Graf, 1986), which is understandable in Tarouquela if we recall that the nuns professed the rule of Saint Benedict. But, considering its geographical distance from Braga, the existence of this artistic influence in Tarouquela can only be justified by means of an institution that conveyed these shapes (Santa Escolástica, 1954: 211). An entire series of topics of Cluniac origin – antithetical animals, two men with a single head, serpents, the mermaid theme and the man between two birds theme besides, naturally, the inverted hearts and

<sup>17</sup> On the matter, please read Botelho (2010: 252).

an entire range of motifs with a geometric nature – were quite easily absorbed and represented by local artists. Hence the somewhat regional flavour we find in terms of sculptural technique in the Church of Tarouquela. A careful analysis of Tarouquela's decorative motifs allows us to identify, besides the already mentioned topic of the man being devoured by animals on the external capital of the apse's window, the presence of other motifs whose origin in Portugal may be found in what has been called as the Romanesque style from the Braga-Rates axis<sup>18</sup>.

A significant example of this influence is the curious fact that we find the topic of the so-called *beak-heads* in one of the triumphal arch's archivolt, a unique case in Portugal. These animals – which are facing forward, not too modelled and showing plenty of graphic elements – are imported from the Anglo-Saxon culture and, according to Manuel Real, were very well accepted among us as an outcome of the Benedictine action disseminated through São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim) (Real, 1982: 59-60). Depicting a clear resemblance with the figures represented on the portal of the tower of Travanca (Amarante) and on the crevice of the pantheon of the Resendes in Cárquere (Resende), in Tarouquela, instead of the traditional bird heads, we find tiger and wolf heads (Graf, 1986: 274). Speaking of the triumphal arch, we should note that Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida believed that this shows a later chronology and chronologically places it on the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Almeida, 1986: 107). In order to suggest this chronology, the author mentioned the fact that this triumphal arch hasn't got any columns, being supported directly by the walls instead. However, considering the composition of the Church's portals, which we shall mention further ahead, we have a different opinion: it is possible that this arch was transformed at a given moment, given the different sizes of the ashlar, which explains the misalignment between the ashlar on the walls and the ones on the archivolt. Besides, we should remember the previously mentioned possibility that the chevet had been finished and/or consecrated in 1214, as suggested by Mário Barroca. A careful analysis of the sculpted motifs found on the triumphal arch allows us to find traces of different colours: white, blue and red. The colour feast in Romanesque architecture.

Considering it was the House of God, the mentors of this monastic Church sought to represent human weaknesses in its corbels. So, we highlight a corbel that is located on the chevet's south elevation and is visible through the chapel of Saint John the Baptist. It depicts a naked squatting man with his left hand holding his genitals. Sexual iconography in Romanesque sculpture as not deserved much attention among us. However, following a proposal by Jaime Nuño González (2006: 203), are we standing before the representation of a lonely man instead of an exhibitionist attitude? It is usual to find iconography with provocative and obscene topics in the European Romanesque style. Despite being the most frequent topics less explicit they also allude to the sin of lust, such as mermaids, women with snakes, or the snake alone (Nuño González, 2006: 203). Tarouquela's *exhibitionist* is also sculpted as an atlas that supports the corbel's upper part and, because he has his right hand on his face, he may be compared with a more timid version of a corbel from this typology identified in the church of San Martín de Elines (Valderrible, Cantabria, Spain) (Nuño González, 2006: 206).

18 On the matter, please read Botelho (2010: 432).





Triumphal arch.

When the chevet was built it was usual to proceed with its dedication/consecration. This ritual is documented in the Christian West since the 7<sup>th</sup> century and Mário Barroca (2000: 313-314) gives us a good explanation of how it worked. The ceremony of the dedication of a church included, at an initial stage, the blessing and purification of the building with holy water sprinkled by the bishop who would walk thrice around the temple. Then the bishop entered the church accompanied only by religious men and drew, at the centre of the temple's floor, on ashes that had been deposited, a saltire (the "X" of the Latin alphabet) pointing at the four corners of the temple, above which he wrote the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet (Alpha and Omega), with the help of a crosier.

Next the bishop anointed the altar table in five points and sprinkled holy water on the temple's walls, this time on each of its internal faces; then, in one of the highest moments of the ceremony, he would place the relics at the foot of the altar. The *loculus*, as well as the lid that would close the tabernacle, was anointed and blessed by the bishop; at the bottom of the tabernacle there was a type of mortar that had been previously prepared by the prelate on top of which the relics were placed. After anointing the lid that closed the tabernacle and sealing the altar's reliquary, the bishop proceeded with the ointment of the twelve consecration crosses engraved on the temple's walls, returning to the altar again to place five grains of incense and five candles on the five previously anointed points; then he would make the sign of the cross and burned some incense. Finally, he celebrated a holy mass that was already attended by the devotees.

However, we should not mix up this ceremony with the one of the consecration, which implies the placement of relics from several saints, namely the temple's patron saint. These ceremonies are often mixed up because, in general, they were simultaneous. Through the depo-



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist.  
Corbel. *Exhibitionist*.

sition of these relics, the temple's space is consecrated, but, after the moment when the bishop prays along the church's interior, solemnly anoints the twelve consecration crosses, spreads incense smoke and draws the saltire with the Alpha and Omega on the floor, the space becomes sacred.

So, if the date 1214 intended to mark the dedication act, an essential event in the life of any religious building, it would consequently lead us, if not to the moment when the Church was completely finished, at least to the moment when the chevet was open for worshipping purposes. This fact is all the most significant considering that the consecration altar with the corresponding tabernacle on the upper part has been recently exposed. This element may go unnoticed due to the fact that it is currently standing as support for an image of Saint Benedict of Nursia. Is it a rectangular and monolithic granite altar foot showing a cross pattée on its front, a well-loved model during the Romanesque Period that was frequently used as a consecration cross.

Now the construction rhythm of the rest of the Church could be slower, according to the financial, technical and human availability of those who built the temple. However, here in Tarouquela everything seems to suggest that the nave was built in a period chronologically very close to that of the chevet, as proven by the consecration crosses found on the walls. The nave is illuminated by two rather wide crevices on each side, located on top of a frieze, and by two large round-arch windows opened over the triumphal arch. However, the aesthetic language adopted for the portals already tells us about the closeness of a new artistic period, due to the fact that its archivolts are already broken, flat and feature faceted edges. However, the presence of columns and tympana still tells us about the persistence of the Romanesque style.

Tarouquela's main portal has been considered as one of the most curious specimens of Romanesque architecture in Portugal. Its sculptural quality has been widely acknowledged. Provided with narrative capitals in which we may identify human and animal figures, the correct proportions of the bodies, the accuracy with which their movements have been represented and the balanced distribution of the figures reveal the hand of a great master (Graf, 1986: 273).

This portal also depicts "a squatting herculean man and a calf head with a similar vigour to that of the corbels that support the tympanum of the door of the Pardon of Saint Isidore (León)" (Vitorino, 1932: 390). Filling the entire area of the tympanum, there is an open fleur-de-lys with a groove which immediately suggests us a Marian symbology (Vitorino, 1941: 14). Knowing that, in heraldic terms, the fleur-de-lys is nothing more than an ornament shaped like a stylized lily, the fact is that it also has a religious significance associated with purity, virginity and perfection, so it often appears as an iconographic elements related to the Virgin at least since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. So, according to Pedro Vitorino, "considering that the church of Tarouquela was dedicated to Our Lady, we may easily accept the fleur-de-lys found on the tympanum as Her symbolic representation" (Vitorino, 1932: 391).

But the figures that act as guardians of the portal, which as popularly known as the "dogs of Tarouquela", are the ones giving rise to more comments. Placed above the extension of the imposts on each side of the portal, these key sculptures represent a pair of four-legged animals with nude human bodies hanging from their jaws, attached by the legs. As Armando de Mattos reminds us, we should look for the origin of the devouring posture of these animals in the



Chancel. Wall on the Epistle side.  
Foot of the altar.





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West façade. Portal.

Eastern and Syrian traditions; this decorative and initially symbolic ensemble of affronted animals reached the West through Byzantium and was used at the service of the Romanesque symbology derived from the fantastic zoological world of Medieval bestiaries (Mattos, 1949: 67). Repeating the theme of the capital from the chancel's crevice, despite using a different scale, these figures have a clear apotropaic nature.

The Greek etymology of the word *αποτρέπειν* (apotrépein) means “to remove”. In fact, the Romanesque Period tried to keep evil away using many different means. The worshipping of relics, which had an absolute apotropaic power, was well-loved in this period and is a good example of this will (and need) to keep the evil forces away (Almeida, 1978: 223). The relics were then taken across the fields or villages as the most beneficial solution to chase away the forces of evil. There are also Christianization or apotropaic signs presenting crosses and other “amulet-shaped” symbols that are carved in rocks and strategically located in places from where bad influences might come and in high places that dominated the village (Almeida, 1981: 207). But is it by using crosses, terrifying animals and an entire series of elements placed on the portals of the Romanesque churches that evil is kept away, or rather, it stays on the outside of this sacred space considered as a Heavenly Jerusalem.

We find similarities between these guardian figures of Tarouquela and the guardian lions of the main portal of Saint Peter of Águias (Tabuaço) or the tetramorph that in São Pedro de Rates supports two decorated arcades placed above the line of the abaci that surmount the capitals of the columns from the main portal. All of them convey a clearly apotropaic nature, focused on keeping evil away.



West façade. Portal. Capitals.





West façade. Portal. "Dog of Tarouquela".

Besides showing a similar structure to that of the main portal, the south portal is simpler and features a flat tympanum that, in this case, is supported by two birds; the one on the left looks like an owl and the opposite one looks like a pelican. The capitals, showing a better state of repair, have an excellent manufacturing quality. Their motifs were extracted from the repertoire of the Benedictine Romanesque art and simplified (Graf, 1986: 273): there are two birds pecking from the same bowl on the capital's corner, two intertwined serpents or, alternatively, a pair of four-legged animals fighting a serpent. On the impostes we find the motif identified by Joaquim de Vasconcelos with the no. 6 ("ellipses and circles with a double movement; ropes"), in his inventory called "Formas ornamentaes extrahidas dos monumentos e classificadas segundo a sua analogia", according to the above mentioned description (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 70).



South façade. Nave. Portal.

## The Gothic chapel of Saint John the Baptist

The construction of this chapel adjacent to the chancel's south façade eventually protected significant Romanesque elements – such as the richly ornamented crevice or an elaborate series of corbels which we have already analysed – from damaged caused by the weather. Although some authors still classify it as belonging to a “transition style” (Vitorino, 1932: 395), the truth is that it actually fits into a series of Gothic constructions with an archaic flavour that had a significant influence in the “comarcas” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division] of Entre-Douro e Minho, Trás-os-Montes and Beira (Dias, 1994: 151).

With an irregular rectangular plan, its portal tells us of a “rural Gothic” style: it does not feature a tympanum and shows a broken archivolt with archaic phytomorphic decorations which is directly supported by the impostes on the walls. The series of corbels is simple; its decoration has a uniform outline but is enlivened by two tori.

As a funerary space, it also features flat graves on the floor, and, until 1980, it kept at least two of the three sepulchral chests that can currently be admired on the building's outside space. They are monolithic granite sarcophagi with a gabled lid. There are no inscriptions, but these show symbols that allude to the identification and the status of those who were buried in them: a sword, corn stalks and a crosier.

The construction of this chapel probably dates back to the date in which Vasco Lourenço established a bond, during the reign of King João II (k. 1481-1495) (Dias, 1994: 157)<sup>19</sup>, which provided it with enough legacies to ensure 100 perpetual annual masses and two weekly masses at the managers' expense (Costa, 1984: 528). In 1494 its management was supervised by a nephew of the abbess Catarina Pinto called Fernão Ribeiro, as we have seen before, and in 1713 by Father Manuel Coelho Peixoto from the hamlet of Souto (near Espadanedo)<sup>20</sup>. Between the two men that were mentioned we can only speculate about possible family connections based on the existing genealogical sources (which are not always reliable).

We can almost surely accept the succession that Felgueiras Gaio presents for the management of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist of Tarouquela from João Coelho da Cunha, the son of Aleixo Coelho Peixoto and Catarina da Cunha Soares onwards (Gaio, 1938-1941). He was succeeded by his son Manuel Coelho da Cunha who, in turn, was succeeded by Manuel Coelho Peixoto and, in 1726, Carlos da Cunha, the majorat of São Vicente do Pinheiro, is mentioned as its manager<sup>21</sup>. Finally, in 1758 and according to the rector of Tarouquela, the manager was Patrício Manuel Coelho Peixoto (Sarmiento, 1758).

<sup>19</sup> This is probably Vasco Lourenço da Cunha, the husband of Teresa Pires Portugal, a descendant of the patrons of the monastery of Tarouquela. The descendants of this couple were responsible for managing the chapel of Saint John until Fernão Ribeiro (16<sup>th</sup> century); later on, it was managed by the Peixotos and majorats of São Vicente (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 354).

<sup>20</sup> ADP – Monásticos, São Bento de Avé Maria, *Index dos tombos de santa Maria de tarouquella* [...], 1713, fl. 1: *Reconhecimento que se fez da capella da invocação de S. João batista, que está contigua com a capella mayor* (...).

<sup>21</sup> He lived in the diocese of Porto, probably in Melres (Gondomar), where he married Joana Maria de Macedo e Melo (Costa, 1984: 528).



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist.







The last managers of the bond were Manuel Nicolau Esteves Negrão and his wife Teodora Correia Montenegro who, in 1812, asked King João VI for the extinction of such obligation. In fact, Teodora Correia Montenegro was probably the legitimate heir of the bond management because she descended from the previously mentioned Coelhos Peixotos.

There have already been attempts to suggest dates and heraldic interpretation both for the flat grave and for the tomb chests. The first attempt was made by Pedro Vitorino who, in 1932, based on the information provided by the canon Correia Pinto, saw in the chapel of Saint John of Tarouquela “a sepulchral stone carved in relief with a Portuguese quartered shield with fleurs-de-lys and goats placed on a sword and surmounted by a 15<sup>th</sup> century processional cross”. In 1943, Armando de Mattos refuted that reading and suggested that the fleurs-de-lys were corn stalks instead, thus being a representation that referred to the Milhaços, while the goats on the second and third quarters of the shields were associated with the Geraldês (Mattos, 1943: 62). However, the available documents on Tarouquela fail to mention these surnames that Armando de Mattos associates with Vila Boa do Bispo (Marco de Canaveses) and Paço de Sousa (Penafiel), where there are similar heraldic representations. The author justifies himself saying that the figurative evidence was enough to establish a connection between the space and the Milhaços lineage<sup>22</sup>. However, if this connection existed or had the importance that is ascribed to it, it seems to have vanished from the family’s onomastics, because the descendants of the chapel’s founder and of the people who were buried there had various surnames.

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East façade. Sarcophagus.

<sup>22</sup> Father Alfredo Pimenta, who was also a historian and a priest in this parish, had partially corroborated Armando de Mattos’ opinion in his work *Brasões de Cinfães*. According to him, the quartered shield was the coat of arms of the Milhaços, despite its differences in comparison with the depiction found in a book called *Livro antigo dos reis d’armas* (a corn stalk on the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, three roses on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters and a passing goat of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter). However, both he and Armando de Mattos do not explain the lack of references to this surname in the documents (Pimenta, 1976).

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD



Chancel. Main altarpiece on the Gospel side. Sculpture. Virgin of the Milk.

If we stick to the chronological limits defined for the Middle Ages, then we may say that, between 1453 and 1536, the year of the transfer to Porto, the changes associated with the architectural space or with the nuns' investment in movable or integrated assets go almost unnoticeable. The most important changes already date back to the Baroque Period and are framed within the context of the external management carried out by the convent of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary.

However, one of the most remarkable elements of this Church, which was introduced during one of the first abbacies from the Modern Period, is the sculpture of the enthroned Virgin, who is breast-feeding the Infant Jesus; it intends to represent Saint Mary Major, an epithet conceived during the Middle Ages to distinguish the Virgin from other women called Mary, such as Mary Magdalene. This Virgin of the Milk, a half-relief sculpture manufactured in a workshop in Brussels (or produced in Malines) was dated back around 1500 by Pedro Dias and was considered by the author as “one of the most beautiful sculptures from Northern Europe kept in Portugal” (Dias, 2000). How may we understand its presence in Tarouquela, a Church that was located far from the coastal centres where these religious art pieces first arrived for they were close to the Portuguese trade routes to Flanders? Returning to the same author, who confesses he knows nothing about the history of the sculptural piece, and although there were efforts to contradict him, the fact is that we unsuccessful in retrieving any information on its origin or commissioning in the available documents. However, by taking the historic and biographical elements about the abbesses from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, we may refer to a few elements that may cast some light over the path of such an extraordinary piece.

Considering its date, with which we agree, the image of this Virgin of the Milk was probably directly integrated in the assets of the monastery or of one of the abbesses, who could have been one of the three “Pintas”: Catarina, Leonor and Beatriz, all from the same family of the lords of Paramos and patrons of Real. We may find an explanation for the presence of such an “uncommon” sculpture in this family and in its connection to the urban patriciate<sup>23</sup> of Porto. The contacts with the city and, of course, with its import market were frequent; unfortunately, we can only speculate about the connections through which these contacts took place. However, we leave a some information that can help understanding the presence of the sculpture of Saint Mary, the Major.

According to Alão de Moraes, Catarina Pinta, staying at her nephew Aires Pinto's house, signed the lease of a property in Figueiredo in 1490. In 1531, Bastião Álvares, a shoemaker and the proxy of Beatriz Pinto, the abbess of Tarouquela, also witnesses one of the monastery's deals in Porto, in “on the city's Mercadores street, in the Houses where the much-respected mecja lopez dazevedo [Mécia Lopes de Azevedo] lived; she was the widow of António pjnto

<sup>23</sup> Using an expression by Pedro de Brito (1997), who provides us with some information about the Pinto Ribeiro family, to which the last abbesses of Tarouquela belonged.

[Pinto], a royal knight<sup>24</sup>. So, the connections of the abbesses, both through their tenants and their relatives, are far from being restricted to the Douro valley, namely to the “couto” of Tarouquela and to other domains from the Montemuro region. The Pintos and the Ribeiros, to whom they were related, were an important clan of citizens from the city of Porto with administrative and official interests and connections to several families associated with the municipal administration and even within the commercial sphere. They surely had contacts with the Brandões (who were responsible for commercial interests in Flanders and, later, in India) and they probably joined the Rebelos and the Madureiras; these two families had thriving wine businesses in the Douro region, where the Pintos owned and managed major rights and properties. So, within this family (and “taste”) context, it is not hard to imagine the purchase of the sculpture of the Virgin of the Milk, like so many other works that were properly recorded at the time<sup>25</sup>.

Regardless of the path that led it to Tarouquela, the piece itself has a much greater meaning than the one that the author consciously gave to it. In plastic terms, this sculpture fits into a production range that reveals the Flemish aesthetic models and, in iconographic terms, it resorts to a combination of eras and spiritual natures: the Medieval hieratic character of the majestic pose blends with a virtuosity that predicts the Modern piety. Although this type of representation ended up being banned by Trento, that did not prevent the *a posteriori* creation of important Marian sanctuaries focused on Virgins of the Milk, such as two examples close to Tarouquela – the Virgin of Cales, in Saint Christopher of Nogueira (Cinfães), and the paradigmatic case of Remedies, in Lamego.

After the monastic complex was abandoned, in 1536, Tarouquela became a simple Church from the patronage of Saint Benedict of Hail-Mary. And although the new monastery in Porto centralised the management and, within its sphere, a few artists from the old “couto”, only the parish Church survived to the transfer of the human capital that, for almost five centuries, was responsible for it.

In 1713, in the survey conducted in order to register the properties owned by Tarouquela, only the prelate’s lands and residence are mentioned and described by the then rector, Manuel Gomes de Sá. In 1758 there were almost no traces of the monastic space: “only a stone tomb, where an abbess was buried”. In that year, rector José Carlos de Morais provides us with a brief description of the ecclesiastical space (Sarmiento, 1758).

He mentions five altars: the main altarpiece, with “Our Lady on the stepped plinth”, an altar dedicated to crucified Christ, another altar where Our Lady of Mount Carmel was worshipped, another altar of Saint Gonçalo and, finally, the altar of the Virgin of the Rosary. He only mentions three confraternities: that of the Lord, that of the Souls and that of the Rosary.

The rector is laconic in the remaining answers about the geography and assets of the land. He mentions the history of the monastery’s foundation and extinction referring its founders Ramiro Gonçalves and his wife “Aurodona”, the foral charter granted by King Sancho – ac-

24 ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maço 28, n.º 19.

25 On this matter, please read Vasconcelos, Brito & Real (1983: 117-119).





General interior view from the nave.

According to him, in 1224 – and concludes with the apostolic bull of 1534 that joined Tarouque-la and other institutions in a single monastery in Porto.

So, in order to have a deeper knowledge on the organization of the Church's space in the Modern Period, namely during the Baroque interventions, we should refer to the photos taken before the interventions carried out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By analysing them we can see that in 1932 there were still four altars in the Church's body from which only two remain, both within the Baroque aesthetic language. Despite the fact that the rector Sarmiento does not mention the arrangement of the images on the altars, we believe that their organization was not subject to major changes, except for the ones that were placed on the main altarpiece: Saint Mary, the Major was moved from the stepped plinth and replaced Saint Peter who, in turn, was moved to one of the collateral altars. The image of Saint Benedict of Nursia was recently placed above the consecration altar stone that was moved to the chancel's entrance, close to the chancel arch; the main altar's corbel was replaced by the corbel of Christ the Saviour, a Contemporary piece.



Nave. North wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. South wall. Altarpiece.

The nave still preserves the devotions to the Virgin of Mount Carmel (although the existing sculpture is not the work of the invocation that was worshipped in 1758) and to the crucified Christ; from the remaining devotional sculptural ensemble, the latter is the piece that shows the highest plastic quality and was not corrupted by recent “restoration” interventions.



General interior view from the chancel.

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

In 1932, when Pedro Vitorino visited this Church for the first time, together with the architect José Vilaça and the photographer and publisher José Marques de Abreu, he considered it as a surprise that “despite being attractive, was almost ignored” (Vitorino, 1932: 386). So, through the promoting action of *Ilustração Moderna*, a magazine published by Marques de Abreu, Vitorino was the first one who drew people’s attention to the Church of Tarouquela; for that purpose, he gathered “a few notes that would be a suitable, but feeble comment on the photographs and drawings made by these artists [José Vilaça and Marques de Abreu]. Thus, the church of Tarouquela may be better understood and admired”. Regarded as the “magazine that, in Portugal, has been most avocating the protection of our artistic heritage and for the restoration of our national monuments”<sup>26</sup>, *Ilustração Moderna* became a reference within the Portuguese publishing panorama both for its images and for its texts, thus contributing in a significant way for the “study and promotion of Romanesque architecture specimens and stimulating the interest of the restorers in those monuments” (Neto, 2001: 184)<sup>27</sup>.

Considering that this Church was only classified as a National Monument in 1945, it is perfectly understandable that the interventions aimed at its preservation only began after that date; the road that allows accessing the Church was only built in 1952 (Figueiredo, 2001).

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General external view before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1960). Source: IHRU archive.



General view of the porch before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1960). Source: IHRU archive.

26 [S.a.] – A igreja de Lourosa: um interessante estudo sôbre o belo monumento nacional, pelo sr. Marques Abreu. *A Comarca de Arganil*. Ano XXX (June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1930).

27 For further development on this matter, please read Botelho (2010: 304).



However, it was only in the 1970's that the Church of Tarouquela was subject to the most significant interventions, some of which went far beyond the simple idea of preserving a building, introducing some changes in the Church's image. From these interventions we highlight the demolition of the porch located on the south façade, which sheltered the access to the portals of the Church and of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, and the staircase that allowed accessing the bell tower; this demolition took place in 1969. It was argued that this structure was in a bad state of repair (Figueiredo, 2001). Currently, the only remains of the porch are the corbels and the supporting eave. However, this was not the only porch-like structure that existed in Tarouquela. Although we do not know when it was demolished, the truth is that the main façade also had a gabled porch-like structure, as proven by the scar that we are still able to see on the wall, located between the portal and the crevice. In fact, we should note that the profile of this window was corrected a few years later.

But we believe that it was the interior of the Church of Tarouquela that underwent the deepest transformations. Besides the fact that the stucco was removed in order to allow the granite walls to be admired, we also know that, in 1976, the choir, the pulpit and a connecting staircase were also demolished. However, judging by the current appearance of the Church, we see that the Baroque pulpit was kept while the choir was recently replaced by a wooden and somewhat minimalist structure. In addition, the collateral altars were also demolished and replaced with stone pedestals to display images.

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Nave. High choir before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



Nave. North wall. Old portal before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



North façade. Chancel after the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1977). Source: IHRU archive.

As we can see, these actions were mainly intended to emphasise the Romanesque origin of the building. In a certain way, the removal of the stucco and the demolition of the porch and the choir sought to reveal elements that were regarded as legacies from the period of the monument's foundation. And it was exactly according to this ideology that, in 1977, the sacristy attached to the Church's north wall was partially demolished in order to make a Romanesque window visible (Figueiredo, 2001). [MLB / NR]

In 2010, the Church of Tarouquela became part of the Route of the Romanesque and, under this scope, it has been subject, since August 2014, to preservation, protection and valuation works focused on its roofs, external walls and openings. This intervention is seen as the “first step to restore the (...) quality and dignity” of this Romanesque building (Costa, 2012: 10). [RR]



North façade. Chancel before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1960). Source: IHRU archive.

## CHRONOLOGY

1134: Prince Afonso Henriques donates the estate of Tarouquela to Egas Moniz and his wife; its (extensive) limits show the territory's importance and value; nevertheless, in the same year, they traded the estate for a horse with Ramiro Gonçalves and his wife Ouruana Nunes;

1162: according to Viterbo, at least from this year onwards, there was "a Convent in Tarouquella, in which the Rule of Saint Augustine was kept";

1171: the bishop of Lamego recognizes the existence of the Monastery, founded by Ramiro Gonçalves, dubbed the "Quartela", and Ouruana Nunes

1185 or 1187: the founders' children and grandchildren confirmed the donation of their Church, of prior foundation, to the monastery, endorsing it to Urraca Viegas, who was also the founders' granddaughter, for her to rule it spiritually and temporally;

1187-1194: with the support of her relatives, the abbess managed to change the habit in Tarouquela;

Late 12<sup>th</sup> century/early 13<sup>th</sup> century: construction of the Church of the monastery of Tarouquela;

1214: possible consecration or completion of the chancel, according to an inscription identified by Mário Barroca;

1224: chartering of Tarouquela, by action of King Sancho I;

1232: according to the *Notícia da fundação do mosteiro de Tarouquela* [News of the foundation of the monastery of Tarouquela], drafted in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Urraca Viegas would have donated all her possessions to the monastery;

1291-1349: the office of Aldonça Martins de Resende was one of the most active in Tarouquela;

1312: it was confirmed that the archbishop of Santiago had no rights over the crops due to the Church of Tarouquela;

1315: Rodrigo, bishop of Lamego, ended the dispute he had begun with Tarouquela;

Second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: the monastery of Tarouquela falls under the sphere of influence of the Pintos;

From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards: there is an actual permanence (nepotism) of certain families at the head of the monastery of Tarouquela;

1481-1495: construction of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, during the reign of King João II and due to a bond established by Vasco Lourenço;

Around 1500: design of the image of the Virgin of the Milk;

1514: King Manuel I orders the foundation of a monastery in Porto to incorporate the female institutes of Tarouquela, Tuías, Vairão, Vila Cova and Rio Tinto;

1535: an alderwoman moves to Tarouquela, to calm the turmoil resulting from the royal will to extinguish the monastery and prepare the transition to Saint Benedict of Hail-Mary, in Porto;

1536: the nuns of Tarouquela are transferred to the convent in Porto; the external administration of Tarouquela from this monastery begins;

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: extension works in the chancel of Tarouquela;



1713: of the former monastic complex of Tarouquela, only the parish lands and residence are documented;

1758: there were almost no traces of the monastic space;

1945: listing of the Church of Tarouquela as a National Monument;

1970s: conduction of major restoration works in the Church of Tarouquela, under the DGEMN's responsibility.

2010: integration of the Church of Tarouquela in the Route of the Romanesque;

2014-2015: works for the general conservation of the Church, mostly at the levels of the roofs and external walls.

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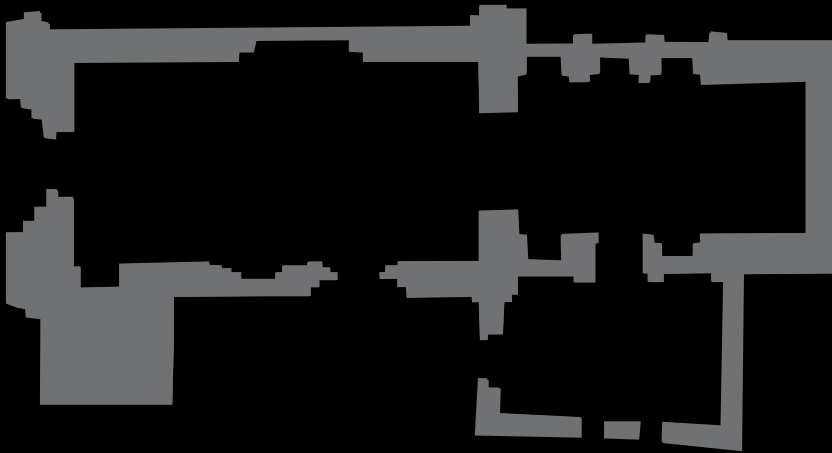






**CHURCH**  
**OF SAINT**  
**ANDREW**  
**OF TELÕES**  
AMARANTE

**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
ANDREW  
OF TELÕES  
AMARANTE



Plan.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Located on a hill overlooking a lush valley, the Church of Telões seems to confirm its origin in the “Granja Real” [Royal Estate] that, legend says, was taken from the grandson of the Moorish king during the skirmishes of the Reconquest. The anonymous narrator further tells that, being the pious nobleman Rodrigo Froiaz one of the masters of the said estate, he commissioned the building of a monastery in that same place, where he put as first abbot Gusmão Pais, all of this in 887 (Santo Tomás, 1651: 89)<sup>1</sup>. Although the date coincides with the strategic advancement of King Afonso III of Asturias (848-910) till the line of the Douro, there is no documentation to confirm the foundational act or even indicate who the first abbot really was. However, given the persistent interference, in the following centuries, of manorial power in Telões, we can integrate it into the series of churches or family monasteries abundantly established to the north of the Douro until the 11<sup>th</sup> century.



General view.

Although both the inspectors of King Afonso II (1220) and of King Afonso III (1258) refer to the monastery of Telões as being allocated to the “terra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] or “julgado” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Basto, a little less than a century and a half later, in 1320, the royal collectors associate it with the “terra” of Sousa, calling it the Church of “Tolões”<sup>2</sup> at the time. This Church paid the amount of 200 “cruzados” [former Portuguese currency unit] to help in the efforts of the Crusades – a sum that, in the region, was only equal to the one paid by Vila Boa do Bispo (Marco de Canaveses) and surpassed by Travanca (Amarante) – a fact that, in a certain way, clarifies the economic importance of the

<sup>1</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 331) still emphasises the idea of “Granja” [farm/farmhouse].

<sup>2</sup> We refer to the work by Eduardo Teixeira Lopes (1992: 331), which transcribe and update the documents regarding the supervising activities of the reigns of King Afonso II, King Afonso III, King Afonso IV and King Dinis.

monastery of Saint Andrew of Telões that, even reduced to a secular church, maintained its role as an important religious and cultural centre over the Middle Ages<sup>3</sup>.

In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and despite the title of monastery that João de Barros grants to the edification, the parish condition of the Church was fully consolidated, dispossessed of any monastic space – although nominally the memory of the latter would linger on. And so the chronicler says: “in the municipality of Celorico we find the Monastery of Telões and the Monastery of Lordelo, which have no friars and are worth two hundred thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit] each. They are attached to Guimarães” (Barros, 1919: 78-9).

This connection to Guimarães was not recent when João de Barros wrote his monograph, despite its union with the city’s collegiate dating back to 1475<sup>4</sup>. A tradition translated into the monastic chronicles ascribed the remote foundation of Telões to the fervent boldness of noblemen from the 9<sup>th</sup>-century reconquest and to the propagation of a series of monks from Guimarães led to the foundation of new houses (Santo Tomás, 1651: 89). What we do know is that both the intervention of the Sousões in local domains and in the monastery’s domains, and the intervention of several institutions so as to control a border territory, located on the limits of dioceses, lands and jurisdictions may have concentrated a series of interests in Telões which may explain its imprecision in terms of geography and institutional hierarchy over the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

However, in the beginning of the Modern Period, its status was perfectly acknowledged: a mother church, a rectorate from the archbishopric of Braga presented by the chapter of the collegiate of Guimarães, a parish within the boundaries of the municipality of Celorico de Basto, close to the town of Amarante and on the road from Porto to Trás-os-Montes<sup>5</sup>.

In 1726, Francisco Craesbeeck presents us a Church with a tabernacle but without the documentary assets that the chronicler often mentioned while writing his monograph: graves and inscriptions that could cast some light on the favourite subjects of the 18<sup>th</sup> century memoirists, i.e., nobility and antiquity. According to Francisco Craesbeeck, “currently there are not any old graves inside the church, because those that existed were removed and the floor repaved, so they could be graves for everyone (...)” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 332)<sup>6</sup>. This rectorate was a profitable one, with revenues that amounted to 250 thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit]; in 1758, it was responsible for the religious issues of 173 residents (housing units), as referred by the author of *Portugal sacro-profano...* (Niza, 1767: 248-249).

3 The existence of toponyms that are similar to Telões or Tolões seems to have confused some of the authors in their studies on local and regional history matters. In fact, in the Middle Ages, not far from Amarante and “Terra de Basto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] there was already a place called Santa Comba de Tolões (or Tolões do Monte, Baião) and a place called Telões de Aguiar da Pena. And, to the south of the Douro river, in Castelo Mendo, the churches catalogue from 1320 mentions the existence of a church that was also dedicated to Saint Andrew and also had the name Telões. But in the case of the existing parish of Amarante, although we find two spellings throughout its history, the use of the toponym “Tolões” seems to have been more frequent, at least since 1269 (Almeida & Peres, 1971; Moreira, 1989-1990: 78-79).

4 According to Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 331), who was followed by many other authors, it was the canon João de Barros, the last prior of Telões, who handed the monastery over to the chapter of Guimarães through a donation made in 1475.

5 This was how father Torcato Peixoto de Azevedo described the situation of the Church of Telões in 1692: “presents the cannons, without the priors, the Church of Saint Andrew of Telões with its adjacent facilities, which was formerly known as the monastery of Saint Augustine, offered by Queen Mafalda, the wife of the King Afonso Henriques, and which was founded by Rodrigo Forjaz, from the Pereira family, in 887, and had as last commendatory abbot the devotee João de Barros, canon of the Cathedral of Braga, and was granted as donation to Saint Mary of Guimarães in 1475, while the church was being ruled by Sixtus IV, who issued the bulls (...)” (Azevedo, 1845: 251).

6 This note sounds like a criticism (from the historian or from the man’s point of view?) that is further explained by the author: “(...) this decision caused the oblivion of many antiquities that they revealed to be lost (...)” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 332).

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

“Here there is a monastery with a graceful, yet restored, galilee. When the traveller leaves the main roads, he always charges large rewards. The valley where Telões was built is open, wide; there is some small brook flowing by and when the traveller is about to enter the church it is time to strike the clock” (Saramago, 1985). These were the words used by José Saramago, awarded with the Nobel Prize for Literature, to describe his arrival to the Church of Saint Andrew of Telões. Although the existing Church has a clear Romanesque origin whose most important traces are found in the chevet, the truth is that its primitive construction was deeply changed over centuries showing an obvious urge for an aesthetic update and adaptation to new liturgies.



East façade.



West façade. Galilee and portal.

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With a rectangular plan, the apse of Telões was certainly designed to be vaulted as shown by the exterior buttresses, finishing well below the cornice, and arranged in the side vestments and back wall. Considering their shape, Manuel Real associated them to an Asturian tradition (Real, 2001: 32). Although this author emphasises the early nature of this Romanesque legacy, which he places in the 1<sup>st</sup> half on the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Real, 2001: 32), Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida (1978: 272) ascribes a more recent chronology to the series of Romanesque traces of Telões instead. Thus, the stylistic elements of the cruise arch provide evidence of a late chronology: the bulb-shaped bases are evolved, the imposts seem late and the robust capitals feature botanic themes already quite attached to the basket<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, the main portal, sheltered by a galilee from the Modern Period, shows a “resistance Romanesque” style: composed of three broken archivolt with sharp edges and no ornamentation, does not bear any columns, so these sit directly on the wall. With a flat tympanum, the fluted corbels stand as the single decorated element of the ensemble.

The vestments of the nave, where simply or plainly decorated modillions can be found, identical to those of the apse, confirm this quite late chronology, while showing a considerable number of scars, thus reflecting the experiences that the primitive edification of Telões



Triumphal arch and chancel.

<sup>7</sup> We believe that the reading suggested by Xosé Lois García (1997: 69) is somewhat forced; he finds a Eucharistic meaning here, saying that the capital on the Epistle side represents a bunch of grapes and the opposite one a bread.





North façade.



South façade. Nave.

went through: additions, demolitions, opening of windows. The oculus that surmounts the portal on the main façade, shaped like a fleur-de-lys, also corroborates the idea of a rather late chronology for Telões. This should not be a surprise to us if we remember that, in the close region of Vale do Sousa, Romanesque architecture features an identical overview in terms of its chronological definition. Both here and in the region of Vale do Tâmega, most of the Romanesque buildings are the result of the reconstruction of clearly older monastic structures, some of which already existing in the 10<sup>th</sup> century or, in this case, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. We may recall the blatant example of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel). In this way we can easily understand the reason why we find Romanesque architectural heritage from such late period in these regions. Telões is one of such cases. Besides, the Church of Telões had to be a finished, or almost finished, building in 1269 because, in that year, Domingos Pais, a canon from the cathedral of Porto, left a series of lamps to the monastery of Telões to illuminate and decorate the altars of Saint Lawrence and Saint Mary Magdalene (Morujão, 2010: 358-359).

As we realise right away from José Saramago's description, the Church of Telões was subject to changes carried out during the Modern Period and which marked its appearance forever. Besides the large rectangular windows opened on the lateral walls of the nave and chancel, we



West façade. Oculus.



General interior view from the nave.

should chronologically highlight the presence of a mural painting ensemble whose chronology has been placed around the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

It is a series of different paintings arranged along the chancel's lateral and back walls, behind the main altarpiece and on the top of the triumphal arch, on the Gospel side, although we believe that there are also paintings behind the two lateral altarpieces (Bessa, 2008: 372). These legacies were studied by Joaquim Inácio Caetano (2006-2007: 57-68) and Paula Bessa (2008: 372-375). Currently, only the one located on the nave's front wall remains visible. So, let's begin from here.

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It depicts a *Nativity* scene that, according to the above quoted authors, corresponds to a second layer. Below it, a twisting stripe was identified; this shape was often used in paintings ascribed to the "active Bravães I workshop" (Bessa, 2008: 374), also known as "Marão Workshop II" (Caetano, 2006-2007: 61), which is also certainly responsible for its design in Telões. Probably the adjoining pink-shaded area also belongs to this first campaign. Traditionally, the pictorial production of "Workshop II" is placed, either between 1498 and 1504, or between 1507 and 1513; this chronological interval results from reading the figures 1501 or 1510 in the paintings of Bravães (Ponte da Barca) (Caetano, 2006-2007: 64)<sup>8</sup>. So, Joaquim Inácio Caetano argues that the chronology of the paintings should be revised, especially when it comes to the paintings from the "Marão Workshop II", which he considers as belonging to a period that is surely earlier than the chronology suggested by Luís Urbano Afonso.

The *Nativity* scene was painted by a different workshop that operated in a later period, known as the workshop of the "Delirious Master from Guimarães" (Vandevivere & Carvalho, 1996: 17-32), because of the torsioned heads and the gestures that emphasise the painting's movement. We should also notice the treatment given to the figure's hairs: the painter treats hair-

<sup>8</sup> The initial reading pointed to 1501, meaning that the chronological interval of this workshop's artistic production was framed between 1498 and 1504. But, the rereading of the same inscription by Luís Urbano Afonso (2003: 273-274) forced a redefinition of its temporal boundaries.

styles as if he drew the hairs one by one using a very thin brush (Caetano, 2006-2007: 64). The presence of this workshop in Telões can be easily explained by the fact that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this Church from Amarante belonged to the patronage of the collegiate of Our Lady of Oliveira, in Guimarães. Joaquim Inácio Caetano mentions the clear similarities in detail between this painting from Telões and the *Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*, a painting that was removed from the chapterhouse of the convent of Saint Francis of Guimarães and is currently kept in the Alberto Sampaio Museum (Guimarães)<sup>9</sup>. We should not forget that the responsibility for decorating the chancel of a given church belonged to those who held its right of patronage and such entity, sometimes, also took the responsibility of preserving and decorating the nave, despite the fact that, in parish churches, this was the parishioners' duty (Bessa, 2007: 439). Its design was probably made between the 1610's and the 1630's (Caetano, 2006-2007: 64).



Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side. Mural painting. *Nativity*.

As it often happens in paintings ascribed to this workshop, the characters – *Our Lady*, *Saint Joseph* and the *Infant* – are framed by an architectural space that is well visible in the pavement made of square tiles that alternate white with a different and contrasting colour. This painting was almost entirely preserved under layers of whitewash and dirt (Caetano, 2006-2007: 60). Its, shall we say, “liberation” occurred in the second semester of 2006 and resulted from a restoration intervention promoted by the DREMN – Direção Regional dos Edifícios e Monumentos do Norte [Northern Regional Directorate for Buildings and Monuments]<sup>10</sup>. However, Joaquim Inácio Caetano believes that this painting would end up being covered by another one, because it was quite damaged, probably as a result of preparatory works for the application

<sup>9</sup> Caetano (2006-2007: 60) and *Matriznet* (inventory no. MAS PD 1) [Online]. Available at www: <URL: <http://www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/>>.

<sup>10</sup> Until then it was only possible to catch a glimpse of a few fragments covered by layers of whitewash and dust, scattered across the chancel's back wall and the upper area of the triumphal arch's wall, on the Gospel side. The restoration work was carried out by ESGRAFITO, led by António José Duarte, who was assisted, in this task, by Elvira Barbosa (Caetano, 2006-2007: 58).



of a new plaster layer (Caetano, 2006-2007: 60). As the author explains, “it was relatively common to paint a fresco overlaying another, because it was not customary for artists to remove the previous plaster layer every time the decoration of a church was modernised with a new fresco painting campaign” (Caetano, 2006-2007: 62).

The rest of the paintings from Telões, arranged along the back and lateral walls of the apse are hidden by the Neoclassical main altarpiece. Probably, the pictorial programme extended itself along the entire wall (Bessa, 2008: 373). The larger fragments are located on the sides of the central crevice, which underwent major transformations while being widened to accommodate the altarpiece (Caetano, 2006-2007: 58). The figure of *Saint Andrew* of Telões is at the centre of the composition; his bare feet, part of his tunic and the saltire of his martyrdom are still visible on the lower area of the painting (Bessa, 2008: 373). It was surmounted by angels that held beads arranged as a garland; Joaquim Inácio Caetano raises the possibility of it being a rosary (Caetano, 2006-2007: 58). There was also a skirting depicting a motif with parallelepipeds drawn in perspective. Flanking the image of the patron saint, there are four-leaved shapes from one of the types that was frequently used in paintings ascribes to the workshop that designed the nave’s *Nativity*, the “active Bravães I workshop” (or “Marão workshop II”, according to the name suggested by Joaquim Inácio Caetano) (Bessa, 2008: 373). The twisting stripes that surmount the upper area suggests this is a painting by the same workshop<sup>11</sup>. In this region, its presence is also shown in the painting that depicts the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Monastery of Freixo de Baixo (Amarante).

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As Paula Bessa explains, these paintings found on the apse of Telões were surely executed before 1547 because they are mentioned in the inspection conducted that same year to the churches and monasteries from the chapter of Our Lady of Oliveira in Guimarães, by order of the archbishop of Braga, Manuel de Sousa (episc. 1545-1550) (Bessa, 2008: 372). They conclude that “the chancel’s paintings shall be very well plastered and painted from now until easter” (Bessa, 2008: 373). However, there are clear modelling features that lead the author to consider that this is a later painting from this workshop with works dating back to “Bravães I” and to 1530 on the apse chapel on the Epistle side of Saint Mary of Pombeiro (Bessa, 2008: 373-374), in Felgueiras.



Chancel. Back wall (behind the main altarpiece). Mural painting. *Saint Andrew*.

<sup>11</sup> Despite the difficulty in identifying the compositional scheme of Telões, Joaquim Inácio Caetano establishes a connection between the fragments found here and the series of paintings that exist on the back wall of the church of Saint Margaret of Vila Marim (Vila Real), ascribed to the same workshop known as “Marão II”, which probably featured a similar compositional scheme (Caetano, 2006-2007: 59).

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

The importance of a given church has always depended on the larger or smaller number of variables that combined among themselves to give it value, honour and primacy. The connection of a given ecclesiastical building to a specific lay or religious social group, the revenues that were allocated for its construction or for the maintenance of its priestly bodies and also, for example, the ownership of relics that turned it into a sanctuary, were aspects that would influence its preponderance over other churches.

It seems certain that the values that have already been presented for Telões, both in the churches catalogue of 1320 and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century memoirs, show the building's economic profitability, which naturally attracted the clientelism and greed of laypeople and ecclesiastics, some to assert their name, others to take advantage of its revenues. In 1269, a canon from the Porto cathedral, Domingos Pais, left a series of lamps to the monastery of Telões in order to illuminate and decorate the altars of Saint Lawrence and Saint Mary Magdalene (Morujão, 2010: 358-359). Did he do it out of a specific fervent devotion? Did he perhaps have family connections with the space? We cannot know, but its offering is associated with an act that was very common throughout the History of the Catholic Church, the one of the pious legacies – assets that the devotee bequeathed to a given church or institution for the good of his/her soul<sup>12</sup>.

The processional cross that is currently associated with Telões is also from the Middle Ages, although it is difficult to establish the historic path of this piece while relating it to the building<sup>13</sup>. This is a Romanesque cross pattée whose manufacturing date may be placed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The cross is decorated with intertwined motifs, elements that were inspired in Byzantine models; the absence of a Crucified Christ does not allow us to provide a more accurate chronological and stylistic reading of the piece that, however, should be compared with the processional cross kept in the National Museum of Ancient Art (Lisbon) and is part of a legacy from Barros de Sá<sup>14</sup>, in which the anatomy of Christ reveals the inherent characteristics of the Byzantine crucifixes judiciously defined by Paul Thoby (1959).

In the Modern Period there were already no traces of the previously mentioned altars dedicated to Saint Lawrence and Saint Mary Magdalene<sup>15</sup>. In 1758, the parish priest Sebastião Manuel de Magalhães Meneses de Vasconcelos mentions four altars but with different devotions: the larger altar that displayed the images of the patron saint, Saint Peter and Saint Anthony; two collateral altars built in the nave, one devoted to the Crucified Lord and the other called the altar of the Souls. A fifth altar was manufactured in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Processional cross.

12 Another legacy, although this time from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, is the chalice-monstrance offered by João Batista Cheiroso in 1697, as referred to in its engraved inscription (Ferreira, 1972). Catalogue no. 37. Recorded in the inventory of the diocese of Porto under no. PMC0.0071 (Costa & Alves, 2008).

13 The cross is registered in the inventory of the diocese of Porto under the no. PMC0.0073 (Costa & Alves, 2008). This was part of a series of Medieval processional crosses registered in the inventory of the diocese of Porto and recently presented by father Manuel Amorim (2011).

14 Both framed within type I metal crosses (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries) (Orey, 2001).

15 It is possible that those invocations were part of the mural painting programme from which only the *Nativity* remains, and were replaced at a later date by the existing invocations of the collateral altars.



Chancel. Main altarpiece.

The main altarpiece, located in the main chapel, is a recent work that combines the Baroque grammar with elements that were certainly collected from the previous structure; it is not really a pastiche, but a reformulation of the Baroque aesthetics – which was actually the most common language in ecclesiastical spaces and, therefore, the most usual model for subsequent expressions. The collateral and lateral altarpieces are from a period concurrent with or prior to the reference found in the memoir of 1758, although their original structure and decoration were somewhat corrupted, as we shall see.

The former include elements that are clearly Mannerist, from which we highlight the decoration of the predellas, the columns with Corinthian capitals and the fluted shafts with botanic decorations. The attics decorated with what we believe to be reused painted wood boards belong to a later period.

Above the collateral altar, close to the north wall<sup>16</sup>, we find an altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary whose 17<sup>th</sup>-century full-body image is displayed in a central niche. The image is flanked by the paintings of Saint Dominic of Guzmán and Saint Francis of Assisi and surmounted by a depiction of Saint John the Baptist.

The opposite altarpiece, built on the south corner of the nave's end, is almost symmetrical; it is named after Saint Anthony of Lisbon, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century image with hardly any plastic expression, deeply changed in a later period, as shown by the overlays of paint. On both sides, two paintings depict Saint Anne and Saint Joachim, the Virgin's parents. In the attic, there is a board showing the Holy Spirit depicted according to the usual iconography of a dove with its wings open wide.

There are two altarpieces embedded in the arches opened both on the north wall and on the south wall. The first is the altar of the Souls (17<sup>th</sup> century) and the second is dedicated to the

<sup>16</sup> We only used the references to the Gospel and Epistle sides while describing furniture and architectural elements included in the chancel because this was the space in which the passages of the Holy Scriptures were read.





Nave. Collateral altarpiece on the Gospel side.



Nave. Collateral altarpiece on the Epistle side.



Nave. North wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. South wall. Altarpiece.

Crucified Christ (18<sup>th</sup> century); both are mentioned by the parish priest in the 1758 memoir.

The presence of a bas-relief panel which is currently displayed on the Church's south wall is less understandable. It represents the *Last Supper* and it is the work of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century artisan or artisans. The 1924 inventory does not mention it<sup>17</sup>, neither as a mobile piece, nor as a piece associated with an altarpiece or an integrated decoration element, so, its presence in Telões raises some doubts about its course and true relationship with the Church. However, we should note that this type of composition reminds us, for example, of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century panel of the convent of Remedies from Braga, which is currently owned by the National Museum of Ancient Art (Carvalho, 1999: 206-207). While the panel from Braga includes decorative and figurative elements inspired in works by Marcoantonio Raimondi (1480-1534) and Dürer (1471-1528), in this composition we see the influence of the *Last Supper* (1542) painted by Jacopo Bassano (1510-1592). In fact, the market of engravings over paintings of the major European artistic centres provided the workshops with the necessary themes and iconographies to fulfil its institutional commissions (Batoréo, 2011).

Other architectural transformations that changed the Church of Telões, both internally and externally, namely the large windows of the nave and chancel, the choir and its corresponding access, the sacristy and the galilee, probably date back to a period between the mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century and the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.

We have an almost successive record of inspection books regarding Telões since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which allows us to assess the stake and investment made in the organization and maintenance of the space during this period.

In 1547 there were several admonishments and obligations imposed to the Church's parishioners, priest and patron regarding several repairs in the main chapel, the Church's body, the churchyard and the porch. In terms of the latter, the inspector mentions the need of installing roof tiles and "applying lime in the joints and gaps" this microspace; its entrance should be widened but closed with "bars that are quite steady so the cattle won't come in"<sup>18</sup>.

In 1565 there are already references to the sacristy and to the need for it to be "painted"<sup>19</sup> and in the following year there is a request for a pulpit, "under penalty of [a fine of] five hundred "réis"". In 1580 the main chapel had plunged into darkness due to few "panels" that were covering the crevices. So, the inspector was ordering the patron to install "window panes with external fine-wire meshes to allow light to enter the chapel" on the above mentioned windows<sup>20</sup>.

However, most of the warnings were meant to raise the awareness of the patrons and the parishioners to the Church's textile and furniture collection, thus drawing their attention to the lack of certain implements and vestments.

We find very similar complaints in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: in 1782 there were references to the poor state of repair of the main altar and the tabernacle, which didn't feature any curtains or

17 SGMF – Arquivo – Comissão Jurisdicional dos Bens Culturais, Porto, Amarante, arrolamento dos bens culturais, Telões, liv. 67, fl. 136-139v.

18 [S.a.] – Visitações dos arcebispos de Braga às igrejas e mosteiros do cabido de Nossa Senhora da Oliveira de Guimarães no século XVI. *Boletim de Trabalhos Históricos*. Vol. 12 (1949-1950) 99-145.

19 [S.a.] – Visitações dos arcebispos de Braga às igrejas e mosteiros do cabido de Nossa Senhora da Oliveira de Guimarães no século XVI. *Boletim de Trabalhos Históricos*. Vol. 13 (1951) 94-96.

20 [S.a.] – Visitações dos arcebispos de Braga às igrejas e mosteiros do cabido de Nossa Senhora da Oliveira de Guimarães no século XVI. *Boletim de Trabalhos Históricos*. Vol. 12 (1949-1950) 99-145.





Nave. South wall. Panel. *Last Supper*.

a canopy. The sacristy's pavement and the main chapel's crevices were obstacles both to circulation and to the Eucharistic celebration. But it was the Church's body that earned the most severe warning that year: the nave was not lined, the walls were not whitewashed and the floor had not been paved. The collateral altars also showed deformities, so the inspector ordered the reconstruction of the space and the construction of altarpieces (the source always mentions altars) with a "Modern urn with its marble paintings, and the other one only with decorations, with pelmets similar to those in the Altar of the Souls, all with matching shapes and proportions, leaving a raised pedestal (...)"<sup>21</sup>. The works seems to have been carried out within the agreed deadline, because, in 1784, it is said that: "those [who had been] ordered [to build] the two altars in the Church's Body, the one of the Souls and the one of the Holy Name, completed the works listed during the last visit"<sup>22</sup>.

There were successive complaints about the poor state of repair of furniture and textile items until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. And in 1831 there was already a complaint from the parishioners of Telões regarding the need for larger bells whose sound could be heard further away, "because, since this parish has a diameter of over one league and places that are almost half a league away from the Church, both to one side and to the other, the small bells that currently exist cannot be heard, so people would only know that the Sacred Viaticum has come out, or that a brother has died, a few days later"<sup>23</sup>. The inspector decided that there should be an extra tax collected from the 1301 devotees in order to pay for the new bells, being that one of them would be manufactured using the remaining material of two small bells<sup>24</sup>.

21 ADB – Visitas e Devassas, Sousa & Ferreira, 1.ª parte, L. 117, fl. 12-12 v.º.

22 Idem, *ibid.*, fl. 18.

23 ADB – Visitas e Devassas, Sousa & Ferreira, 1.ª parte, L. 118, fl. 18 v.º.

24 Idem, *ibid.*



## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

There is a gap of more than a century regarding the information left by the Contemporary Period about Saint Andrew of Telões. This might be explained by the fact that, in 1864, the rector Manuel Carvalho Coutinho informed the director of Public Works of Porto that “this Parish Church” was still showing “the necessary decency and was well built”<sup>25</sup>. So, we can only find further institutional information on this building in Amarante in the early 1970’s.

In late December 1972, the DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments] was requested by the 4<sup>th</sup> Subsection of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section of the National Board for Education to organize a “documentary process with a view to a possible classification of the Romanesque Church of Telões together with its contents, in Amarante”<sup>26</sup>. A memoir from April 4<sup>th</sup> 1973, mentions the “primitive elements that should be considered”, despite the fact that the building underwent “continuous adulterations”<sup>27</sup>. These elements were the “corbels, the east and west rosette, the capitals and columns from the chancel arch and the primitive elements from the pavement, which are still not visible”. Besides, there are a few “crevices on the wall, covered by the intrusion of built-in altars”. Some aspects of the Modern Period’s construction were also taken into account, such as the “wooden trough ceiling”, the “Lord’s Supper” and, “among its rather sober external elements, we highlight the bell tower and the covered Churchyard, which works as a connecting element between the former and the Church’s body”<sup>28</sup>.

Although the Secretary of State for Education and Culture had determined the classification of this monument as a Public Interest Building in 1973<sup>29</sup>, the truth is that the Decree that definitely classified Saint Andrew of Telões was only published on September 29<sup>th</sup> 1977<sup>30</sup>.

Two years later, over a century after the 1864 information, the Building Commission of Telões reports the “state of ruin” shown by the galilee and the choir, given that “both places are threatening to collapse at any moment due to their precarious state of repair, which will cause, furthermore, expensive material damages”<sup>31</sup>. In June 1980 the tender procedure for a building work contract regarding the “demolition of the two choirs that were improperly built in different periods, but in an inappropriate way, as well as the consolidation and repair of the galilee’s roof”<sup>32</sup> was already being officially prepared. It was estimated that, with a total budget of 250,000\$00 [former Portuguese currency unit], it would be possible to carry out “the most

25 Coutinho, Manuel Carvalho – Missiva de 10 de outubro de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM, Cx. 3216/3. Correspondência igrejas do concelho de Amarante. 1864-1867.

26 Ofício da Direção Geral dos Assuntos Culturais de 28 de dezembro de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.00901118] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/026-0109 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [Nº IPA PTO11301350015].

27 Memória de 4 de abril de 1973 [SIPA.TXT.00901123]. Idem.

28 Idem.

29 Ofício JN11/13 (99) da Direção Geral dos Assuntos Culturais de 28 de dezembro de 1973 [SIPA.TXT.00901129]. Idem.

30 DECRET no. 129. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I*. 226 (77-09-29) 2390-2396.

31 Neto, Nelson Castro Borges – Missiva de 16 de julho de 1979 [SIPA.TXT.00901130] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/026-0109 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [Nº IPA PTO11301350015].

32 Ofício n.º 8543 da DREM de 25 de junho de 1980 [SIPA.TXT.00901134]. Idem.

urgent works in the church's area, which are hazardous to the lives of those who use it to attend the celebration of divine worship"<sup>33</sup>. In the following year, several works were carried out in the galilee and in the sacristy<sup>34</sup>.

We should highlight the initiative launched in 1984 by the choral group of the parish of Telões with the goal of "raising funds to purchase a new altar for the Monastery"<sup>35</sup>. In May that same year, father Nelson Castro Borges sent a request for financial aid to the DGEMN in order to proceed with several works the Church required and that the Building Commission of Telões was not able to carry out on its own<sup>36</sup>. The Church of Telões was subject to several conservation works over the 1980's (Basto, 2006), from which we highlight the intervention carried out in 1988, which was focused on its roofs<sup>37</sup>.

Between 2005 and 2007, Saint Andrew of Telões underwent a new series of major conservation interventions that were not only focused on its architectural elements, but also on the protection of its mobile assets, namely the main altarpiece, the collateral altarpieces, the pulpit, the bas-relief representing the *Last Supper of Christ* and the design of new furniture items for the presbytery<sup>38</sup>.

In 2010 Telões became part of the Route of the Romanesque. And, like many other monuments from Amarante, it was the subject of a protection and enhancement project. Its implementation includes the "rehabilitation of the church's exterior and its surrounding area, of the churchyard and its surrounding area" (Marques & Dinis, 2012: 3). There are also plans for the development of a preservation and restoration project for the pulpit and the altarpiece of the Calvary (Duarte, 2010a), the altarpieces of the shrines and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Duarte, 2010b) and the altarpieces of Our Lady of the Rosary and of Saint Anthony (Duarte, 2010c). [MLB / NR]



Nave. High choirs before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1973). Source: IHRU archive.

33 Memória de 1 de julho de 1980 [SIPA.TXT.00901145]. Idem.

34 Memória de 31 de julho de 1981 [SIPA.TXT.00901164]. Idem.

35 Teixeira, Maria da Graça Pinheiro; Machado, Maria de Fátima Ferreira; Teixeira, Maria de Fátima Lourenço – Missiva de 19 de março de 1984 [SIPA.TXT.00901178]. Idem.

36 Neto, Nelson Castro Borges – Missiva de 25 de maio de 1984 [SIPA.TXT.00901180 and SIPA.TXT.00901179]. Idem.

37 Memória de 10 de agosto de 1988 [SIPA.TXT.00901197 to SIPA.TXT.00901199] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/026-0109 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [Nº IPA PT011301350015].

38 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREMNDM – DGEMN:DREMNDM-2732/12 to 15.

## CHRONOLOGY

Until the 11<sup>th</sup> century: probable chronology for the foundation of the monastery of Telões;

13<sup>th</sup> century: Telões was allocated to the "terra" or "julgado" of Basto;

13<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup> half): possible chronology for the edification of the Romanesque Church based on the remaining traces;

1269: Domingos Pais, canon of the cathedral of Porto, left a series of lamps to the monastery of Telões for lighting and decoration of the altars of Saint Lawrence and Saint Mary Magdalene;

1320: the Church of Telões, in the "terra" of Sousa, is referred to as contributing with 1200 "cruzados" to the Crusades;

1475: the patronage of the monastery of Telões is transferred to the collegiate of Our Lady of Oliveira (Guimarães);

Early 16<sup>th</sup> century: first mural painting campaign in the Church of Telões;

1510-1580: several interventions in the Church of Telões are documented, recommended by diocesan visitors;

1782-1784: construction of the side altars as the inspections indicate;

19<sup>th</sup> century: deployment of a fifth altarpiece for the Church of Telões;

1831: the parishioners of Telões request larger bells;

1864: the Church of Telões is deemed to be in a "reasonable state of preservation";

1972-1977: process for the classification of the Church of Telões as Public Interest Building;

1980: lowering of the two high-choirs that existed over the main door;

1980's: conduction of several conservation and restoration works in the Church;

2005-2009: action for the safeguarding of the construction of Telões, including its movable assets and the reformulation of the area for the Eucharistic celebration;

2006: discovery of the mural painting in the Church of Telões;

2010: integration of the Church of Telões in the Route of the Romanesque.

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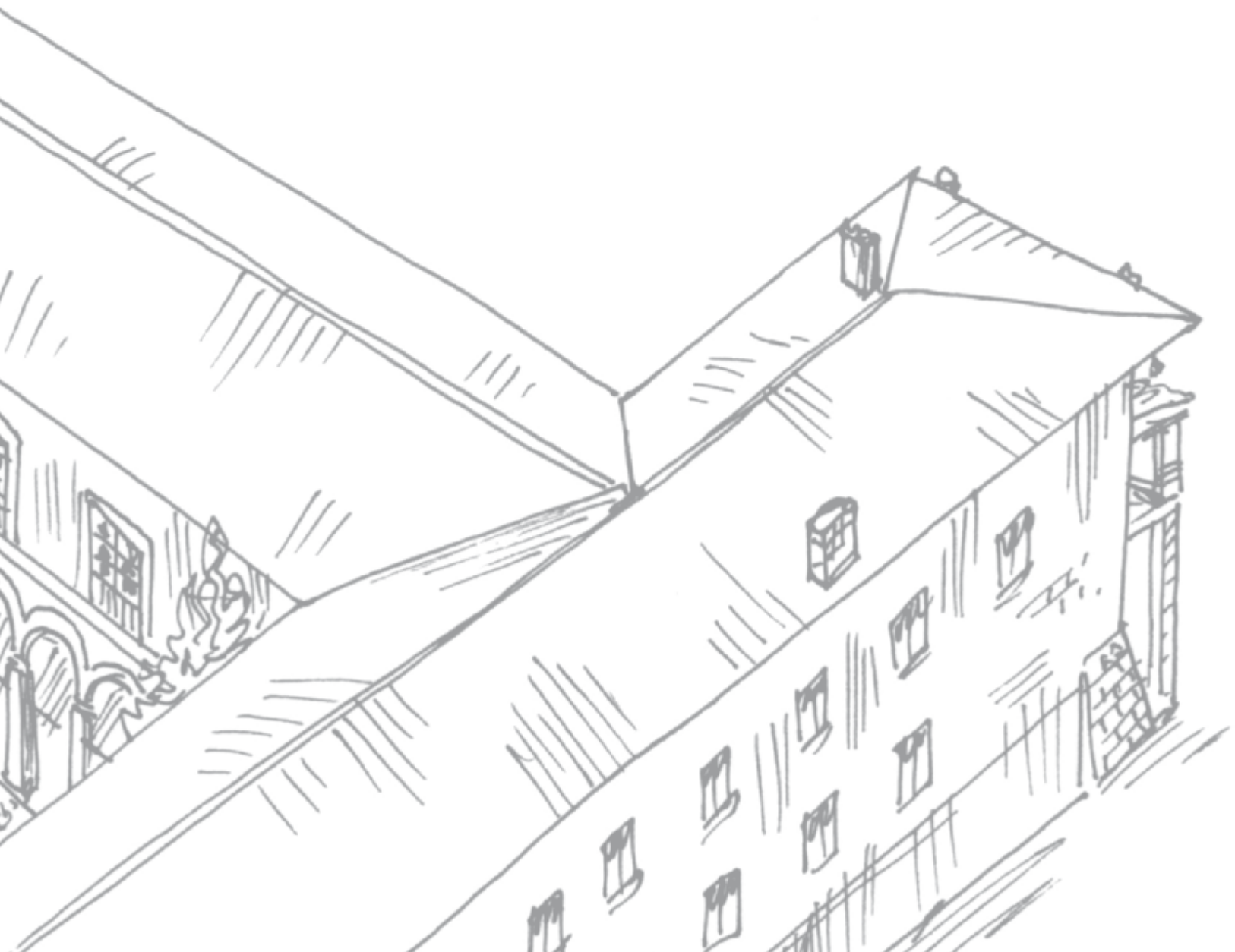
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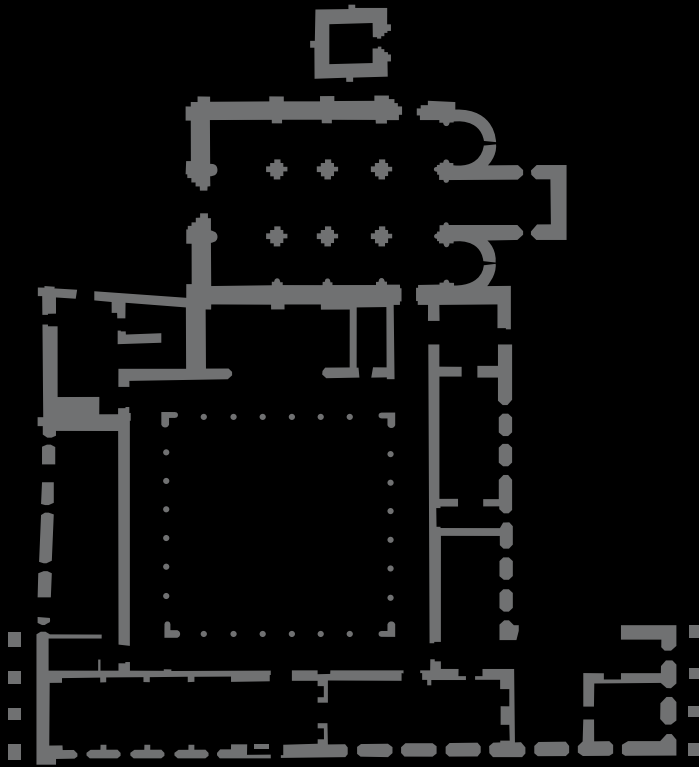
**MONASTERY**  
OF THE SAVIOUR  
OF TRAVANCA  
AMARANTE



**MONASTERY**

**OF THE SAVIOUR  
OF TRAVANCA**

AMARANTE



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Portuguese historiography has rarely contradicted certain documents, transcriptions or translations regarding or associated with the foundation or donation of monasteries. Ill-prepared for reading, but mostly for the critical and substantiated analysis of names and dates, some historians (amateurs, but also academicians and scholars) created repositories of propositions unfounded or simply based on apocryphal documents or crypto-documents<sup>1</sup>, despite early warnings such as the ones left by João Pedro Ribeiro or, later on, by Alexandre Herculano<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, a substantial part of the Portuguese monastic archives disappeared due to the neglect of their keepers, in the voraciousness of the liberal decrees or even at the hands of the republicans who were interested in supporting their ideological movements.

So, for a long time, local and national historic studies were conducted based on ignorance or good faith, and in good faith the authors failed to notice the fact that monastic archives were places of manipulation and forgery. The institutions who held written documents were interested in securing rights, providing them with the necessary antiquity and, often, seeking the value and protection of the old and honourable names of the elites from the past that had founded them. The 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were fertile in this type of rewriting of history, both for the need to ensure the preservation of the old Medieval records and book with lists of properties, boundaries and rights, and due to the increasing autonomic conscience of institutions focused on their prerogatives and their power.

In Travanca's case, the information provided by Friar Bento de Santa Gertrudes on the condition of the monastic archive right before the dawn of liberalism is particularly interesting<sup>3</sup>. In 1801, when he was sent to Travanca to organise the old archive, he found the collection in a deplorable condition: "the Archives, and many other Books and Papers, all attacked by moths, drenched with moisture and showing early signs of corruption" (Santos, 1969). The clerk also points out that the inventories and several tables of contents produced by less careful abbots and registrars were all mixed up: "to this great flaw we add the lack of diplomatic knowledge, and critic, and even accuracy, making no distinction between originals and simple or authentic copies, or between different dates and their value" (Santos, 1969). Now, the lack of scruples in one case was combined with ignorance on the other and, together, they corrupted the course of history.

The origin of the Monastery of Travanca is one of the examples of these eventful historic writings, as proven by the in-depth studies conducted on this institution. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the author of *Benedictina lusitana*... , Friar Leão de São Tomás tries to untangle the inconsistency of dates and names that a document from the archive of Alpendorada (Marco de Ca-

<sup>1</sup> We consider as crypto-documents the ones whose whereabouts are unknown, the ones that do not exist or were simply fully or partially transcribed.

<sup>2</sup> On the beginning of this *História metódica*, please read Torgal, Mendes & Catroga (1998).

<sup>3</sup> In 1726, the scenery seemed to be quite different. Francisco Craesbeeck describes the archival depository of Travanca as follows: "this monastery has a good library and, inside it, we find the registry, with a rosewood closet recessed into the wall, divided into drawers and cabinets, and very clean (...)" (Craesbeeck: 1992, 394).



naveses) associates with Garcia Moniz, the son of Múnio or Moninho Viegas, the “Gasco”, in 1046. And adds, “Monio Viegas, Garcia Moniz’s father, was already dead in 1022, according to the epitaph on his grave, found in the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo (Marco de Canaveses). So it seems that the era of 1046 is the era of Caesar, which corresponds to the Christian year of 1008, a period when Monio Viegas was still alive” (Santo Tomás, 1651: 253).

José Coelho dos Santos, in a dissertation on this monument, deals with the issue of its foundation, its founders and dating, pointing out the apocryphal stain that falls on Alpendorada’s document, refuting it with the inscription that mentions Garcia Moniz as the founder of the Monastery<sup>4</sup>. This author places the construction of Travanca between 1008 and 1066, the (conjectural) life span of Moninho’s son, Garcia Moniz. But what kind of Monastery was this? A new building? A reconstruction? Could there have been a small cenobitical unit in the construction place called “Granja” of Travanca?

We know very little about this period. And we know even less about this institution’s first years of existence. Its origin was certainly rooted in private or family churches, as the donation refers, emphasising the construction (or, as we highlight again, the reconstruction) of an essentially private space<sup>5</sup>. Otherwise, apocryphal or not, Alpendorada’s document is based on a connection to the Gascos that could not be ignored<sup>6</sup>. The presence of this lineage (just like in Vila Boa do Bispo, Marco de Canaveses) endured in Travanca’s memory until quite a late period, both through its patronage rights and its symbolic and real connection with the ecclesiastical and monastic space: the founder’s descendants joined this space and were buried here, making sure they had control during their lives and after their deaths, for example, through masses and memorials on the anniversary of their demise.

The date suggested by José Coelho dos Santos for the death of Garcia Moniz – 1066 – is almost coincidental with the council of Coyanza (1055), which introduced the Cluniac reforms that were surely received in the new Monastery. Nevertheless, it is not inappropriate to believe that, if there were a pre-existing community, it possibly followed the rule of Saint Fructuosus, a path similar to that of other communities before the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

However, one of the most interesting documents on Travanca is the one we managed to find in the course of this research. It is a parish memory dated May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1758 that was misplaced in the *Dicionário geográfico...* collection, i.e., it was associated with the “comarca” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division] of Viana and not with the “comarca” of Guimarães and the archbishopric of Braga inside whose limits the parish and the Monastery of the Saviour were actually located (Sousa, 1758). What could be just another list of more or less



Reproduction of the frontispiece of the work *Benedictina lusitana*, by friar Leão de São Tomás.

4 “This Monastery of Saint Saviour was founded by Garcia Moniz, who lived in the era of 1046 [or in 1008 A. D.] and rebuilt it from scratch; its superior was the reverend priest Monteiro of S. Tiago and its Abbot was the reverend priest friar Tomé de Esperança, May 1601” (Santos, 1969: 20). In 1939, João de Castro (1939: 8), the author of the introductory text on DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]’s rehabilitation project already questioned the document’s authenticity.

5 José Coelho dos Santos (1969: 58) does not include it either in the agricultural monastery type or in the manorial type; instead, he considers it as a combination of both. However, we cannot fail to mention the intrinsic connection to its founders. Without the support of the Gascos lineage, the Monastery would hardly stand out among dozens of other institutions that were based on manorial estates. Is the tower that rivals with the Church an architectural expression of such manorial power?

6 On its origin, please refer to Fernandes (2001). And please read what we wrote about them in the text dedicated to the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo, Marco de Canaveses.

stereotyped answers to the survey circulated by the Secretary of State for the Kingdom's Affairs, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, revealed itself as a true treaty on the parish and "couto" [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of the "Saviour of Travanca". Its author, priest Luís Álvares de Sousa<sup>7</sup>, wrote a 50-page text in which he discusses the Monastery's location, origin and history, beginning his narrative with a description of the world and its continents; then, he focused specifically on the institution's location<sup>8</sup>. According to him, in this area there was a farmhouse owned by the family of Garcia Moniz, the Monastery's founder.

In fact, the priest dedicates part of his words to the lineage and the provenance of the first lords of the region. Quoting chronicons<sup>9</sup> and crypto-documents, namely the already mentioned codex kept in the archive of Alpendorada, Luís Álvares de Sousa relates the written evidences to the ruins that, within the limits of the "couto", were signs of antiquity and corroborated the ancient roots of the Monastery. In his Gongoristic style, he even raises a possibility that, until now, we believe had been originally mentioned by A. de Almeida Fernandes<sup>10</sup> on the origin of the Gascos: "these gentlemen come from the place known as Gascony, as inferred from Egas Moniz's second surname, Gasconha [Gascony in English]" (Sousa, 1758) – "Egas Moniz de Gasconha" so he is called in a document of Alpendorada of the era of 1046, according to transcript of the vicar.

What we can assure, with some degree of certainty, is the increasing influence of the monastic power in the economic, political and religious control of the region, either by donations or by the zealous administration of its assets<sup>11</sup>. So, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Travanca was an important house that stood out from other institutions in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region by contributing with the large sum of 1800 "libras" [former Portuguese currency unit] for the extraordinary tax in favour of the Crusades (Almeida & Peres: 1971). In fact, only a solid financial capacity and a solid bureaucratic machine could be responsible for the building that still stands today<sup>12</sup>. At the time, the institute was part of the "terra" [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Sousa and remained within the sphere of the limits of the municipality of Ribatâmega despite the fact that it was turned into a "couto", supposedly still during the period of Count Henrique (c. 1093-1112) and his wife Teresa (1080-1130)<sup>13</sup>.

7 Perhaps assisted by vicar Manuel Coelho de Mendonça and by the commissioned rector Belchior José dos Reis Moreira who also sign the memoir.

8 Between pages 997 and 1001 the author of the memoir presents a long dissertation on the four [sic] continents, the Iberian Peninsula and the "Gallecia", the hamlets of Portus and Cale, mentioning even that it was possible to get to Travanca by going up the Douro and the Tâmega. Apart from that, the memoir is almost a history and geography treaty in which Travanca is the central element.

9 Among others, there are references to João de Barros and his translation of *Chronica do imperador Clarimundo* (1522), Gonzalo de Illescas and the *Historia pontifical* (d. 1553), friar Diogo Ximenes Arias, the author of *Lexicon ecclesiasticvm latinohispanicvm* (1588), Jorge de Cabedo and *De patronatibus ecclesiarum regiae coronae regni Lusitaniae* (1603), Friar Luís dos Anjos, the author of *Jardim de Portugal* (1626), *Monarchia lusitana* (1597/1609), Rodrigo da Cunha and the *Catálogo dos bispos do Porto* (1623), António Álvares da Cunha and the *Obelisco portuguez* (1669), and Antonio Maria Bonucci and the *Epitome* (1706).

10 As on the matter the author summarizes in Fernandes (2001: 53).

11 Particularly suggestive is the description made by Friar Tomás of the governance of a 14<sup>th</sup> century abbot, Friar Pelágio Guterres, "who was very zealous with regards to religion and its observance, and increased and preserved all the monastery's assets during the whole time he ruled over it, which were many years" (Santo Tomás, 1651: 254).

12 A significant part of the memoir from 1758 is focused on the "functioning" of the "couto" [a type of Portuguese administrative division], with all its prerogatives and privileges duly proven by the transcription of the documents it mentions (Sousa, 1758).

13 The issue of the "couto" and its prerogatives was a recurrent topic throughout the Modern Period, when other institutions and lords were threatening the prerogatives of the abbot and his Monastery. The "couto" was confirmed in 1651 with its corresponding limits and rights (Santos, 1969: 59; Craesbeeck, 1992: 290).

The perpetual abbots, about whose lives information is scarce<sup>14</sup>, ruled the Monastery of Travanca until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Wrongly or rightly, they benefited from the stability of long abbacies, in which they could perform a personal kind of governance that could express itself through the way they managed the institution's resources or when they resorted to their manorial prestige. We should not forget that their ascent to the position of abbot was frequently the result of clientelistic meshes or, even more frequently, of nepotist strategies.

Travanca, as most of the profitable abbeys, went through a period of commendatory abbots who distributed its revenues among important noble figures as rewards. Within this context, between the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and 1565, we know, at least, the name of seven commendatory abbots who were noblemen or sons of some of the most important noblemen in the Kingdom: João de Castro, João de Faria (and his son Afonso), Gonçalo Pinheiro (the bishop of Tangier) and Fulgêncio, the son of Jaime, the duke of Bragança.

Finally, the community went through a long period of time in which it was ruled by triennial abbots; the first one was presented in 1572. The different origins of the noblemen and the rotation of the abbots prevented bad habits and neglects, but we may speculate that certain works were restrained during the mandates that some individuals still managed to repeat<sup>15</sup>.

In 1568, the inspector sent by the future Cardinal-King Henrique (k. 1578-1580) to assess the condition of the archbishopric's Benedictine monasteries, described the monastic ensemble of Travanca as follows:

“This monastery is located in a low land between some hills and is entirely covered, and despite its humidity, it stands in a good and wealthy district, and is half-league away from the monastery of Mancellos, of the Order of Saint Augustine, and two from the monastery of Pombeiro, the latter belonging to the Order of Saint Benedict (...)” (Ferro, 1987: 192).

The available documents, namely the ones related to inspections and general assemblies, allow us to assess the constructive and reconstructive vigour that was felt between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Right before its extinction in 1834, the Monastery was going through a particularly flourishing period in terms of governance. The constant references to the purchase of tree species, such as chestnut trees, olive trees, oaks and vines are signs of a large investment that would have repercussions in the resulting revenues, which certainly came from these crops. Together with the repairs and improvements carried out in the Monastery and its fences (namely the construction of roads and bridges to access certain properties and collect rents and crops, something that has not been properly studied)<sup>16</sup>, the Church was also subject to improvement works whose

14 In his study, José Marques (1981) mentions some of the abbots from the final period.

15 The list of the perpetual, commendatory and triennial abbots was published by José Coelho dos Santos (1969: 65) and Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 295).

16 There are several, yet late, references to the construction of walkways and even of a bridge: “in 1725 a road was constructed along the wall that reached the priest's farm; and, in 1773, the Marramque road was completed, and in 1819 that same road was entirely paved in stone up to the corner of the souls, and, at its bottom, small peer was built for residual water. Still in the same chapter he refers that the road that connects the cross of Mezura to the farm of Portella was also made, and paved where needed, while building, at the bottom, a bridge with guards to facilitate the output of water and residue coming from the fence” (Silva, 2012: 26, 46, 65). These notes may help us understand the location and even the construction of bridges within the sphere of influence of certain monasteries (please refer to what we wrote on the matter regarding the Bridge of Veiga, Lousada).



Church. Sacristy.  
Painting, Counts Teresa  
and Henrique.



importance and weight we shall assess when we deal with the Modern interventions in the ecclesiastical space further ahead. However, we should highlight that the interventions focused on the landscape and the territory were not limited by the outline of the fence; instead, they influenced a broad geographical area of which the Monastery was the centre.

When Francisco Craesbeeck visited the Monastery in the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the abbots presented themselves as lords of a flourishing religious, cultural and economic centre. In addition to their titles and prerogatives as magistrates who presented the civil judge, the weights and measures inspector and the attorney general, the bailiff and two policemen – ruling the legal sphere in an almost autonomous way – the abbots presided over an institution that was also provided with the means, the instruments and the professionals associated with the transmission of knowledge. Among the many printed and manuscript books, the chronicler points out some of the works he saw, such as the ones copied by Friar Alexandre da Paixão from the work by Manuel Faria e Sousa (Craesbeeck, 1992: 294). And in 1783, when the Monastery underwent major improvement works “a large painting of this Monastery’s Donor and Five large Maps, all framed” (Silva, 2012: 49) were put up in the hall. If knowledge is power, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Travanca experienced its height as an illustration emporium.

When the 19<sup>th</sup> century arrived, it is possible to notice that, apparently, according to the documents we have been quoting, the investment was not slowing down. However, liberalism wanted to take advantage of the assets owned by these institutions (some of which, like Travanca, were clearly profitable) and executed the decree that extinguished the religious orders, thus nationalising its revenues and removing all the contents from the old monastic houses and churches. Pinho Leal, whose work is mainly valuable for the critical descriptions he makes about the society of his time or of the period immediately before him, says:

“After the monks were expelled in 1834, the 19<sup>th</sup> century vandals invaded the monastery’s building and stole woods, roof tiles, decorative tiles, furniture, etc. And, concluding his ideological criticism, he adds: time, helping the sacrilegious devastation caused by Man, has been reducing this majestic monastery to a sad pile of ruins, which shall provide evidence, to the future generations, of how far the erudition of the Enlightenment went” (Leal, 1873-1890: 730).



Church and tower. North façade.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

### The Church

**T**he Church of the Monastery of the Saviour of Travanca fits into the restricted family of three-naved churches that were built in Portugal during the Romanesque Period. Except for the Romanesque cathedrals, most of the remaining examples are characterised by the persistence of a small scale. The old Coimbra cathedral, which, according to many authors, follows the traditional *canon* of the so-called pilgrimage churches with its *triphorium*; the Porto cathedral, which had the only known chevet featuring an ambulatory and radiating chapels in Portugal up till now, or the Braga cathedral, which rivalled with Santiago de Compostela (Spain) for so long, are remarkable exceptions within the Portuguese architectural panorama of the period and show clear foreign influences and artistic movements.

Apart from it, only a few Cistercian (Tarouca and Salzedas, both in the municipality of Tarouca) and Benedictine monasteries accomplished such a feat. São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim)<sup>17</sup>, Pombeiro (Felgueiras), Paço de Sousa (Penafiel) and, of course, Travanca, are examples of churches that were part of Benedictine monasteries and that still proudly feature three naves. As we know, it was not exactly easy to make buildings during the Romanesque Period because, besides the economic and financial demands that a large-scale construction implied, the composition/organization of a Romanesque building yard was rather complex, regardless

<sup>17</sup> On the construction of this central building in the context of the Portuguese Romanesque architecture, please read Botelho (2010b: 213).

of its true physical size<sup>18</sup>. We should add the tardiness associated with the transportation of materials that, consequently, implied being close to a good source for the supply of the raw material that was more commonly used in our Romanesque architecture: granite. Finally, there were very few buildings built in one go during this period. We believe that, close by, we may only suggest the case of Sousa (Felgueiras), considering the unitary nature of its construction<sup>19</sup>. On the contrary, through the scars on its walls and the different techniques and sculptural motifs used, São Pedro de Rates indicates the existence of several interruptions. Saint Mary of Ermelo (Arcos de Valdevez) is the most perfect example of a building that was designed to have three naves but, due to constraints that we were not able to ascertain, was left with only one. Within this context, we may also mention here the peculiar case of the Chapel of Our Lady of Deliverance of Fandinhães, in Paços de Gaiolo (Marco de Canaveses), which we believe never had a nave.

It is, therefore, for all these reasons that the Church of Travanca stands out from the panorama of the Portuguese Romanesque architecture. Its monumentality is confirmed, not only by its plan, but also by the presence of a free-standing tower, the highest built during the Medieval Period, as well as by the sculptural motifs we find here. Besides, it is a monumental ensemble that, due to its location and grandeur, is a clear expression of the agricultural economy that allowed its development and of the successive pretensions of those who were associated with it throughout history (Almeida, 1986: 9), as we have already seen.

But let us continue with our analysis of its plan which fits into what Manuel Real has been calling as the ““Portuguese Benedictine plan” for three-naved churches” (Real, 1982b: 35). According to this author, the Church of the Monastery of Travanca is precisely its most accomplished example. Comprising three naves defined by four bays and a wooden roof supported by diaphragm arches, it has a chevet composed of two vaulted apse chapels with semi-circular plans that flank a chancel which is currently deep and rectangular, as a result of an extension carried out during the Modern Period, as we shall see. However, considering the remaining traces found at the base, close to the chancel arch, we may already suggest that it was probably circular and higher than the two apse chapels; besides, it would have had two floors<sup>20</sup>. That feature is revealed by the two levels of columns built one on top of the other with a subtle cornice between them that may suggest the level of the upper floor, although we believe that the existing solution is not exactly the original one considering the existence of some differences in terms of the columns’ alignments.

So, the back elevation of the Church would probably feature a design based on the graded volumes that were so common in large-sized Romanesque churches, of which São Pedro de Rates is a fine example, and which we are still able to appreciate today; however, we should highlight the fact that the existing chancel is the result of a reconstruction made during the



Church. Chancel. Remaining Romanesque traces.

<sup>18</sup> On the organization of the Romanesque building site, please read Botelho (2010c: 47).

<sup>19</sup> On the matter, please read Botelho (2010d).

<sup>20</sup> We should notice that the existence of a two-levelled chevet is not unheard of within the context of the Portuguese Romanesque style. As far as we know, the chevet of the Porto cathedral, besides having an ambulatory and apse chapels, surely had a second level above the first one, of which the (currently walled up) arches facing the transept are still visible. On the matter, please read Botelho (2006).





Church. East façade.



Church of São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim). East façade. Source: Maria Leonor Botelho's private collection.

restoration works carried out by the DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments] in the Church in the 1930's and 1940's. In this respect, we should note the fact that Armando de Mattos regretted the fact that the existing Baroque apse of Travanca had not been replaced by the primitive Medieval one, especially because he believed that methodical surveys would eventually “reveal the foundations of the initial plan of the apse in question, since there are still some visible traces of it” (Mattos, 1951: 97).

For Manuel Real, the ““Portuguese Benedictine plan” for three-naved churches”, provided with a specific programmatic meaning, corresponds to “a very particular way of perceiving architecture, which is generally interpreted with grandeur and emulation” (Real, 1982a: 119). However, this author regrets the conservative nature of Portuguese Benedictine architecture, which is expressed through projects that are not very ambitious despite the difference of scale between São Pedro de Rates and Travanca and most of the Portuguese Romanesque architectural legacies; the latter are dominated by austerity (Real, 1982a: 122), but also by a very particular architectural “module” and scale, usually comprising a single nave and a rectangular chancel that, very rarely, appears as circular instead. This is the reason why Kenneth John Conant states that the “influences of the pilgrimage and the Burgundian Romanesque style are expressed in the most ambitious Portuguese buildings” (Conant, 2001: 357) and Manuel Real considers “the Benedictine programme as the most representative artistic expression associated with the internal colonisation of the territory” (Real, 1982a: 123). However, we should not forget that the introduction of a Romanesque style with a more international flavour in our territory has been ascribed to the Cluniacs, specifically through São Pedro de Rates, the first monastery of the Cluniac Order in Portugal that, through a donation from 1110, became the first church bequeathed by the Portuguese counts to the Cluniac priorate of Charité-sur-Loire (Nièvre, Burgundy, France)<sup>21</sup>. So, the fact that most Romanesque churches with three naves belonged to Benedictine monasteries is not a coincidence.

Manuel Real also establishes a direct connection between this type of architecture and Gothic churches, namely in terms of their “internal elevation and the type of façade of most of our Gothic churches” (Botelho, 2010a: 131). So, the graded volumes and the clear correspondence in terms of façade design are the elements that will allow “Benedictine architecture” to survive over the Gothic period (Botelho, 2010a: 123). Such feature is perfectly clear in Travanca. On



Church. West façade. Portal.

21 For further development on this matter, please read Botelho (2010a: 432).



Church. West façade before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

the outside it is quite noticeable that the lateral naves are much lower than the central one, both when we look at the monument's side elevations and when we analyse its main façade. The same happens in São Pedro de Rates and Paço de Sousa.

But these are not the only similarities between the Church of the Monastery of Amarante and the Church of the Monastery of Penafiel. It is on the main portal that we find one of the features that brings the Churches of these two Benedictine Monasteries closer and which has been considered as one of the leitmotifs of the so-called “nationalized Romanesque” style. In very general terms, this architectural movement of the Portuguese Romanesque style, which was first identified as such by Manuel Monteiro (1943: 5-21), is characterized by its late nature (most of the buildings date from the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and, above all, by the combination of different influences (some of which of foreign origin) that, together with local pre-existing elements, gave rise to a very peculiar plastic language that is circumscribed to a very well-defined region. However, without going into too much detail<sup>22</sup>, we could not fail to highlight that one of the most visible features of the Romanesque style that evolved around the Sousa basin and extended itself to the Tâmega basin is precisely associated with the peculiar composition of the main portals.

In Travanca like, for example, in Sousa, Airães or Unhão – all of them in Felgueiras – the western portal opens a protruding volume that allows extending the building's depth. The origin of this model, which was spread across the entire region from Paço de Sousa, lies in Coimbra. In Travanca this volume is surmounted by a series of corbels with a quadrangular profile that, ultimately, reminds us of the composition of the portal of the old Coimbra cathedral, despite the fact that the latter has a cornice supported by little arches. However, we should notice the fact that these corbels are the result of a composition designed together with the restoration carried out in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which surely tried to emphasise this connection.

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Church. West façade.

<sup>22</sup> For further development on this matter, please read Botelho (2010a: 453).

Travanca's portal is also combined, in an exemplary way, with a model commonly used in the Sousa basin and included an element that was clearly influenced by Porto: the dihedral torus. By marking the rhythm of the four slightly pointed archivolt, the dihedral tori contribute to elongate the thin columns with cylindrical shafts. As we have already seen, this element appears in several buildings from the same region, from which we may highlight Cabeça Santa (Penafiel), besides Fandinhães and Vila Boa do Bispo.

According to Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, Travanca's portal has a unique value (Almeida, 1978: 275) because it displays the best Romanesque sculpture in the region (Almeida, 1986: 100). The capitals, despite being short, feature rather protruding, small and very delicate sculptures. We agree with this author when he states that "only in a monographic and very extensive work would it be possible to study the types and themes of its capitals that have plenty of mermaids with fishes in their hands and bevelled foliages hanging from the top of the abaci" (Almeida, 1978: 275). It is not possible to develop this kind of study in this context, so we limit ourselves to leaving a suggestion<sup>23</sup>. However, we highlight some of the themes that are repeated throughout the entire building: birds with intertwined necks, a human figure designed as a sort of atlas on the capital's corner, intertwined serpents and a theme, whose origin lies in Braga, which we find in several monuments from the Tâmega and Douro basin. It is the composition in which there are monsters swallowing naked figures that hang from their mouths, suspended by the legs. By way of example, we should mention that this model appears in several capitals from Saint Martin of Mouros (Resende).

On the impostes – which extend along the entire protruding volume and are very well executed, depicting a superb chisel technique – Artur Nobre de Gusmão identified a design composed by "two undulating elements heading in opposite directions and meeting at the centre of distant arches with which they intertwine" (Gusmão, 1961: 38). The same motif had already been identified by Joaquim de Vasconcelos (1918: 69) in his inventory of the typical motifs of our Romanesque style with the no. 6, defined as "ellipses and circles in a double movement; rope". On the other hand, the columns' bases are an example of the "decoration with two zig-zag and occasionally intertwined strip" (Gusmão, 1961: 36), a variant of motif no. 42 of the same inventory ("double chained lozenges") (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 72).

In this refined and richly ornamented portal we immediately see a clear contrast between the elements described above and its flat tympanum, which is supported by two corbels and, despite its obvious wear, shows animal figures. As we shall see, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Church still had a painting that depicted a crucified *Christ flanked by His Mother and Saint John the Evangelist*, as we may confirm in picture 17 published in DGEMN's Bulletin no. 15 (Castro, 1939).

Also on the main façade we should also highlight the Romanesque flavoured crevice that, above a subtle cornice, illuminates the central nave. Flanking the protruding volume there are



Church. West façade. Portal before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: DGEMN's Bulletin no. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Armando de Mattos (1951: 97-124) suggested a topographic reading of this Monastery's decoration. In a descriptive work, this author tried to make an inventory of the decorative motifs of the Monastery's Church, together with the corresponding map for an easier and more accurate identification. There was still an attempt to produce a monographic reading of this Monastery that, despite contributing with several historical data and the publication of sources, in matters of the artistic study itself, it was essentially focused on providing a stratigraphic reading of the purely Romanesque elements of the Church (Santos, 1969).









Church. North façade. Nave. Portal.



Church. North apse chapel.

two buttresses that end in a ramp. In the north and south elevations we also see buttresses that mark the rhythm of the nave's lateral wall. Only slightly protruding and plain, they stand on a base with three steps; inside, they correspond to the adorsed columns that separate the bays of the collateral naves. These giants alternate with narrow crevices. The crevices that laterally illuminate the central nave are larger and more monumental: they have columns that, together with their capitals, support dihedral tori, proving the influence of the city of Porto once again. The cornice is supported by plain corbels in both naves.

While the north portal was intended for public service, the south one would probably serve the monastic area. And because they were opened on the Church's fourth bay, they turn it into a sort of transept, according to a solution that Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida considered as being associated with the functionality of the space and is found in other churches from the same period (Almeida, 1978: 33). The first one has three archivolt with square edges that are slightly pointed, a feature that reveals and confirms the late nature of this Church. Almost in front of the portal that allows accessing the tower – which we shall discuss in its own chapter – this symmetrical portal includes themes that belong specifically to the Romanesque Period: the intertwined snakes, the mermaid and the birds with entwined necks. Its impostes are decorated with chains of circles.

The capitals that crown the half columns that are embedded on the wall of the north apse chapel show more refined shapes; these columns are surely playing a supporting role that is obviously associated with the vault. Besides the motifs of the palmettes, the mermaid and the serpent, we find the same motif – whose origin lies in the city of Braga – that we have already identified on the main portal. These columns with bulb-shaped bases alternate with plain corbels that help to support the cornice. Halfway up there is a chequered frieze that helps to ennoble the ensemble. There is a narrow crevice surmounted by a single voussoir that, for be-



Church. South apse chapel. Frieze and crevice.

ing different from the other sculptural motifs, seems to be an example of the reuse of elements from a building that existed before the current one. We can feel the bevelled but in the design of the phytomorphic motifs.

On the back elevation we should notice the quadrilobed oculus that surmounts the chancel arch and, together with the aforementioned crevices, illuminates the interior of the main nave. There is a rich motif carved in relief on its intradorsum. It is the motif that Joaquim de Vasconcelos described as “rope-shaped; broken and linked arches; high-relief”, corresponding to no. 25 of the aforementioned inventory (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 72).

After the extradorsum of the – currently Baroque – chancel we still see part of the south apse chapel that, however, was truncated by the building that was attached to this side of the Church and took advantage of the primitive cloister’s location. It is quite similar to the north apse chapel but here we should highlight the fact that its corbels have sculptures with anthropomorphic motifs and also the possible reuse of a bevelled-cut voussoir that surmounts the narrow crevice located on the chapel’s top.

So, let us go inside the Church. At first glance, the emphasis put on the granite of the walls and pillars is more than obvious; this appearance was only restored in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Castro, 1939: 25), as we shall see. The pillars are cruciform and their role is to support the diaphragm arches and the ribs that rest on their columns.

Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida (1978: 77) finds pre-Romanesque influences in the origin and perduration of the diaphragm arches. Usually associated with triple chevets that have circular chapels and stone ceilings, diaphragm arches provide the walls with an increased firmness and also help to support the ceilings (usually made of wood) by dividing the high part of the Church in bays and, therefore, they are a result of the pre-Romanesque architecture and its





Church. Triumphal arch. Oculus.



Church. South apse chapel.



Church. General interior view from the central nave.



Church. Naves. Diaphragm arches.

atmosphere (Almeida, 1986: 93-94). In most of the churches that have already been referenced there are diaphragm arches<sup>24</sup>.

This is one of the spaces with most rhythm in Portuguese Romanesque architecture (Almeida, 1986: 100), which does not alter the fact that it reveals several irregularities in terms of design, different arcade solutions (some are round, others broken and others are almost shaped as horseshoes), as well as a technical and stylistic diversity in terms of imposts, capitals and column bases (Almeida, 1986: 100). Through a brief analysis of its capitals, Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida was able to suggest four different construction stages for this monastic Church: the oldest part corresponds to the central area of the south nave, which was followed by the chevet and an extension to the east; the north nave and the west part of the Church were built next; the last elements to be built were the chancel's roof and the diaphragm and rib arcades (Almeida, 1986: 100). So, the temple's oldest elements which were reused in this area may date back to the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Considering the fact that its arches are broken, the presence of the quadrilobed rosette above the chancel arch, as well as the connections established between this and other monuments from the Sousa basin or the Porto region, the end of the first quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century has been suggested as an average date for its construction (Almeida, 1986: 100). We agree with this proposal.

<sup>24</sup> The Braga cathedral, the Monastery of Pombeiro (Felgueiras), the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel), the church of Paderne (Melgaço) and, partially, the church of São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim) are some examples.



The archaeological surveys that have been recently conducted inside the Church, close to the north wall and in the alignment of the first bay of the naves confirmed the existence of two construction stages (Fontes, 2012: 4-5). The oldest one was identified by its good quality masonry, composed of well-cut granite blocks arranged in regular horizontal rows. The later stage is revealed by the lower quality of the masonry, which is now composed of larger blocks with different heights.

The capitals that fill that Church's interior stand out for their rich thematic variety. They were all mapped and identified by Armando de Mattos (1951: 105-109) and repeat some of the themes we find on the portals and on the external face of the apse chapels. However, we should note the capital that supports the wall rib of the last bay, close to the apse on the Epistle side, which the scholar António Coelho de Sousa Oliveira<sup>25</sup> considered as being a variant of the psychomachic<sup>26</sup> theme of *Daniel in the lions' den* (Oliveira, 1966: 655-663). So, through the analysis of this theme, the author proved the reach of his working hypothesis. So, based on its formal analysis, he tried to identify the Mesopotamian source of the theme and the formal evolution it went through until it reached the Western world. Only then could he progress to a simultaneous assessment of its different representations and of the consequent effects in terms of interpretation. His analysis finishes with the identification of the theme's inversion in the portico of the Monastery of Pombeiro (Oliveira, 1964), where it takes on the opposite meaning: while, traditionally, this theme represents the fight of the virtuous soul against devilish temptations, which are symbolically shaped as wild animals, its opposite intends to remind the Christians, when they enter the temple, of the need to be virtuous, to fight sin and avoid being caught by temptations (Oliveira, 1966: 658-661). So, this is the theme described above, which



Cloister. Archaeological surveys.

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Church. South nave. Wall rib. Capital on the Epistle side.



Monastery of Pombeiro (Felgueiras). Church. West façade. Portal. Voussoir.

<sup>25</sup> On the important contribution of this – almost ignored – author for the development of the historiography of the Portuguese Romanesque style, please read Botelho (2010a: 252).

<sup>26</sup> According to this author, the psychomachic themes allude to the "fights of the soul", expressed through the struggle between vices and virtues, good and evil, as suggested by Aurelius Prudentius, a Latin-Christian poet of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in his *Psychomachia*. On this matter, please read Oliveira (1966: 655-663).





Church. North apse chapel. Frieze.



Church. North nave. Wall rib. Capital on the Epistle side.

is so commonly found in this region, despite the fact that its origin lies in Braga, as was described by Armando de Mattos as follows: “a kneeling full-body human figure wearing a hood and holding two lions (?) that are climbing the volutes by their throats” (Mattos, 1951: 108).

As we know, the use of sculpted human figures is not very common within the context of our Romanesque style and is definitely not a characterising element of the so-called “nationalized Romanesque”. So this is the reason why we also highlight the capital that is located right in front of the one we described above, on the pillar and supporting the same rib: according to Armando de Mattos, it represents “three human figures; the central one is a female figure, the one on the observer’s right holds a sword (?) in its left hand” (Mattos, 1951: 106). In general, the remaining capitals repeat the themes already identified in other portals together with other themes of animal, botanic and phytomorphic nature.

Judging by the impostes decorated with the so-called stylised ivy that are still preserved in the chevet, surmounting the Romanesque capitals, as well as by the grooves that decorate the triumphal arch, we may imagine the monumentality of the original ensemble, had it not been the replacement of the Romanesque chancel by another one that addressed the new Baroque liturgical precepts. Taking a close look at the remaining traces mentioned above, it seems obvious that part of the walls were reused, masked and, thus, integrated in the new construction. We also think that this apse was not so different from the one in Saint Peter of Ferreira (Paços de Ferreira) both in terms of plan and space, despite the circular interior. That indication is clearly provided by the apse chapels, which are only decorated with a frieze resulting from an extension of the already mentioned impost. So, it was this certainty that led Armando de Mattos to regret the fact that, during the restoration intervention carried out by DGEMN, there was no decision to rebuild the primitive Romanesque chancel.

## The tower

The tower of Travanca has been mentioned many times. Its monumentality is emphasised by the fact that it is a free-standing volume and, as we have already said, one of our highest Medieval towers. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the memoirist and priest Luís Álvares de Sousa described it as being “similar to the ones that are placed above the gates of walled cities” (Sousa, 1758). It stands on the north side of the Church, thus displaying a quadrangular plan. As we shall see further ahead, this volume worked as a bell tower. However, today it stands tall with its crown made of merlons that surround a balcony supported by machicolations, an appearance that resulted from the restoration intervention carried out during DGEMN’s golden age.

The fact that many towers feature merlons and that there are a few with a military nature associated with religious monuments (although these are mainly from the Gothic period), such as the one of the Monastery of Travanca, is enough for many authors to defend the existence of a typically Portuguese typology that shows an obvious military nature, although this is more rhetorical than actually military<sup>27</sup>. In the Middle Ages the tower was seen as a symbol of safety and, in the absence of castles, the Church represented the best fortress (Almeida, 1971: 69). Therefore, regardless of its intended purpose, the religious nature and an alleged military willingness are, in these cases, inseparable. This is yet another reason why the tower of Travanca has been understood as an element of manorial assertion (Almeida, 1986: 100-101).



Tower.



Tower. Crown.

<sup>27</sup> Such relationship is largely due to a historiographical movement that constantly associated the Romanesque architecture with the Reconquest process started by Portuguese first kings. It is within this context that we should understand the discourse of the author of the “Notícia Histórica” [Historical Note] of the DGEMN’s Bulletin when he says that this “robust building was erected as a fortress of faith against the Saracen invaders” (Castro, 1939: 17). However, considering its chronology, more than being coeval with the Reconquest, this architecture is contemporary of the process of territorial reorganization. For further development on this matter, please read Botelho (2010a: 379).







But it is its east portal that has given rise to more comments in terms of the historiography of Romanesque architecture. Despite being rather narrow it is located on the ground level, a feature that proves that the military nature is, in this tower, purely rhetorical. We should not forget that the keeps, the *ex-libris* of the military Romanesque architecture, because they were the last defence stronghold of a castle-like structure, had their entrance door located on the first floor; the access to this door was made through a mobile stair, generally made of wood, as surely was the case in the Castle of Arnoia (Celorico de Basto). Now, if it is in these structures that we may find the direct model that inspired the design of the tower of Travanca, the fact that the entrance door is located on the ground floor corroborates our thesis and, again, we insist, emphasises its rhetorical nature. In fact, we should note that Aarão de Lacerda highlighted the fact that “the connection between this tower and the temple does not seem very obvious, especially from a stylistic standpoint, since the decorations of the two buildings are quite different” (Lacerda, 1942: 239).

Let us describe it. Embedded in the thickness of the wall, the portal of the tower of Travanca does not have any columns or capitals, thus concentrating its decorative elements on its two broken arcades that are only supported by impostes. On the latter we see a typically Romanesque motif carved in relief, which is the theme described by Joaquim de Vasconcelos (1918: 69) as a “vertical, wavy ellipse” and identified with no. 14 in his inventory. Structurally, this portal shows an organization that may already be considered as Gothic and that we may see repeated in many portals from the region; we ought not to find this surprising given the fact that the tower’s chronology also fits into this period, as we have already mentioned. However, and here lies its greatest originality (but also the source of all the debates about this portal), the archivolt proudly show a series of ornaments that, close to a scheme whose origin may be found in the city of Braga, represents affronted animals carved in relief along the voussoirs of the outer archivolt. These animal decorations are not too modelled and show plenty of graphic elements. Such scheme is not unusual in the Tâmega region. We can remember the case of Vila Boa do Bispo. In the internal archivolt we also observe a model that pleased this region and that is the topic of the so-called *beak-heads*, which we may also find in Cárquere (Resende), Fandinhães (Marco de Canaveses) and Tarouquela (Cinfães). On the tympanum we see a very original representation of the *Agnus Dei* [Lamb of God], which is partly bending its knees and holding a cross pattée up high. Associated with the belief that it would stop the entrance of certain beings, it is one of the most common themes found in our tympana, despite its variants (Almeida, 1971: 107, 111-112).

The evolved character of the portal’s organisation shows a clear contrast with the elementary nature of its graphic elements. So, it is the archaic design of its ornaments that has led some authors to raise two possibilities. According to Armando de Mattos (1951: 98) or Aarão de Lacerda (1942: 300), these are reused materials. The reason that leads the first author to accept the “possibility that they [the materials] came from another place is the fact that he finds a certain disharmony between the rich ensemble of the tympanum and its archivolt and the emptiness of the wall on which they stand” (Mattos, 1951: 110). For Reynaldo dos Santos, the archaic nature of this ensemble, which is representative of 12<sup>th</sup>-century art, results from an



Church. North façade and tower.

interpretation made by a regional artist “using a material that is hostile to refinements such as granite” (Santos, 1955: 59).

There is a different and more recent proposal developed by Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida. According to this author, this is already an attempt to imitate the Romanesque style from the city of Braga that, for being so rude, finds itself “so distant from the prototypes that it already suggests that Romanesque sculptural tradition is extinct, thus being the result of an elementary revivalism” (Almeida, 2001: 123). However, he highlights “that it is still an example of the resistance and the prestige of the Romanesque art that is relived in the small portal of a work that may be dated back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century” (Almeida, 1986: 100). In other words, while for the first authors the archaism we see here is a result of its antiquity, the last author clearly associated it with a resistance of Romanesque shapes.

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

We noticed that, over the Modern Period, the Church was often subject to interventions – some deeper and structural, while others caused less impact and were focused on adding integrated assets; most of them were placed inside the building, but there were some items applied on the outside, like the already mentioned *Crucifixion* panel placed above the tympanum of the axial door.

Given that the Church was not subject to substantial changes in terms of its Romanesque construction, the Medieval space was gradually adapted to the increasing needs of the monastic and lay communities and to the normative and liturgical guidelines resulting from the Council of Trent (1545-1563). We should highlight the construction of a medium choir (which was already mentioned in 1568) and the institution of lateral altars and altarpieces (five when DGEMN's works began). A pulpit was built, taking advantage of one of the columns that divides the central nave from the south nave and, before the purist interventions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Church was almost entirely plastered; the ceilings were coated with white stucco (including occasional decorations) and the walls coated with mortar. In this respect, we highlight the frescoes; their only remain is a painting exhumed during the reconstruction works in which we can still see the image of a seating *Virgin who is breastfeeding the Divine Infant*; we shall focus on it further on (Castro, 1939: 19-20). Painting of the *Martyrdom of Christ with two supporting Angels* were found on the chancel's vault, which “belonged to the Abbot” and seems to have been rebuilt between 1575 e 1587, according to the memoirist's report of 1758 (Sousa, 1758). The altarpiece of the main altar was manufactured during this period, as well as the images that were displayed there in that year: Saint Benedict and Saint Bernard flanking the patron, the Saviour, which was also a full-body sculpture.

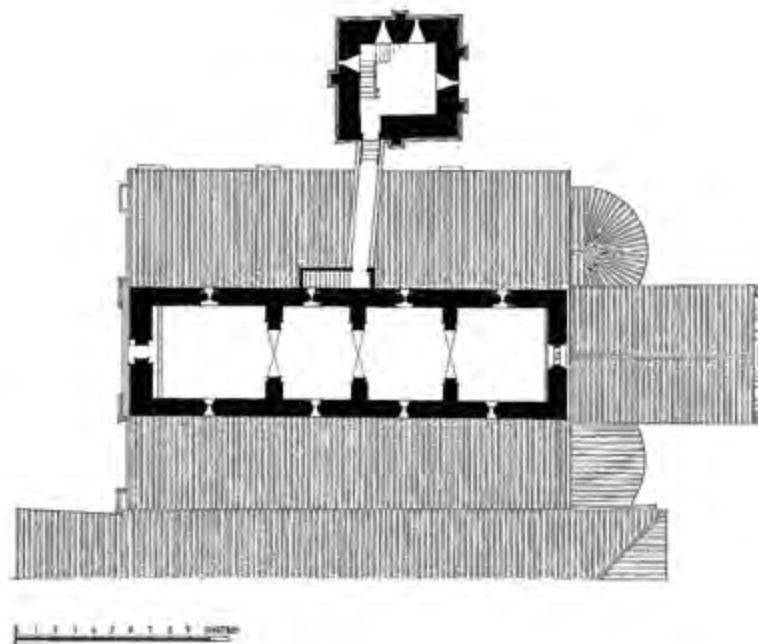


Church. North apse chapel. Mural painting (missing). Source: IHRU archive.



Church. Interior view before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: DGEMN's Bulletin no. 15.





Church. Church plan before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

Because the Church is currently deprived of most of these elements, the visitor is now allowed to walk inside a temple that is very different from the one used by religious and lay people between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In fact, even the Church's acoustics probably changed dramatically between the 13<sup>th</sup> century and our days. The human voices and the sound that came from the organs that existed in the choir (mentioned in 1644) interacted in multiple ways with the spaces that were, in the meantime, transformed.

Anyone who entered the Church of Travanca in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century had to "pass through the three-naved" galilee first (destroyed in 1568) and would enter a space with signs of decay. Standing right at the entrance of the central nave, the observer would see the "old" high-choir with stalls and organs taking up the central bay. It could be accessed externally through the tower (and later through a door opened on the south wall) which limited the cloister. Looking straight ahead, the observer would see the chancel's "used" altarpiece and laterally it was possible to catch a glimpse of two "vaulted" chapels. This description was left to us by an inquirer from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Ferro, 1987), who considered this work as old and ancient. However, the following years and centuries witnessed deep reforms. We shall focus only on the Church and sacristy, although the major works of the Modern Period had to do with the adjoining buildings, namely the cloister, the dormitories and other outbuildings regarding which Francisco Craesbeeck leaves us a short description (1992: 290, 294).

In 1726 there were already five "altars" (the word is Francisco Craesbeeck's) besides the main one. This altar was the location of the images of the Saviour (at the centre), Saint Benedict (on the Gospel side) and Saint Bernard (on the Epistle side). The tabernacle was displayed in the apse chapel located on the Gospel side (the chronicler calls it collateral chapel) and in the cross-



Church. Sacristy.

ing, on the same side there was an altar dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary that was privileged by a Brief from 1720 (Craesbeeck, 1992: 301).

Along the nave, on the north wall, there was the altar of Saint Amaro (or Saint Maurus, as referred in 1758), and on the south wall there was another altar with a Marian invocation, this time dedicated to the Virgin of the Remedies. In the second apse chapel there was a Christological themed altar with the invocations of the Dead Lord and Our Lady of Sorrows (Craesbeeck, 1992: 300-301). In the sacristy there was another altar with its corresponding altarpiece, which was already mentioned in 1716 and is probably the one that currently exists, almost unchanged.

After 1726, two other altars were built, because during the transformations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there is a reference to the “demolition and removal of seven completely worthless wooden altars”. The author of the report located them as follows: “three along the north wall, two close to the south wall, one in the apse chapel located on the same side and another one in the chancel” (Castro, 1939: 26). One of them would surely be the altar of Our Lady of Conception, which is mentioned in the chapters of 1731 (when referring to the gilding, the upholstery and a silver crown for an image with that name) (Silva, 2012: 15) and 1758. This year marks the existence of “an Oratory”, placed in the middle of the Church, which depicted “a beautiful image of Saint Benedict, while still a young man, which works many miracles, as shown by the offers found next to it”.

Other notes we have focus on purchases, repairs or improvements related to a series of sculptures, namely the ones of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Anne, devotions associated with images mentioned, respectively, in 1719 and 1732.

The remaining sculptures arranged along the lateral and collateral altarpieces of the Church of Travanca were moved to the sacristy. Two images representing Christ remained in the ecclesiastical space, which was deprived of the seven altars as mentioned before: one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (in the north apse chapel) and another placed above a lateral corbel in the chancel, depicting the Church’s patron saint, the Saviour. The images of a crucified Christ, Saint Benedict of



Church. Chancel. Main altarpiece.



Church. South apse chapel. Altar.  
Sculpture. Virgin of the Conception.



Church. Chancel. Wall on the Gospel side. Pedestal.  
Sculpture. The Saviour.

Nursia and Saint Anthony of Lisbon are also displayed in this space, on a modest Baroque altarpiece from the National Period [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)]. On the south wall of the main chapel, we find small sculptures of Saint Joseph and the Infant Jesus. An expressive sculpture of the Virgin of the Conception was displayed in the south apse chapel. On this image, manufactured at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we have mentioned that it was subject to an intervention in 1731, when a silver crown was added to it.

The image of the Saviour, which repeats the most frequent model of this representation – a standing Christ pointing towards the Kingdom of Heavens with His right hand and holding the Globus on the left hand – is currently placed discretely on the chancel's north wall. This is a work from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that still shows signs of the beautiful upholstery which was applied over the white tunic. But it is the series of sculptures and paintings placed on the sacristy's chests of drawers that really draws our attention, either for their plastic and pictorial qualities or for the fact that they show the interaction between the monastic and the vernacular devotions, given that the Church of Travanca was simultaneously a monastic and a parish temple.

The sacristy, described in 1568 as being “small with its old cabinets” (Silva, 2012: 7), is the result of the major building works campaign carried out in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries documented in the extensive list of improvements mentioned in the corresponding chapters 2012: 26). On the intradorsum of the door providing access to the lobby (or ante-sacristy) the date 1585 presumably marks a first extension stage of this area, which was later renovated according to the Baroque taste between the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Built according to a rectangular plan adjoining the Church's south wall, this structure includes two



Church. Sacristy. Intrados of the entrance door. Inscription.





chests of drawers placed laterally along the east and west walls. On the top there is a niche or chapel, which is separated from the main body by a round arch and accommodates a gilded woodwork altar and altarpiece from the National Baroque Period. There is a record from 1716 regarding a gilding campaign carried out in this structure (Silva, 2012: 14) and the dates of the installation of textile ornaments as well as of the execution of the paintings on the arch's wall are perfectly identified. In 1758, "at a devotee's expense, the Sacristy's altar received a crimson Damask drape with a silk galloon, a wooden frontal finely painted on both sides, showing a fake Damask with beautiful and numerous ingeniously designed branches, and its oil-painted platform, and green taffeta covering the altar. § Someone had the fine idea of painting the arch's wall in various colours, also faking a beautiful drape" (Silva, 2012: 39).

This offer from an anonymous patron seems to fit into a period of major renovation of the space and its furniture that spanned between 1752 and 1755, as proven by the documents collected by Domingos de Pinho Brandão, which record the renovation of the chests of drawers, the purchase of a new cabinet and the repair of another, as well as the installation of a new table for the chalices (Brandão, 1987, 117-118). The chest of drawers was probably trimmed with gold, lacquered, and included raised panels and eight new drawers. The new cabinet was to store amices. This renovation should be completed by painting works in the sacristy; the writer was probably referring himself to the marbled effects on the openings' masonry and not to the coffered ceiling.

The latter is a remarkable carpentry and painting work expressing the preference for Classic motifs that have direct or symbolic connections to the religious semantic conveyed by the Holy Scriptures. So, the depictions shown on the panels of the coffered ceiling of Travanca, such as fountains, the Phoenix, trees and floral motifs, imaginary depictions of temples and towers







alternating with the heraldic symbols of the Benedictine Order and liturgical items, allude to the resurrection, purity, spiritual renovation and, of course, to the importance of the time and Men who used this space. In fact, it was here – where most lay people were not allowed to enter – that the priests solemnly prepared themselves for the sacrifice of the mass.

Currently this space displays an important series of images, a heterogeneous collection that shows the transition between the Mannerist canons and the introduction of Baroque formulae. From the first stage, we highlight the foppish representations of Saint Maurus of Glanfeuil (also popularly known as Saint Maur) and Saint Benedict (Calado, 2008u, 2008v), as well as the interesting series of reliquary busts and arms<sup>28</sup>. Our Lady with the Infant on Her arms (which may well have been the Virgin of the Rosary found on the altar mentioned before)<sup>29</sup>, the lying Christ (Calado, 2008f) and Our Lady of Sorrows (Calado, 2008i)<sup>30</sup> are already from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Baroque; they would have surely integrated the ensemble that represented the Passion and Death of Christ which was once placed in the Church's south apse chapel. The noble Saint Barbara is truly remarkable and the greatest example of the plastic treatment achieved by an experienced artisan from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (Calado, 2008t); this devotion is constant within ecclesiastical contexts due to the versatility of her intercession against fires or thunderstorms. The representation of Saint Benedict of Nursia (Calado, 2008p) displayed on the main altar also deserves special highlight.

Despite the fact that, due to their poor pictorial quality, these paintings are not an ensemble that truly expresses Travanca's economic and artistic power, we should highlight the small paintings with scenes from the *Via Crucis*, which date back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Calado, 2008c, 2008e, 2008s), the small canvas with the depiction of *Christ in the Garden* (Calado, 2008g), which is probably earlier, as the four boards with two pairs of holy figures, both from the 17<sup>th</sup> century: the apostles *Saint Peter* (Calado, 2008r) and *Saint Paul* (Calado, 2008q), and the patriarchs *Melchizedek* (Calado, 2008h) and *Abraham* (Calado, 2008a). Given their dimensions, it is almost certain that all these paintings are the only remains of altars that were demolished or replaced over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; they could have been part of predellas and other spaces of the integrated assets that marked the space of the ancient Romanesque Church<sup>31</sup>.

28 Three busts (Calado, 2008b, 2008n, 2008o) and four arms (Calado, 2008j, 2008k, 2008l, 2008m). It is likely that this set is associated with the purchase or renovation of the collection of sacred material and it possibly dates back to the transition period that spanned between the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Francisco Craesbeeck's information is ambiguous, because it mentions only two arms, one piece of the Holy Cross (which we cannot currently identify) and several relics that may have been used for the commissioning of the busts or belong to a later period: "this features a good sacristy, to the south, and in it a closet with the following relics: a silver cross and, inside, a gold cross, with the Holy Cross; between the arms of the cross, 4 relics of saints; another two silver arms and a bone from the martyr Saint Deodatus; and in the other one, another one from Saint Viturian; another sanctuary with a gilded silver monstrance with several relics; one other triangular gilded silver sanctuary, with the bone of a saint" (Craesbeeck, 192: 301).

29 The memoirist from 1758 mentions an image of Our Lady of the Rosary placed on the altar with a stepped plinth that used to be in the sacristy. This sculpture was used in processions and had been commissioned by friar Xisto da Purificação, the triennial abbot between 1605 and 1608, and also between 1623 and 1626 (Sousa, 1758).

30 It is difficult for us to accept the late date that is ascribed to it (17<sup>th</sup> century), considering the permanence of models and the treatment given to its anatomy (especially to its face) and to its clothes. Although the recent polychromy and flesh tones do not allow us to draw conclusions about its original decoration, we assume this is a Virgin of the Calvary whose movements, despite being contained, are already close to the Baroque virtuosity that was translated from painting into the Baroque sculptures of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

31 Because it was designed for an area other than the Church and the sacristy, we did not analyse the painting of the Counts *Teresa and Henrique*, which dates back to 1780 and was made for the hall where it was put up in 1783, as confirmed by the assemblies held in that year: "In the Hall there is a big painting of this Monastery's Donor; and Five big Maps, all of them framed" (Calado, 2008d).



Church. Sacristy. Chest. Sculpture. Lying Christ.





Church. Sacristy. Chest. Sculpture. Saint Barbara.



Church. Chancel. Main altarpiece on the Gospel side. Sculpture. Saint Benedict of Nursia.

The Treasure, which was remarkable in 1758, was kept in the sacristy; it was made up of relics of which there are still some specimens, such as the “four wooden arms, one with the relic that includes bones from the forty martyrs. Another with the bone of Saint Deodatus, and another with a bone of Martyr Saint Juliana. There is another one with a bone of Saint Venturine” (Sousa, 1758)<sup>32</sup>. In addition to these anatomical reliquaries, there was a silver cross with fragments of the Holy Cross, an image of Saint Benedict placed on the sacristy’s altar with unspecified relics on the chest, two half-bodies and two reliquaries – one shaped like a pyramid and the other shaped like a monstrance – commissioned by Friar Xisto da Purificação; the latter contains the holy remains of several saints<sup>33</sup>.

Among the illustrious figures associated with Travanca, the memoirist from 1758 mentions Friar Pedro de Basto, who died with a reputation of sanctity and was buried “under the entrance of the chancel” of the Monastery’s Church (Sousa, 1758).

<sup>32</sup> In the Christian book of sermons there are two references to “forty Martyrs”: one to the people who were tortured in Sebaste or Armenia (330 AD) and the other to the Jesuits who were captured and killed by the Calvinists. It is likely that Travanca’s relics are associated with this last event, as corroborated by the black sleeves that cover two of the arms, since black was the colour of the Jesuitical habit. On this issue, please read Osswald (2008: 249-268). Saint Venturine is a Benedictine monk who was tortured in Messina in 543 (Réau, 2012: 335).

<sup>33</sup> Saint Gregory the Great, Saint Mary Magdalene, the Martyrs of Cardena, Saint Ursula, Saint Vincent, Saint Peter, the Innocent Saints, Saint Catherine, Saint Placid, Saint Zeno and others who are not named (Sousa, 1758).

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

Little do we know about the state of repair of the Church of Travanca in 1864. Such is due to the fact that the parish priest, “Francisco d’Anunciaçam Magalhães”, informed the Director of Public Works of Porto that, for having been “over thirty days on thermal waters”, after arriving in Travanca he sought, first of all, to deal with his “parish affairs which I [him, the priest] consider to be in greater need to be taken care of”<sup>34</sup>. However, despite the fact that he apologised at the time “for all the mistakes that might have been made”, we do not know if he provided information to the competent authorities about the foundation and state of repair of the Monastery of Travanca at a later date.

So, it was necessary to enter the 20<sup>th</sup> century to have further information about this monastic ensemble, which was classified in its entirety as a National Monument in January 1916<sup>35</sup>. It is according to this condition, and due to the fact that it is considered a building with enough legitimacy to “have a place among the monuments that, in one way or another, are the foundations of our History” (Castro, 1939: 16), that we see the Church and tower of this Benedictine Monastery being subject to an evident restoration intervention during the 1930’s, which is shown in the Bulletin published right before the Double Centennial of the Motherland and the Portuguese Nationality.

In fact, according to a noticeable preference for monuments associated with the period of the formation of the Nationality, the Romanesque buildings underwent interventions that were all guided by the same principles, since they were intended for the same purposes, as well as carried out and monitored by the same institution: the DGEMN<sup>36</sup>. Since the monument’s primitive state was considered as the purest one, because it was related to its origin and to the period meant to be emphasised, DGEMN constantly sought to retrieve that exact state through the elimination of the elements that were seen as being involved in the transformation of its legibility over time. So, the stylistic reintegration defines itself as the most important restoration trend in this period (Tomé, 1998: 18, 20). Besides, the preponderance given to a so-called primitive state to the detriment of elements, which date back to a later period, clearly shows the primacy of the historical value over the artistic value<sup>37</sup>.

At the time, the DGEMN’s technicians had an obvious preference for Medieval buildings, because these lent themselves more easily to the materialisation of their restoration ideas that, ultimately, are the result of an adjustment of the “restoration” theory and the concepts of “unity of style” developed by the French architect Viollet-le-Duc (1997:14-34). Besides, the DGEMN’s selection criteria did not always correspond to the real needs and the artistic importance of the buildings (Neto, 1999: 31). This is the reason why the preference for buildings

34 Magalhães, Francisco d’Anunciaçam – Missiva de 26 de outubro de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREMNDM. *Correspondência igrejas do concelho de Amarante*, 1864-1867. Cx. 3216/3.

35 DECREE no. 2199. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I*. 16 (1916-01-17) 1.

36 About the ideology behind DGEMN’s interventions in Medieval monuments and its materialization, please read Rodrigues (1999: 69-82).

37 For further development on this issue, please read Botelho (2010a: 342).

that show limited transformations in comparison with their primitive state and whose restoration emphasises their nature as models creates a series of restored monuments that, par generalization, is mistaken for an existing programmatic conceptual framework (Tomé, 1998: 21).

So, it is within this context that we should understand the restoration intervention carried out in Travanca and presented to the general public through the Bulletin published in 1939 which explains: “(...) the restoration, guided by the purpose of ensuring a longer and more dignified existence was not intended to produce a complete reconstruction of the primitive building; however, it managed to strengthen – through the most careful aesthetic correction and harmonisation works – the noble architectural and religious traditions that the current building represents” (Castro, 1939: 22-23).

So, in short, new roof structures were built in order to avoid the imminent danger of a general collapse and definitely contain the infiltration of rainwater. This was the answer to mentioned urge to make the monument last for future generations.

The consequences of the so-called “aesthetic correction and harmonisation” were mostly felt in the Church’s body. As we have already mentioned, it included the disassembling and demolition of “seven completely worthless altars that were arranged as follows: three along the north wall, two close to the south wall, one in the apse chapel located on the same side and another one in the chancel” (Castro, 1939: 25). Considering that the altar from the north apse chapel was the only one that could be used, it was then adjusted to the chancel that, as explained, was not restored due to the lack of elements that allowed carrying out that work (Castro, 1939: 25, 27). Furthermore, two masonry altars were built for the apse chapels, “according to their period” (Castro, 1939: 25, 27).

So, it was after the removal of the altar that the already mentioned painting of *Our Lady of the Milk*<sup>38</sup> was discovered on the back wall of the apse chapel, on the Gospel side; it was mentioned at the time and its current whereabouts are unknown (Bessa, 2008: 472). The first treatment was carried out by an Italian painter called Augusto Cecconi Principi and, at some point during the process, it was deemed necessary to detach it (Silva, 2012: 37). Only then was the fresco, or its remains, taken to the Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon to be “properly preserved” (Castro, 1939: 20). So, it was possible for the north apse chapel to retrieve the “noble simplicity it had lost” (Castro, 1939: 20).

Pursuing this goal of freeing the temple, the high-choir was demolished because, due to its large volume, “it covered half of the space bordered by the walls of the church’s body with shadows” (Castro, 1939: 19). However, they did not stop here; the pulpit attached to the last pillar of the central nave, which was accessed through a stone stairway, was also demolished. After that, the stucco that imitated white marble was completely removed from the vaults, a task that was carried out together with the “complete removal of the plastering mortar from the internal and external walls, as well as from the pillars, bases, capitals, archivolts, etc., thus uncovering the precious remaining Romanesque ornamentation” (Castro, 1939: 25). After the Church’s pavement was lowered, the bases of the pillars were repaired. To finish this search for



Church. Interior view after the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



Church. North apse chapel.

<sup>38</sup> Analysing this picture’s image, Paula Bessa (2008: 472) says it is a “careful painting in terms of “figurative” drawing and modelling, as well as in terms of the treatment given to the background motifs”.



the retrieval of a Medieval atmosphere, the two large rectangular windows that flanked the portal of the main façade, opened during the Modern Period, were replaced by narrow crevices (Castro, 1939: 21). The same happened to the window that surmounted this portal, as well as to “all other windows located on the lateral façades that illuminate the three naves” (Castro, 1939: 21). By way of example, we find an obvious similarity between the action taken in order to “free” the Church of Travanca and those that were applied during the intervention that was carried out by the same institution in the Porto cathedral<sup>39</sup>.

Reynaldo dos Santos publicly praised the intervention carried out here, which he classifies as one of the most judicious restorations of a Romanesque building because it corrected “many of the additions that were disfiguring” and hiding the primitive construction (Santos, 1955: 57). According to this author, “in general, both here and in Rates, the reintegration works were well-made, and we need only compare its appearance before and after the restoration to acknowledge the benefits that were achieved” (Santos, 1955: 61).

The tower was one of the main concerns of this intervention, which aimed at emphasising its alleged military nature. First and foremost, the elements that characterised it as a bell tower were eliminated because, in the Modern Period, there was the decision “to build a large-sized belfry turret above the entire space taken up by the roof and the battlements destroying all the crowning merlons, had been taken” (Castro, 1939: 22). In short: this element was demolished and, consequently, a separate belfry was built in the churchyard, close to the apse; as a result of the reintegration works, the tower became, again, “the owner of the merlons it had lost” (Castro, 1939: 22). In addition to these works there was a special concern in turning the two buildings (the tower and the Church) into independent volumes. The fact is that, as we have already made reference to and is plainly visible in the photographs taken before this intervention, until the 1930’s there was a stone footbridge that formed an arch and connected the second floor of the tower to the elevated area of the central nave, thus allowing direct access to the choir. So, it was demolished. The tower thus became definitely “independent” (Castro, 1939: 22).

As we may infer from what has been said above, the image of the Monastery of Travanca we know today owes a lot to this intervention that was completed in 1939; so, we also add that this is a good example of how the study of the restoration campaigns – especially when they have such an interventionist nature in terms of legibility – becomes essential for the study of any building – and particularly of a Romanesque building of such greatness.

Together with this deep campaign, a service road was opened in order to allow accessing the Monastery through National Road 15 and there were several conservation works carried out in the parish residence (Silva, 2012: 37-38). We should not forget that these interventions usually included improvements works that were carried out on the building’s surroundings in order to give them an increased monumentality. It is within this context that we should understand the “interruption of the cemetery and the removal of the chapels and graves which were close to the Church to a new location” (Castro, 1939: 25). In this respect, we should add that the archaeological surveys recently conducted between the north portal and the tower confirmed the



Church. West façade and tower before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: DGEMN’s Bulletin no. 15.



Church. Chancel and apse before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: DGEMN’s Bulletin no. 15.

<sup>39</sup> On this matter, please read Botelho (2006).

existence of graves in this space during the Medieval Period (Fontes, 2012: 2-3); in the 1930's this space was renovated and accommodated new functions.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we notice that there were several conservation works carried out in the Church of Travanca. We cannot not forget that the major reintegration was still very recent at the time, so the only need that was felt was to maintain what was already there<sup>40</sup>. It was also during this period that the monastic outbuildings of Travanca were adapted to work as Correctional Facility for Minors (Silva, 2012: 38; Basto, 2007).

As for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as far as we know, there was a project divided into four stages: "Treatment and preservation of the nave's roofs and ceilings; External preservation works; Internal preservation works; and External improvements"<sup>41</sup>. The improvement of the churchyard was also planned<sup>42</sup>. We believe that this ambitious project from 2005, preceded by the corresponding preliminary study<sup>43</sup>, did not go beyond drawings and good intentions. We were not able to verify whether it was actually implemented.

Within the scope of the integration of this Monastery in the Route of the Romanesque, in 2012, a new project aimed at its "conservation, protection and enhancement" was developed. Its first stage was implemented, focusing on the Church's roofs (which were actually one of the priorities) and on the conduction of works in the tower (Malheiro, 2012: 11). We also highlight the urgency of protecting the sacristy and all the valuable assets it shelters (Malheiro, 2012: 11). This project was developed together with an in-depth historical study by Mariana Silva (2012) focusing on the collection of sources, as well as on the conduction of several archaeological surveys by Luís Fontes (2012). We should highlight that these surveys, besides identifying the ditches that correspond to the foundation of the Church and tower, confirmed the "absence of any foundation or basis that might be associated with an alleged narthex. So, we may infer that this element never existed, at least in according to a building solution consistent with the preserved Romanesque model" (Fontes, 2012: 4). [MLB / NR]

Following the architectural project, the preservation works, which began in 2013 and went on until the end of 2014, focused on the preservation of the external surfaces, namely roofs, walls and openings of the Church and the adjoining tower. In view of the urgent need to protect the assets kept in the sacristy, the intervention on the roofs was extended in order to cover the area occupied by this space and by the halls adjacent to the Church through the south transept door. There were also works to preserve the Church's pavements and halls, as well as the stairs' woodwork and the tower's pavement. The celebration space, including the Church's furniture and the choir, was renovated and the wind guard was redesigned. [RR]

40 Considering the large number of interventions that were carried out, namely in terms of roof repairs, wood replacements or the electrification and installation of a sound system in the building, we shall avoid this matter in our study. Only a work with a monographic scope would justify their thorough analysis. For further information on this matter, please read Silva (2012: 38) and Basto (2007). The highlight given to the intervention carried out in the 1930's is justified by the changes felt in the monument.

41 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM. 2506, Cx. 33/1 to 33/4.

42 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM. 2506, Cx. 33/7.

43 "Estudo prévio para a conservação e valorização geral da igreja de Travanca – Levantamento, diagnóstico e proposta de intervenção", jan./jun. 2005. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM. 2506, Cx. 33/6.



Church and tower before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



Church and tower during the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

## CHRONOLOGY

11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries: foundation of the Monastery of Travanca;

13<sup>th</sup> century: construction of the Church;

1320: the income of the Church and Monastery is taxed in 1800 Portuguese "libras" to assist the Crusades;

Until around 1492: ruling period of the perpetual abbots;

1492-1565: ruling period of the commendatory abbots;

1568: description of the Monastery's condition according to an inspection ordered by Cardinal Henrique;

1572-1834: ruling period of the triennial abbots;

1678, May 17<sup>th</sup>: date that marks the reconstruction of the monastic quarters (according to Francisco Craesbeeck);

1716-1813: an intensive period of construction and reconstruction activities and artistic investments in furnishings, specifically in terms of the collateral and lateral altars, the choir, the organ and the sacristy;

1720, December 10<sup>th</sup>: date of the Papal Brief granting privileges to the altar of the Virgin of the Rosary;

1834: termination of monastic life and subsequent nationalisation of the congregation's estate;

1916, January 27<sup>th</sup>: the Monastery of Travanca is declared a National Monument;

1939: DGMEN publishes its Bulletin no. 15, dedicated to the restoration project of the Romanesque Church of Travanca;

2010: the Monastery of Travanca becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque's set of monuments;

2013-2014: intervention to preserve the roofs, walls and openings of the Church and the tower.



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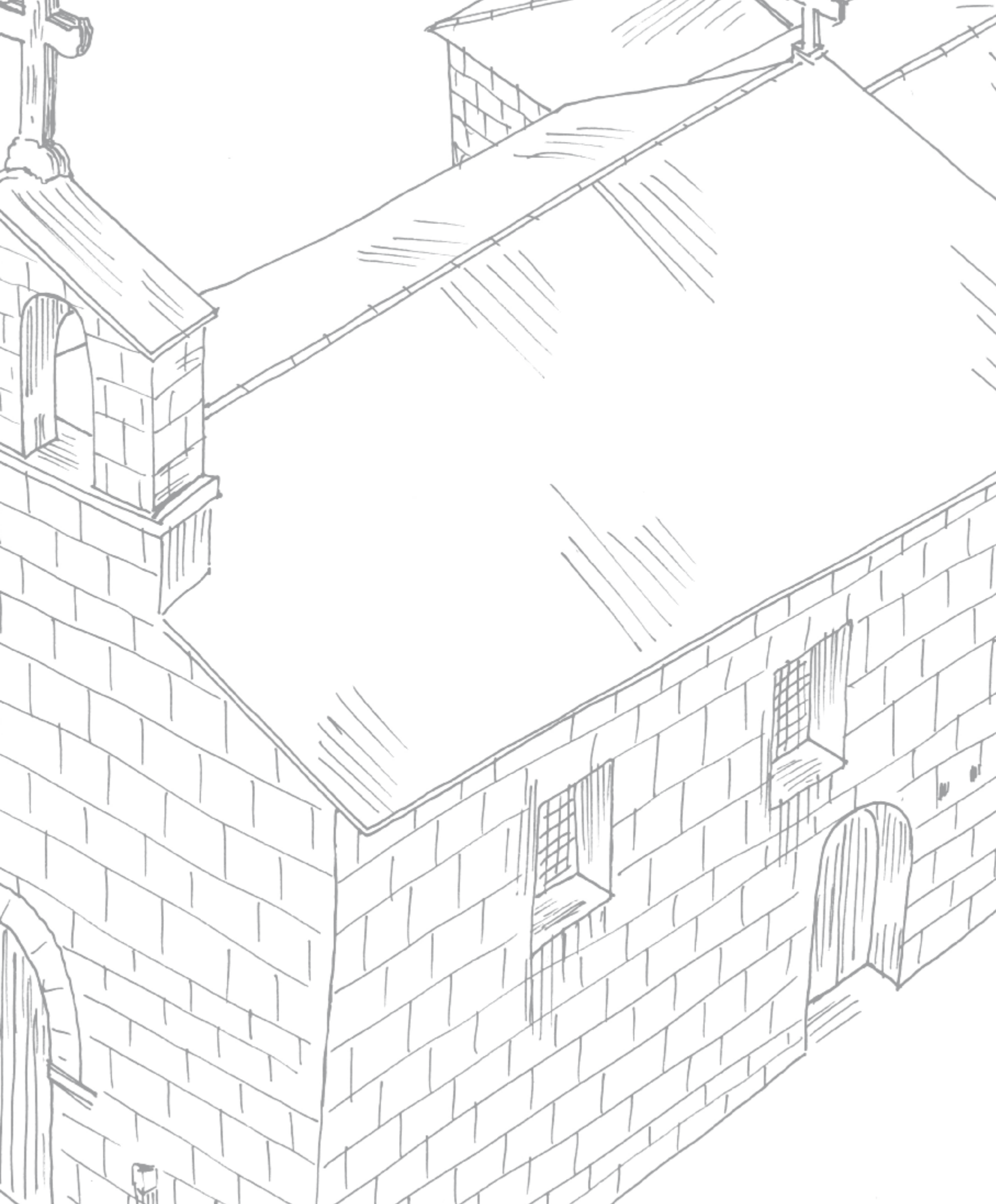
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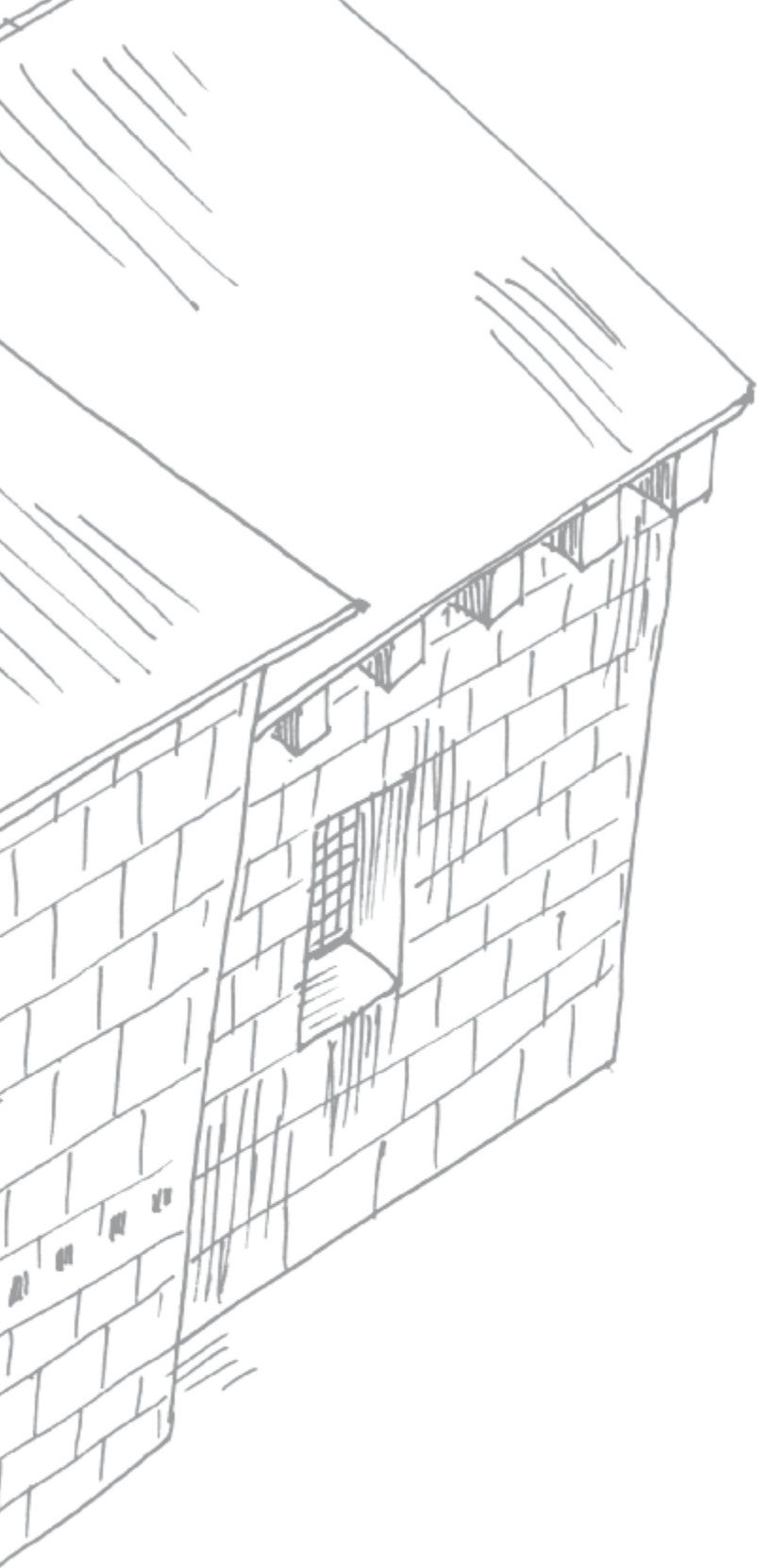
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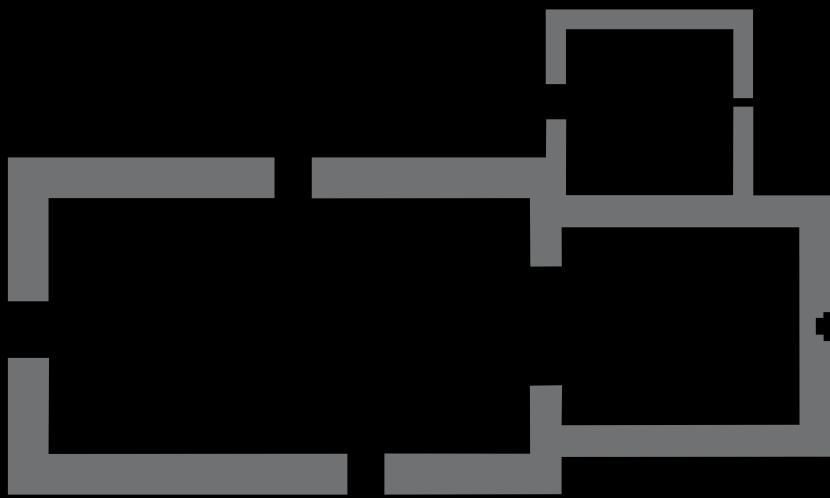






**CHURCH**  
**OF SAINT JAMES**  
**OF VALADARES**  
BAIÃO

**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT JAMES  
OF VALADARES  
BAIÃO



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

**B**ound early on to the Medieval “terra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Baião and its lords, both in ecclesiastical and secular terms, Valadares reveals through its name<sup>1</sup> the importance of geography for the humanization of the territory: a mild valley which allowed the living and vicinity at 500 metres of altitude. In this aspect, the actual deployment of the Church itself reveals the intrinsic connection of the parochialization with the advanced plotting. Built at the centre of the system proposed by Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida (1978: 49) for the subsistence of rural communities, the micro-agricultural-forest system, the Church dedicated to the apostle Saint James the Great is, above all, a sign of the advances of humanization.

As for the lords, the inquiries of 1258 mention that the Church was controlled by a group of eight individuals who were surely connected by consanguinity or marriage bonds (Herculano, 1867: 1161-1162)<sup>2</sup>. And when asked whether the king had rights over the said Church, the parish priest Pedro Soares, said not knowing. So, far from the monarch’s might, the manorial domain was preserved here until a rather late period. Even though the patron saint was associated with a tradition that considered this to be a passage point, the main roads were far: the passage along the Douro river, to the south, and from the old path across Aboboreira, to the north.

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In 1320, the Church of Valadares contributed with 80 “libras” [former Portuguese currency unit] to the Crusades (Almeida & Peres, 1971: 96). Considering that the Monastery of Ancede (Baião) was taxed in 550 “libras” and the church of Grilo (Baião) in 15 “libras”, we may say that this was an abbey with moderate revenues, according to its size and the number of devotees.



Aerial view.

<sup>1</sup> Referred, at least, since 1242 (Moreira, 1989-1990: 89).

<sup>2</sup> One of its patrons or relatives was “Gomecio Menendi” who is possibly the same person who founded the monastery of Jazente (Amarante), as stated by the monastery’s abbess in that same inquiry (Herculano, 1867: 1150).



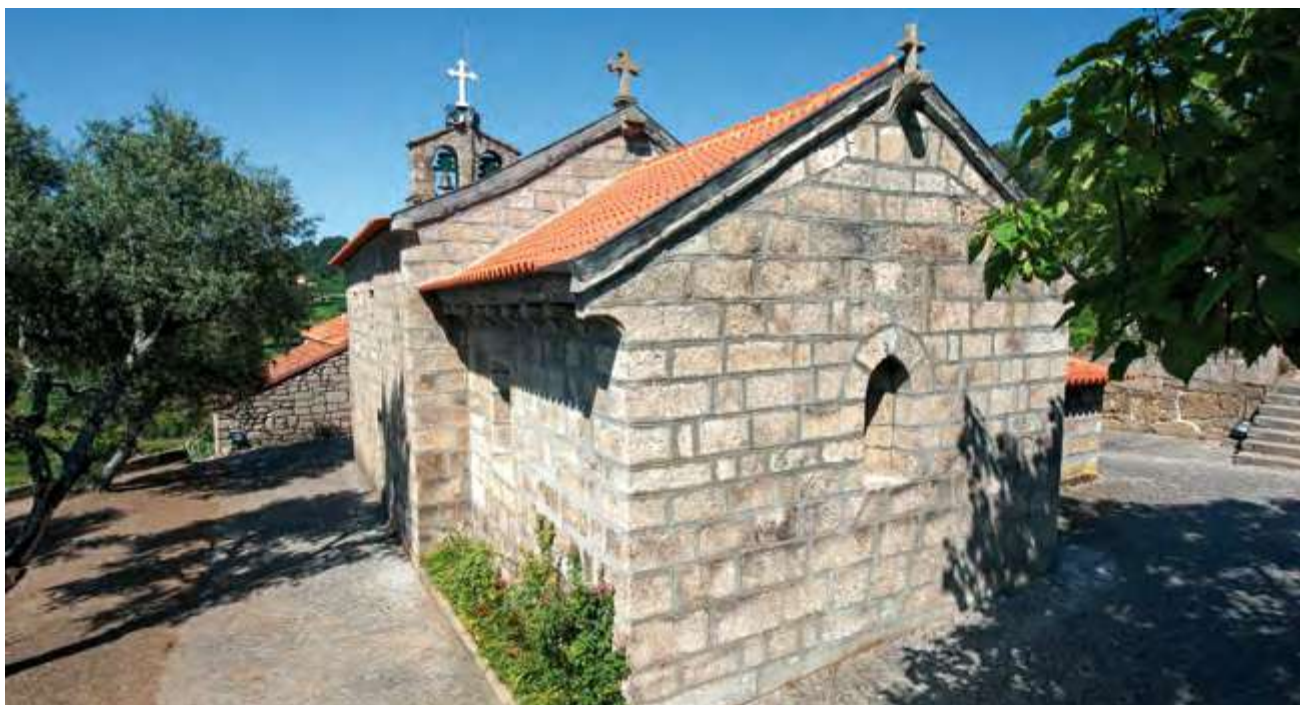
The Modern Period seems to have brought prosperity. The catalogue of the bishops of Porto, from 1623, mentions that the Church had the Blessed Sacrament (its isolation required it) and was a profitable abbey that yielded 300 thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit], despite the fact that the parish counted merely 398 people, including communicants and minors (Cunha, 1623: 430). This profitability was surely related to the inclination of the sons of local nobility to occupy the position of abbot, which was easily granted within a nepotist and clientelistic logic. That was what happened, as we shall see further ahead, to João de Sousa Camelo, the son of Álvaro Gonçalves Camelo, the third lord of Baião.

In 1706 the abbey’s income was of 450 thousand “réis” and its parishioners were distributed by 120 dwellings. The author of this information, Father António da Costa Carvalho, further informs us that Valadares was part of the heritage of the Houses of Baião and Marquises of Aronches – information which, moreover, aligns with the answers of abbot Ricardo Feliz Barroso Pereira, in 1758 (Costa, 1706-1712: 406).

This parish priest categorically indicated the name of the person who, at the time, was the patron and donee of the Church and land: João da Costa Ataíde (Pereira, 1758). Although the abbot makes no reference to it, we know that he was the second son of Gaspar da Costa Ataíde and Catarina Rosa de Lima who, in her turn, was the daughter of Cristóvão de Sousa Coutinho, lord of Baião. So, João de Ataíde obtained the patronage of Valadares through his mother’s side, and this patronage became the local representation of the lords of Baião who had been ruling over the region since the Middle Ages.

Even with the profound changes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Valadares no longer gravitated around Baião, carrying on as a parish of its own<sup>3</sup>.

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East and south façades.

<sup>3</sup> In 1853 it belonged to the jurisdiction of Soalhães, it used Penafiel’s post office and the parish priest received the Church fee (Marques, 1853).

## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Impressed by the “rustic simplicity” of the Church of Saint James of Valadares, Vergílio Correia begins his report on this small Church by admiring the landscape in which it is integrated: “In Valadares, the houses are scattered along a valley that drops perpendicularly to the valley of the river Douro in windrows, and adjust themselves to a ledge found on the east side; its modest church appears unexpectedly along the sinuous landscape, standing out by its whiteness from behind the light-green line of trees that grow in the adjoining fields” (Correia, 1924: 99).

Writing about this “little Romanesque church”, this author uses a discourse that shows a very common feature within the context of the historiography of Portuguese Romanesque architecture and that is precisely associated with the praise of the landscape and rural values of the immediate surroundings of the monuments in question, while emphasising, first of all, their spiritual impression and charm. It was only with Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida that the geographical and historic aspects of the territory began being appreciated. Through an in-depth anthropological approach that greatly enriched the Contemporary historiography on the Portuguese Romanesque style and largely influenced our understanding of this subject, this author was well aware of the historical and anthropic deepness of the roots of our Romanesque architecture and its relationship with the territory itself<sup>4</sup>.

Until about 1940, we may observe an actual praise of a sort of rurality which is intentionally associated with Romanesque architecture. It is especially through historiography and iconography that we may identify the relevance of these values. Within this context, we should not forget the importance of the exhibition of photographic works by José Marques de Abreu dedicated to *Arte românica em Portugal* [Portuguese Romanesque art], displayed at the Ateneu Comercial do Porto in 1914. Collecting a set of 125 works which were put together by this photoengraver over 15 years, its memory is still accessible today through the great book that was published four years later by Edições Ilustradas Marques Abreu (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918). Despite focusing on the Romanesque Period, it also included photos of landscapes, traditions and folk costumes. The emphasis placed on the monument’s surroundings, of rural nature, and the insertion of characters from this rural world is quite obvious. And Marques de Abreu is praised for feeling “our fields and our cheerful villages bathed by a golden sun and outskirted by the shadows of the most dazzling woods”<sup>5</sup>.

Besides, we should not forget the rustic ideal that was part of Salazar’s ideology and was expressed in the trilogy “Deus, Pátria e Família” [God, Homeland and Family] in “Lição de Salazar” [Salazar’s Lesson], which “praised a nostalgic ruralism against the contemporary and future industrial world” (Medina, 1993: 23). In fact, the constant references to the Romanesque style

4 On the subject, please read Botelho (2010: 265).

5 [S.a.] – Aos domingos... notas d’arte – «Vida Rústica» – costumes e paisagens – photographias artísticas de Marques Abreu. *O Jornal do Commercio e das Colonias*. (June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1927).

exalt not only its condition of Portuguese style, but also its rurality as a dominant feature. We are faced with a peculiar concept of rurality, which is exalted by men who came from an urban world asserting itself, so they sought in what they believed to be the “true” Romanesque style a fabricated image of the rural world they deemed poor, simple but “authentic”. So, it is within this context that we should understand the allusion made by Vergílio Correia to the “people of my [his] Douro region”, the primitive parishioners of Valadares who, “living from the land and for the land”, attended the “poor” sanctuary consecrated to Saint James.

There is an issue we should discuss right away. By classifying many of the architectural remains of the Medieval Period – in which Saint James of Valadares is obviously included – as “simple” and “rural”, historiography tended to focus, at best, on their appearance without seeking the reason behind it. Arguing the need for a diachronic analysis of the architecture from the Romanesque Period by considering the long durability that many of these shapes had among us, given that they even took on vernacular features, is an issue that has only been discussed very recently. During the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and already coexisting with an artistic period that historiography has been considering as Gothic, we may still observe “the persistence of a repertoire that was strongly associated with the Romanesque style”, according to Pedro Dias’s (1994: 151) words. It is mainly in the “comarcas” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division] of the North and Beira regions that most of the remains from this “resistance Romanesque” style are still preserved; in the Sousa basin we may highlight the cases of Escamarão and of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist of the Church of Tarouquela, both in Cinfães. As the author explains, “the North remained very attached to the Romanesque aesthetic language until very late, more due to inertia than to any other reason” (Dias, 1994: 159). With a peripheral position in relation to artistic centres such as Batalha or the capital city, these regions lacked a sort of aesthetic education, both associated with the commissioners and with the local builders. That meant that the old Romanesque churches from nearby towns and villages worked as models, although their formulas could be slightly modified by some sort of secondary innovation that the master had learnt in one of his rare visits to the south (Dias, 1994: 159).

So, marked by the weight of a building tradition, the Church of Saint James of Valadares fits into this group of buildings that, despite standing out for the persistence of Romanesque shapes and formulas, have also already been included in what has been called as the “rural Gothic” style. The limit between these two somewhat peripheral and late artistic phenomena is very subtle and hard to define. The issue of the concept of “style” and of the temporal scheme that includes beginning, progress and decline moments – which allows inferring a linear mechanism that explains the influences and the ways how shapes are conveyed – is one of the issues that are still too rooted in artistic historiography (Botelho, 2012: 132). The truth is that, as Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida wrote, there are always such big differences in terms of patterns between a work with a “good style” from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and a similar one from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, which only tradition and inertia or a very narrow concept of “style” may justify their integration within a single category (Almeida & Barroca, 2002: 12).

Comprising a single nave and a rectangular chancel, which is narrower and lower, the Church of Saint James of Valadares is surely a building from a much later period. Inside the





Chancel. Inscription.

chancel there is an inscription engraved in an ashlar in which, despite its inverted position, we are able to read: E<sup>a</sup> M<sup>a</sup> CC<sup>a</sup> XX<sup>a</sup> VI<sup>a</sup>.

This inscription refers to 1188 (“Era of 1226”)<sup>6</sup>. The dating method, based on the “Era”, is exclusive of the Hispanic territory, although there are still some doubts regarding the event which may have been at the origin of this chronological counting method (Barroca, 2000: 211). According to Álvaro d’Ors, the “Hispanic Era” used the title of Emperor granted by the Senate to August in 38 B.C. as its starting point (Barroca, 2000: 216). On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1422, King João I (1385-1433) decreed that the “Era of the Birth” of Christ should be used from then onwards. So, when we find an inscription whose date is earlier than 1422, we should subtract 38 years in order to ascertain its accurate chronology or *Anno Domini*.

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The fact that this inscription is inverted leads us to consider the possibility that this was a reuse. Besides, 1188 seems like a very early date for a building such as the one of Valadares, whose constructive formulas clearly fit into a *modus aedificandi* featuring a chronology that should be placed, at least, during the following century. We should also add the fact that there is a stonemason’s initial overlapping this epigraph, which shows a sort of crosier drawn horizontally. These initials, whose shape and design suggest a late chronology, are repeated in several ashlars that integrate the chancel. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century the stonemasons’ initials were no longer alphabetic and even became ideographic, i.e., by using the drawing of objects to represent a given surname.

Therefore, judging by the type of initials we find here, we believe that, sometime during the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, the chancel of Saint James of Valadares was rebuilt, resorting to the reuse of ashlars from an earlier building that surely already existed in 1188, as proven by the inscription that mentions the “Era” of 1226. The nave was also built (or rebuilt?) on the same occasion, as proven by its plastic language.

<sup>6</sup> We thank the invaluable assistance of Professor Mário Barroca, PhD, in the reading of this epigraph and whose suggestion we follow.



North façade. Nave. Corbels.



West façade. Portal.

So, today the Church of Saint James of Valadares shows a majestic appearance made of granite, and is no longer plastered and whitewashed like in Vergílio Correia's description from 1924. Most definitely, its vernacular appearance, considered by some authors as "rustic", is partly due to the shape and arrangement of its ashlar, which feature different sizes and give its walls a somewhat irregular appearance. Besides, the occasional natural of the decorative elements emphasizes this idea. It is in the chancel and in the north façade that we find the primitive modillions of this Church, featuring ornaments composed of rollers, balls and a couple of somewhat rough figures. The late nature of these modillions is witnessed by the difficult adequacy of the sculpted elements to the original shape of this supporting element. On the north side façade, the persistence of protruding corbels halfway up the ornaments indicates the previous existence of a porched structure.

The main façade is surmounted by a two-bell belfry for and its only opening is a portal carved in the wall's thickness<sup>7</sup>. Composed of two archivolts that are directly supported by the walls, this is a remarkable element that allows us to substantiate the late chronology of this building and confirm its classification as a "resistance Romanesque" Church or, if we will, as

<sup>7</sup> On the façade, there are two representations of animals; one of them is surely depicting a rabbit or a hare (despite being difficult to see due to the fact that they are located close to the gable). On the one hand, the hare and the rabbit are associated with abundance and, on the other hand, with licentiousness (in the *Old Testament* the rabbit is considered an impure animal); these two figures are often present in the capitals and corbels of Medieval churches, which may evoke or invoke, either successful harvests, or a moralization through a fable (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1994). However, we make it clear that these readings are mere conjectures, given the polysemic nature of these representations and the, sometimes complete, lack of knowledge on the bestiary that the master stonemasons and carvers had access to and its use in the ornamentation of monuments.



West façade. Insculpture.



East façade. Crevice.

a “rural Gothic” Church. Slightly broken, the outer archivolt is smooth and with somewhat beveled edges. On the opposite, the inner one is dotted with pearls in the chamfer, motif that repeats itself at the level of the impost. Also the portal of the south façade confirms this thesis, because it consists of a single smooth archivolt, embedded in the thickness of the wall. Finally, on the back façade there is a crevice of Romanesque flavour, despite the fact that it doesn’t have any ornamental element on its broken archivolt which is walled up from the inside. We should also highlight the figures carved in the façade, one of which clearly depicting a rabbit, as we have discussed earlier.

The primitive construction was transformed sometime during the Modern Period, as proven by the absence of corbels on the nave’s south side. The large rectangular windows that illuminate the Church’s body and chevet, as well as the straight-lintel door that provides access to the nave on the north side are certainly from the same period as this “modernization” intervention carried out in the parish Church of Saint James of Valadares. The terminal cross depicting fleurs-de-lys on its ends, surmounting the nave just above the chancel arch, is likely to belong to the same period; the chancel arch was also transformed, as shown by the Classicist language of the pilasters that support it.



North façade.



South façade.

The interior of this Church consecrated to Saint James the Greater is a good example of how the aesthetic language of a Romanesque church is easily “modernized” according to new tastes and different liturgies. The mural painting on the apse’s back wall, currently hidden by the Baroque altarpiece, is a good example of this ability. These paintings were protected both by this woodwork element and by a thick layer of plaster. Vergílio Correia was probably the first person to discover them, on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1922, thus providing the first reports (Correia, 1924: 102). The appreciation we can currently make is different from the one made by this author in the early 1920’s because some of its features are ruined or have lost their legibility<sup>8</sup>, specially its inscriptions (Bessa, 2008: 398).

<sup>8</sup> Joaquim Inácio Caetano (2012) recently developed a proposal for an intervention on these mural paintings, which is mainly focused on the restoration of the remaining sections.



The paintings are located along the back wall and side walls of the chancel, but only in the area that was protected by the main altarpiece. In addition to the damages caused by the holes drilled on the wall for the installation of the altarpiece whose central part is completely leaning against it, making it impossible to read the remaining ensemble in its whole. The paintings also suffered a more recent attack when the temple's electrical network was installed (Afonso, 2009: 799).

The mural painting composition located on the nave's back wall created a fake altarpiece comprising four different panels (Afonso, 2009: 799). Following the terminology proposed by Luís Urbano Afonso, the "wheel" of the Gospel clearly depicts the representation of *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, accompanied by her attributes: the spiked wheel and the sword she is holding in her left hand. Although we are currently not able to confirm it, in 1924 Vergílio Correia identified the inscription "qterin" together with this saint (Correia, 1924: 103). The tyrant's head that she had at her feet is no longer visible.

Next there was a representation of the *Pietá* or, as suggested by Paula Bessa (2008: 399), a *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*? We are only able to see the lower part of this image, which includes the lifeless body of Christ with a well-marked wound on the hand and the hole opened by the nail that held one of His feet to the cross.



Chancel. Wall on the Gospel side (behind the main altarpiece). *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*.



Chancel. Back wall (behind the main altarpiece). *Virgin of Piety*.



Chancel. Back wall (behind the main altarpiece). *Saint James*.



Chancel. Back wall on the Epistle side (behind the main altarpiece). *Saint Barbara*.

Right after it, on the Epistle side, there is a figure that is almost entirely hidden by the altarpiece, wearing a light-coloured tunic and a red cloak whose draperies were stiffly marked in a way, falling in vertical pleats. Wearing black shoes, it appears over a background of square embossed tiles, just like the *Pietà*. Luís Urbano Afonso finds it possible that this is a representation of *Saint James*, who is depicted here as a pilgrim, since the only visible attribute seems to be a pilgrimage staff with a pointed tip and several knots that divide the cylinder pole in regular intervals (Bessa, 2008: 399; Afonso, 2009: 800). Paula Bessa stresses the fact that this depiction is not located in the middle of the back wall, a requirement that was only defined in 1496 by the synod constitutions of Diogo de Sousa (1496-1505) for the bishopric of Porto, i.e., after its execution, as we shall see.

Next there is an image of *Saint Barbara* that, in 1924, would also include the inscription “barbor” (Correia, 1924: 103). Her depiction shows her standing on a pavement with lozenge-shaped tiles, similar to the one of *Saint Catherine* (Afonso, 2009: 800), holding a book on her left hand and together with a grey tower, which is her traditional attribute. Her face is almost completely erased.

On an upper level, above the figures we have just identified, there is a frieze showing the upper parts of the bodies of angels, which was copied by using the transfer technique (Afonso, 2009: 801): with open wings and resting hands, they wear crossed tunics. There is a small Latin white cross popping out of abundant yellow hairs. There are roll-shaped frames dividing the different panels depicted on the chancel’s back wall which, in turn, are surmounted by faux tapestries with alternating light-coloured and red stripes that Luís Urbano Afonso defines as humble.

Now we should take a closer look at the lateral walls. What we see on the Epistle side is possibly a depiction of the pseudo-apostle *Paul*, who is identified through the only visible attributes: the sword with the circular pommel and curved guards he is wielding with his right hand and the book he is holding in his left hand (Afonso, 2009: 801). In Valadares, the representation of several figures denotes a strong attachment to a late Gothic language: hieratic representations, a very stiff depiction of the draperies, whose pleats are defined by vertical lines, and silhouette outlines painted using an extremely thick line (Afonso, 2009: 800-801). On the other hand, the angels feature interesting curves showing the volume of their clothes (Bessa, 2008: 399).

So, the manufacturing quality of the workshop that executed this painting is quite clear and, despite the use of free hand patterned motifs, especially on the backgrounds, it accomplished the programme defined, while treating all details in a very careful fashion (Bessa, 2008: 399-400). The fact that these paintings have features which are similar to those of other pictorial ensembles – from which we highlight the examples of the painting on the triumphal arch of Saint John the Baptist of Gatão (Amarante) or the first layer of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses (Marco de Canaveses) – is rather significant and it is the reason why they have been considered as being executed in the same workshop (Bessa, 2008: 401-402; Afonso, 2009: 804-805; Caetano, 2012: 3). Although his name remains unknown, Joaquim Inácio Caetano and Luís Urbano Afonso have been calling the person in charge of this workshop the “Master from Valadares”, whose intervention area still evidences a significant regional concentration (Afonso, 2009: 204-207; Caetano, 2012: 3). Its period of activity was probably between 1480 and 1500<sup>9</sup>.

On the front wall there is the depiction of a series of fantastic creatures with a markedly popular nature: a cynocephalus devil and a tow-faced figure with two horns, a strange black bird with the head of a rooster and the beak of a goose (Afonso, 2009: 802). Nowadays the general meaning of the scene is hard to find. Here Vergílio Correia saw the depiction of apocalyptic animals (Correia, 1924: 104-105) and Paula Bessa (2008: 399) identified it as a representation of *Hell*. On the other hand, Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 802) suggested the possibility that this is a depiction of the tortures inflicted on Saint Anthony the Great, considering the fact that there are traces of little figures being tormented by devils. However, considering that this is not a usual theme within the context of 15<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese mural paintings, this author finds it more likely that this ensemble is a reference to *Hell* and/or the *Purgatory*, which could be part of a larger depiction of the *Final Judgement* (Afonso, 2009: 803). According to Paula Bessa (2008: 399), this representation creates a clear contrast with the angels and sacred figures of the remaining iconographic programme: Heaven *versus* Hell.

As we can see, this is an extensive programme, which was surely well conceived from a thematic point of view, thus revealing the commissioner’s determination and demanding character. The inscription that identifies the commissioner is currently less visible and more mutilated than when Vergílio Correia (1924: 106) read it and published it: “This work was commissioned by Juan Camelo de (Boro?) this church’s abbot: era of fourteen hundred and... Currently, only



Chancel. Wall on the Epistle side (behind the main altarpiece). *Saint Paul*.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to the above mentioned cases, we should mention the churches the Saint Saviour of Arnoso (Famalicão), Saint Mary of Covas do Barroso (Boticas), São Nicolau (Mesão Frio) and Saint Margaret of Vila Marim (Vila Real) (Afonso, 2009: 204-207; Caetano, 2012: 3).







this can be read: [...] [man] dou fazer juan camel [...] era de mil e trezentos (...) [commissioned by João Camelo [...] era of thirteen hundred (...)]” (Bessa, 2008: 401). Hopelessly mutilated by the electrical switchboard, the only information we can surely provide is that this is a 15<sup>th</sup>-century iconographic ensemble, probably even from the last quarter of the century (Bessa, 2008: 401).

The reference to the name of the commissioning abbot, João Camelo, is rather significant. Vergílio Correia (1924: 106) raised the possibility that he was the parish abbot born in the neighbouring village of Borosende, saying also that “it would be rather curious if this man called João Camelo was the one who later became the bishop of Silves and of the neighbouring town of Lamego!”. Both Paula Bessa and Luís Urbano Afonso considered this a valid possibility, with due reservations given the lack of documents and facts regarding the bishop of Lamego.

However, it seems hard to ground a solid connection between the prelate and Valadares. First, because the scarce information available on his family seems to point towards a well-defined lineage circle: the Camelos and the Madureiras from the Porto region. In fact, both Alão de Morais and Felgueiras Gaio identify him as the brother of the prior of Grijó, João Álvares (or Fernandes) de Madureira, who is included by Pedro Brito in the connections of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century urban patriciate of Porto (Brito, 1997: 106).

On the other hand, it would be surprising if a cleric, despite belonging to a profitable and important abbey as Valadares seemed to be, managed to reach the episcopal seat so quickly. It is hard to accept this path, as well as this social and geographic mobility, from the mountains of Baião to the cathedral of Silves and Lamego. Only a direct connection to the lords of Baião could possibly explain the fast-track promotion and his relationship with Valadares. When we tried to establish that relationship, we found the answer to the identity of the commissioner of the paintings in Valadares in a coeval namesake from the prelate of Silves. It is João Camelo de Sousa, mentioned by 18<sup>th</sup> century genealogists as being the son of Álvares Gonçalves Camelo, the third lord of Baião. Felgueiras Gaio (1938-1941) is peremptory: he is called abbot of Valadares and, although there are no specific dates regarding his term in office, he must have surely been the parish priest at the turn of the first to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a period when his brother, Luís Álvares de Sousa, is mentioned in several official administrative documents from Porto by one of his titles, the lord of Baião<sup>10</sup>.

So, it is natural that the remaining mural painting is an expression of the taste of the nobleman João Camelo de Sousa, who belonged to the family and social circle of the lords of Baião. They would surely be acquainted with the work of the workshop of the Master from Marão that, over the 15<sup>th</sup> century, worked in churches that were somehow allocated to the assets or ruling of those lords.

<sup>10</sup> He was also an inspector at the Treasury of Porto (Marques, 1980: 73-98).







## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

Protected from the purifying zeal of the ruralist and nationalist conceptions of “Estado Novo” [authoritarian regime installed in Portugal between 1926 and 1974] theoreticians, the collection of altarpieces, paintings and sculptures of the Church of Saint James of Valadares contrasts with the Medieval ashlar in terms of “movement” and colour. However, this deep transformation of the ecclesiastical space is essentially Mannerist and Baroque. We do not know much about the previous artistic project and what we know is partly due to indirect sources, such as the inspections. This kind of ecclesiastical surveillance that was strongly implemented after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) was usually carried out by an inspector (who could be the bishop himself or one of his representatives), a registrar and a bailiff who travelled around the parishes hearing about and looking into spiritual and temporal issues.

Once they arrived at the parish, the ecclesiastical officials installed a temporary auditorium where witnesses were heard on the behaviour of the parishioners and the clerics, the service of the parish priest, the accounts of the confraternities and brotherhoods and the state of movable and immovable assets. Regarding this particular issue, the inspectors summoned the parish priest and the people’s judge to draw up regular object and furniture inventories. The oldest of these inventories was preserved among the folios of the book of baptismal records of Saint James of Valadares and dates back to 1592.

As in all parish churches, the assistant Gaspar da Veiga, who was responsible for listing the pieces, makes a clear distinction between two different owners or managers of the objects: the abbot and the parishioners. The latter were represented by the people’s judge who, in the case of Valadares in 1592, was probably Pero António, “the church’s caretaker”.

Each of the owners had, besides a series of pieces, a space inside the Church. The chancel was responsibility of the abbot and of the Church’s patron, who had the duty of providing it with vestments and contributing to the maintenance, reconstruction and ornamentation of its space.

The parishioners or the people who lived in the parish were responsible for building and preserving the nave or the Church’s body. Naturally, the local noblemen intervened in this space disputing the “best” burial places, closer to the chancel arch or at the feet of the altars and chapels they had set up. Only patrons and abbots were buried in the chancel, despite the Church’s efforts to forbid these expressions of power.

The inventory, dated November 16<sup>th</sup> 1592, was written after the visit of the bishop Jerónimo de Menezes who ruled the diocese of Porto between that year and 1600. So, Jerónimo de Menezes was in Valadares at the beginning of his episcopate, preaching and ensuring that the Tridentine rules that had been imposed as a result of the Council of Trent a few years earlier were being followed. The inventory allows us to have an insight on some of these issues, as we shall see.

The assistant Gaspar da Veiga begins by listing the “pieces that belong to the parish”. These included:

“# one silver cross with its box # a wire cross without box # one holy water vessel # four brass candlesticks # one bell # one mattock for the deceased # one iron jewel (?) # one “escano” [coffin-shaped casket or box] for the deceased # three sleeves from the cross: one in red damask, another one in black taffeta and another one in blue taffeta # two pulpit cloths, a green one and a black one # four altar frontals, I mean five, one in white taffeta (...) two in a green fabric and two for Lent # four linen altar cloths # curtains for the same altars # black cloths for Lent # Indian fabric (?) on linen curtains for the altar of Our Lady # two bookcases # two sets of garments for Our Lady, one in white damask and the other one in yellow taffeta # a record book with Our Lady’s rules and other things # another book for accounts and for the brothers # a Blessed Sacrament bull # one lantern # one iron chandelier with nineteen candles # another chandelier, placed in front of the Blessed Sacrament, in brass # another one placed in front of Our Lady # one silver monstrance with a gilded copper foot, together with its box # a few red damask shrines with all the necessary parts # one canopy with its poles # one thurible # one red taffeta lining or drape to cover the sacrarium # one red damask frontal for Our Lady”<sup>11</sup>.

The objects described here suggest the places they were supposed to be through their function, their materials and colours. The cloths for the altars (frontals, coverlets, towels) and the pulpit, the lamps, the candlesticks and the paraments used to decorate the altars according to specific liturgical periods stand out from the list. At least one of the altars – the one of Our Lady – was associated with a confraternity, because there are references to a record book with the names of the brothers and to an accounting book. Regarding processions, moments that were especially important for the communities, there are references to two processional crosses, the sleeves with which they should be carried, the canopy and the thurible. Although the tabernacle was in the chancel, some of the objects associated with the Eucharist, such as the monstrance, the canopy and a lamp to illuminate the tabernacle were the parishioners’ responsibility.

The abbot’s items speak of his tasks as a celebrant and preacher, the ornamentation of the chancel and the altarpiece according to the different liturgical period of the year. The objects associated with the sacraments provided both inside and outside of the Church are also listed (boxes with holy oils, ciboria, altar stones). The set of paraments and textiles associated with the mass, the celebrant, the co-celebrant and their assistants is quite remarkable. In fact, the list is so extensive and rich in vocabulary that it is worth transcribing<sup>12</sup>:

“# two silver chalices, one of which gilded # four sets of garments, one in red damask and blue velvet, plus another new one in common taffeta # two in red camlet [woollen fabric] # one with a black “skirt” (?) for Lent # three frontals, one in red and blue taffeta <there are four yellow damask frontals and (?)> # another one in red and green camlet # another one for Lent # one linen curtain for the altarpiece # another one in black bocaxim [fab-

11 ADP – Paroquiais, Valadares, livros mistos, fls. 218 ss. 1586-1679.

12 Because this work does not justify a comprehensive description of each of the objects, we suggest a reference to Aldazábal (2007).



Triumphal arch. Wall. Collateral altarpieces.

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ric] for Lent # five albs # six amices [white garment, in a fine fabric, that the priest uses under the alb] # three cloths for the main Altar, one that look like a towel and two made of linen # five corporal tables with their protections and palls # one box for the Holy oils with their ciboria # another leather-covered box with its ciborium for the Holy Oil of the Ill # one more red damask frontal> // # one tin plate for it [for the ciborium] # one brass basin to carry the Holy oils # another one for the offerings # two new candlesticks with large tubes # three hand cloths # one large cloth to administer the Blessed Sacrament # four linen cloths for the chalices # six purificators [cloths to clean the Chalice] # two Mass Books, a new one and an old one # one new manual # a few constitutions [probably the synod constitutions] # one song book # two Altar stones # one in the Sacarium # the other one in Our Lady of Bruzende # one cloth for the Holy oils <...> <# two more purificators> <#two hand cloths (...)>”<sup>13</sup>.

So, we are able to draw a diagram of the ecclesiastical space based on the distribution of the objects used in liturgical celebrations. Besides the main altarpiece, which was located in the chancel and kept the Blessed Sacrament, there was another altarpiece dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and, although it is not mentioned, there was a third one whose main invocation is still unknown. We assume this possibility considering the number of altar frontals that were listed: between ten and twelve, which would allow the existence of three to four frontals per altar, which corresponded to the periods of the liturgical year, definitely established by the Missal by Pious V (1566-1572): Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter.



Chancel. Main altarpiece.

13 ADP – Paroquiais, Valadares, livros mistos, fls. 218 ss. 1586-1679.



In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, abbot Ricardo Feliz Barroso Pereira confirms the arrangement of three altars: besides the main altar, there was one dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and another to the Sacred Name of Jesus (Pereira, 1758). They probably correspond to the location of the existing invocations of the Virgin of the Rosary of Fátima and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which are 20<sup>th</sup>-century images. The chancel's National Baroque [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)] altarpiece, including its Eucharistic throne with five steps, and the external coating of the chancel arch, based on a Mannerist model that was later supplemented with ornaments from the National [1690-1725] and Johannine period [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)], were probably carried out before the 1758 memoir<sup>14</sup>.



General interior view from the high choir.

The distribution of several niches surmounted by canopies, both in the main altarpiece and in the collateral ones, together with the pelmets placed above the openings inside the nave, provide the space with a homogeneity that, as we have already mentioned, contrasts with the plastered stone. We should add the chancel's coffered ceiling that, in a certain way, extends the National Baroque language that characterizes the ornamentation of the main altarpiece.

Although most of the niches were deprived of their images (they are not mentioned in the inventory from 1911)<sup>15</sup>, we should refer, in addition to the invocations that were displayed along the chevet's walls before the altarpiece was built, the three panels displayed above the chancel arch. It is a very original composition focused on the iconography of Saint James and its relationship with the Dominican Order.

<sup>14</sup> As we may conclude from their current arrangement, the images were moved from the places they used to occupy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: Our Lady of the Rosary was placed on the main altarpiece's corbel, on the Epistle side, and it is likely that the Sacred Name of Jesus, a name used by the abbot Ricardo Feliz in 1758, corresponds to the crucified Christ stored in the sacristy.

<sup>15</sup> SGMF – Comissão Jurisdicional dos Bens Culturais, Baião. Arrolamento dos Bens Culturais, Valadares, [Cabral, Afonso Vitorino de Barbosa – Arrolamento dos Bens Culturais de Valadares]. In the inventory on the iconography of Saint Anthony of Lisbon drawn up in 1996, there is a reference to the existence of an image of that thaumaturge on the left collateral altar: "polychrome wood, h. 31.5 cm, 19<sup>th</sup> century" (with photo) (Azevedo, 1996: 105).



Triumphal arch. Panels.

In fact, although the patron saint of Valadares is Saint James, the pilgrim<sup>16</sup>, in the nave he is depicted in two paintings as a knight or Moor-slayer, just like in the precious Baroque image that may be worshipped in the main altarpiece's niche, on the Gospel side; this representation was unusual in Portugal, but in the Hispanic world it was quite common. The largest painting is the one that was placed above the vault's planking, which we shall mention further ahead. The smaller painting is part of an ensemble we could consider as being a triptych, which is placed, as we have already mentioned, above the chancel arch. Riding a horse and fighting an infidel that is kneeling at the animal's feet, *Saint James* is wielding his sword. On the background, a group of individuals identified as Muslim warriors by their red flags with crescents, is beating a retreat. The saint is wearing clothes that incorporate his condition of apostle (recognized by the traditional green and red colours) and pilgrim who shows his scallops and a small travel bag.

This scene is flanked by two other representations, one of which is also unusual to find in the parishioners' ecclesiastical space: on the observer's left side, we see *Saint Gonçalo*, identified by the bridge behind him and the staff he is holding. He is wearing the Dominican habit and on his left hand there is an open book. On the right side, we see *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, a well-known Spanish preacher who was born in Valencia in 1350 and died in Brittany in 1419. This iconography is extravagant: the saint is depicted with wings, holding a book in his left hand and pointing towards the sky with his right hand, thus recalling a miracle he performed (Almeida, 2003: 111-118)<sup>17</sup>. He is fairly considered as the patron of the souls and, sometimes, associated with the role of psychopomp.

<sup>16</sup> Under the cover of tourist advertising, this representation contributed to foster the idea that there would be a pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela (Spain) that included Valadares. This idea of a mass pilgrimage, much to the Contemporary taste, is not consistent with the historical reality; and the fact that there is a devotion to Saint James in a given church or chapel does not mean that it marks a point of a possible route. Furthermore, all roads led to Rome (Italy) or to Santiago de Compostela. It is more usual for the devotion to Saint James to reveal particularities that are less associated with his role as a pilgrim and more as a protector of the fields and communities that embraced him. We believe that this is the case in Valadares.

<sup>17</sup> The author explains the unusual attribute and provides examples of other winged saints that integrate the pictorial collection in the Aveiro region.







How can we explain the presence of two Dominican invocations and of such an eccentric representation of Saint James?

The Dominican Order or Order of the Preachers (*Ordo Fratrum Praedicatorum*) was founded in 1215 by Dominic de Guzmán, a Castilian man who was deeply influenced by the fight against the infidels and the heretics. Born during the period of the crusades, Dominic intended to fight those who contradicted or rejected the doctrine of the Church through evangelization and preaching. So, in 1219 he created a confraternity or brotherhood called The Militia of Jesus Christ. But his relationship with the ideal of the religious warrior – an ideal he passed on to the Preachers Order – didn't stop here. As a result of his deep knowledge about the work developed by the military order, such as the Order of Santiago – the one his older brother had joined –, he conceived an order that served outside the walls of the monastic fence and, through the use of the spoken word, converted and placed on the path of faith those who had gone astray. Saint James the Apostle, the patron saint of a Spain that was growing against the Other, the Moor, was turned into the symbol of the celestial warrior at the service of Men, fighting beside them to eradicate heresies and Islamism from the Iberian Peninsula. The iconography of Saint James the knight and Moor-slayer – which Louis Réau considers as a late iconography forged after the battle of Clavijo (844) – emerged within this atmosphere of conflict and confrontations (Réau, 2002: 177).

So, the connection between the Dominican Order and Saint James – especially in his role as a fighter – is clear and the apostle is conveniently associated with the Order's ideal: fighting the infidels, converting them and spreading the faith.

It is within this context that we should frame the triptych of the chancel arch of the Church of Valadares: *Saint Gonçalo*, who opened the paths of evangelization, and *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, who actively travelled them, assist the glorious apostle who brought light to the Peninsula and expelled those who were threatening it with darkness. It is interesting to reflect on who introduced the theme in the Church of Valadares and the circumstances under which it happened. While it is certain that, either *Saint James the Moor-slayer*, or the Dominican saints who assist him, or even the Virgin of the Rosary, are related to the Dominican preaching that had its seedbed of evangelists quite close by (in Ancede, for example), we know nothing about the author of the composition. His origin and education would be useful to understand the context in which this work was commissioned.

The painting located on the nave's ceiling, which is also related to the theme of the fight against heresy and the spreading of the Gospel, repeats the model of *Saint James the knight*. Alone, riding a properly equipped white horse, the apostle is holding a red banner with the cross-shaped sword on one hand and a scimitar on the other. We may say he is observing the audience, vigilant, ready for a fight. He is old and wears a tunic, a cloak and sandals, like a pilgrim who interrupted his journey to fight a battle.

The painting is in the middle of a beautiful frame with volutes intertwined with phytomorphic elements and angels in shades of brown, red and blue. A similar border surrounds the entire perimeter of the ceiling.



Nave. Roof. Painting.  
*Saint James the knight.*

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

However, in a report provided by the Royal Palace, on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1890, it was decided to grant an allowance of two hundred and fifty thousand “réis”, “paid in Lisbon to a representative of the Local Council” of the Parish of Valadares, municipality of Baião, “for the repair of several annexes of its mother church”<sup>18</sup>. The information of this previously unknown documentary source is short and adds no further details. However, we believe that it is part of a larger process, of which some documentary sources were lost, that was inaugurated by the inquiry sent to all the priest of the parishes from the bishopric of Porto in 1864<sup>19</sup>.

We only manage to find further information about this temple almost a century later. The order that opened the appraisal process regarding the possible classification of the Church of Saint James of Valadares was issued on December 13<sup>th</sup> 1989, and the corresponding special protection zone was defined at the time (Filipe, 2011).

The classification of a monument is an essential step to establish improvement criteria for immovable heritage, “because it defines that a specific asset has an inestimable cultural value”<sup>20</sup>: general criteria (historical, cultural, aesthetic, social, technical and scientific) and supplementary criteria (the asset’s integrity, authenticity and uniqueness)<sup>21</sup> that reflect values that will be established in the classification act, which will, therefore, become a vehicle for its public and legal recognition. Depending on their relative value, and according to Law no. 107/2001, of September 8<sup>th</sup> 2001 (Art. 15), properties may be classified as having “National Interest”, “Public Interest” or “Municipal Interest”<sup>22</sup>. The filing of a classification process and its subsequent conclusion determine that the building, ensemble or place that were classified, or submitted to classification, automatically have a protection zone or a special protection zone in their surroundings; *non aedificandi*<sup>23</sup> zones may be included in the latter category. In fact, the classification of a given building, which implies a long administrative process composed of a series of different stages defined by the fundamental law on the policy and regime of protection and valuation of the cultural heritage is the first step for its protection, rehabilitation and enhancement. This protection imposes a set of rules that aim at safeguarding the integrity of the building’s heritage, although we should highlight that the classification is not enough to preserve and improve the building.

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18 [Illegible name] – Missiva, 20 de setembro de 1890. IRHU/ Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM N Cx. 3216/2 (Correspondência igrejas do concelho de Baião. 1864 to 1890).

19 Victor Le Cocq, through an order issued by the Minister of Public Works, had been commissioned to draw up a map of the state of repair, corresponding repairs and authorised expenses of all the buildings under that Ministry’s management. These buildings included those that were considered monuments, parish churches and public chapels, among others (Rosas, 1995: 511).

20 Under Article 18 (1) of Law no. 107/2001 of September 8<sup>th</sup> 2001.

21 On the development of the concepts that are inherent to this criteria, please read Maia (1996: 26-29).

22 Decree-Law no. 309/2009 of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009, which develops the legal regime of Law no. 107/2001 and specifies the administrative steps regarding the process of building classification, clarifies, in Article 3 (1), that immovable assets may be classified as buildings of national interest, public interest or municipal interest.

23 LAW no. 107. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Séries I-A*. 209 (2001-09-08) 5808-5829, art. no. 43.

So, the Ordinance regarding the decision to classify the Church of Saint James of Valadares as a Public Interest Monument and to define the corresponding special protection area was only published on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012<sup>24</sup>. So, the reason why we were not able to find any information regarding protection interventions carried out in this building by the competent authorities during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the fact that it still had not been classified. As we may infer from what has been said above, there were occasional interventions in this Church during the last century like, for example, the installation of an electrical network inside the building. This and other interventions, which were surely aimed at maintaining the building and its integrated assets, were carried out under the responsibility of the parish itself and of its Building Commission.

In 2006 there was an inspection of the Church's roofs leading to the replacement of tiles and to the installation of the *onduline* system (Monte, 2012: 4). Since it became part of the Route of the Romanesque in 2010, the Church of Valadares was the subject of a study on mural painting conservation, which we have already mentioned (Caetano, 2012: 3); it was also the subject of a project whose main goal involves the building's conservation, protection and enhancement, focusing on the roofs of the nave, chancel and sacristy, on the external openings and on a series of works aimed at its external area, namely its immediate surroundings, from which we highlight the replacement of the aerial electrical installations by underground installations (Monte, 2012: 4). The building works shall begin still during 2014. In the meantime, and considering its poor condition, a preservation and restoration project was also developed for the main altarpiece and its statues (Duarte, 2014). [MLB / NR]



## CHRONOLOGY

1188: inscription date reused in an ashlar from the chancel;

1258: the Church of Saint James of Valadares is referred to as a private or family church;

Late 13<sup>th</sup> century: suggested chronology for the construction of the Church of Valadares;

Mid-15<sup>th</sup> century: João Camelo de Sousa, from the family and social circle of the lords of Baião, commissions a mural painting campaign in the Church of Valadares;

1623: the Church of Valadares had a tabernacle;

18<sup>th</sup> century: Valadares was part of the properties of the Houses of Baião and Marquises of Arronches;

18<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup> half): suggested chronology for the manufacture of the National Baroque main altarpiece;

1890, September 20<sup>th</sup>: 250 thousand "réis" were granted by royal initiative for the repair of various sections of the Church of Valadares;

1989, December 13<sup>th</sup>: the process for the classification of the Church of Valadares is opened;

2006: inspection of the Church's roofs leading to the replacement of tiles and to the installation of an *onduline* system,

2010: the Church of Valadares becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque;

2012, September, 14<sup>th</sup>: Ordinance regarding the decision to classify the Church of Saint James of Valadares as Public Interest Monument and to define the corresponding special protection area.

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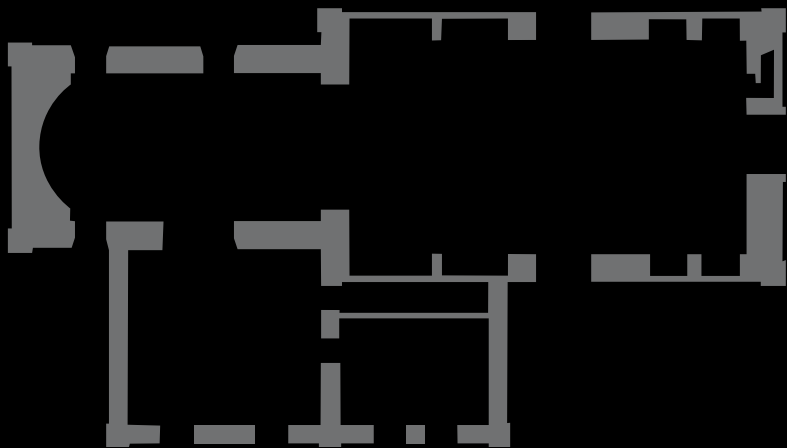






**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
MARY  
OF VEADE  
CELORICO DE BASTO

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OF SAINT  
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OF VEADE  
CELORICO DE BASTO



Plan.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY



East façade.

As shown, albeit indirectly, by the author of the article “Veade”, published in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira*, this Church is heiress to deep transformations that combine the vicissitudes of several institutions and agents (Correia et al., 1965: 391-393). Those changes began in the Middle Ages, but these events survive only in the remaining documents, since the Contemporary temple tells a much more recent story.

In fact, the old Medieval Church – probably a chapel or hermitage<sup>1</sup> – was founded in the family property that, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, was associated with a landlord from the Guedeões strain or lineage. The inscription, which is engraved on a granite ashlar and inlaid on the north wall of the Church’s nave, close to the left side of the portal, may well be proof of this circumstance (Barroca, 2000: 267-271): SUB : Era : M<sup>a</sup> : C<sup>a</sup>2 : X<sup>a</sup> : VII<sup>a</sup> / OBIIT : FAMULA : DEI / MIONA : DOLDIA : GOMEZ<sup>2</sup>.

This is the funerary inscription of Dórdia Gomes who, for being mentioned here as “Miona”, was probably a person of high social status (Barroca, 2000: 267-271). As explained by Mário Barroca, the titles “Miona”, “Miana” or “Meana”, derive from the expression “mea domina” or “mea



Aerial view.

<sup>1</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century João de Barros (1919: 77) was still echoing this tradition, stating that the “Commendation of Biade, of Saint John of Rhodes, (...) which was, once, a monastery with Monks”. And he adds, in a critical tone, “and according to the information I have, I believe that the first ones who ordered the Monks to leave some of these Monasteries were the Knights Templar, who were provided with their sustenance and, not content with what had been given to them, demanded more and, for that reason, lost everything at the time of Pope Clement V (...)”.

<sup>2</sup> It reads: Sub Era 1197 Obiit Flamula Dei Miona Doldia Gomez. That is, if, in the Middle Ages, the inverted “2” is read as a 5 and the “X” in inverted commas means 40 for deriving from connection to the Roman number XL, then we should add both numbers and, therefore, obtain the year 90. By subtracting the 38 years of the formula for changing from the Era of Caesar to the Birth of Christ, we obtain the year 1159.



North façade. Nave. Funerary inscription of Dórdia Gomes.

domna” and were only used within a very limited group of wealthy women from the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their high social status was combined with piety because they were often involved in the foundation of monastic houses. Thus, having died in 1159, it is possible that Dórdia Gomes would have somehow been related to the origins of the monastic institution which the inquiries of 1220 call the “monastery of Bialdi”, although the Church of Veade was already a parish temple by then.

It is quite plausible, judging by her patronymic, that Dórdia Gomes, on whom there is no further information, was the daughter of Gomes Mendes Guedeão – from his first marriage to Chamoá Mendes de Sousa – despite the fact that there is no reference to Dórdia Gomes in the lineage books and that we have not managed to find any definite connection between this woman and the Guedeões family (Barroca, 2000: 269). Another possibility – which does not give rise to any chronological incompatibilities, but would raise geographical coherence issues related to the burial of Dórdia Gomes in Veade in 1559 – is that she would be the wife of Garcia Rodrigues, the lord of the vast “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Leomil<sup>3</sup>. A geographically plausible hypothesis is the one suggested by Mário Barroca: this Dórdia Gomes would be the person who, together with her husband “Carciaro” Honorigues, bought a forth in the estate of Canedo to Elvira Teles, in the parish of Celorico de Basto, according to a deed dated December 12<sup>th</sup> 1100; however, this possibility presents an extended chronological interval between the deed (1100) and the date of the demise (Barroca, 2000: 270).

Despite the uncertainties about this female figure buried in Veade<sup>4</sup>, there is a later reference that can only be associated with her. The inquiries of 1258<sup>5</sup> mention the name of Dórdia Peres

<sup>3</sup> Mário Barroca (2000: 269-270) is more prone to identify the wife of Garcia Rodrigues as a namesake of the “Miona” buried in Veade in 1159.

<sup>4</sup> Close to the Church, to the south of the churchyard, there are two Medieval tomb chests, currently used as water tanks. However, their existence draws our attention to the importance that the Church of Veade had or for the people that had themselves buried there during the Romanesque Period.

<sup>5</sup> Published and transcribed in Lopes (2008: 220).

de Aguiar, who was better known for being the mother of the Master of Santiago, Peres Paio Correia. This lady, from the regional nobility, was the great-great-granddaughter of the first man from the Guedeões or Guedaz lineage, whose domains were located between the Douro, Minho and Trás-os-Montes regions, as highlighted by José Augusto de Sottomayor-Pizarro, who studied one of the branches of this powerful family (1997: 58).

One of Dórdia's relatives was the canon Gomes Alvite who, before 1258, unexpectedly sold the Church and all the estates to the Order of the Hospital. Knowing the private churches system, which entitled rights and assets to the descendants of a specific founder, it is somewhat surprising to find a single individual taking control over a vast heritage that should be in the possession of several people<sup>6</sup>. However, according to what the author of the quoted entry refers, "being the rightful owner or not, the fact is that the canon gave everything to the Knights Hospitaller "ut quitaret eam de debitis quas debet", i.e., to pay debts, receiving the corresponding amount from the Order" (Correia et al., 1965). The prestige of this institution surely attenuated the crime; so, the contract was concluded and the fate of the Church and parish of Veade was sealed.

The Church, primarily a smaller temple that the inquiries of King Afonso define as the "monastery of Bialdi", was a hermitage with facilities for the hermits, a common typology among the first family cenobies, some of which were occupied by family members themselves, while others were handed over to the management of strangers who devoted themselves to living in solitude or in small groups<sup>7</sup>.

It is likely that this chapel was replaced by a larger and nobler building – perhaps due to the intervention of the Guedeões, namely of Gomes Alvites who was related to the clergy of Braga –, but there are still significant sections integrated in the existing building. However, the most remarkable investment on the ecclesiastical space was made later, under the commanders of Moura Morta's responsibility; their job was to collect the benefits and to present the mother Church's prior or vicar and, later, the affiliate, annexed or suffrage church's priest<sup>8</sup>. As the author of the memoir of 1758 explains, "the construction of the Mother Church and Annex and Churches are all made at their Patrons' account and expense" (Lopes, 2005). These patrons, represented by the Commander, did not refrain from leaving their mark and symbols of authority and prestige. Perhaps due to the need to rationalise the commendatory heritage management, scattered and vast, Veade joined the commendation of Moura Morta. This parish, which currently belongs to Peso da Régua, became the seat of one of the commendations of Malta that, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, yielding 113\$352 "réis" [former Portuguese currency unit], a benefit handed over to Luís Coutinho at the time (Falcão, 1859).

6 José Anastácio de Figueiredo (1800: 502-503) mentions several names of familiars of this Church who gave up their rights over it; these were found in the documents from the bailiff ship of Leça. We should note that the inquiries themselves mention the "nepotes Domne Durdie" as the holders, surely through inheritance, of the rights over the parish of Veade (Barroca, 2000: 270).

7 Although we still do not know much about this type of structure, we suggest reading Maciel (1998).

8 Saint James of Gagos was still operating as a co-mother church in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: "Saint Mary of Veade, a Commendation of Malta that is attached to the [Commendation] of Moura Morta, has a Vicar, with the Order's Habit (who presents the Commander), who celebrates Mass in this Church on two Sundays, and on one Sunday at the church of Gagos, which are both attached so that the parishioners can attend it on these days, in one place or the other, according to where the vicar is (...)" (Costa, 1706-1712: 146).



Among the commanders of Veade, we highlight the name of Diogo de Melo Pereira (d. 1666), who had the Commendation houses built in 1641, as stated in the inscription found under the coat of arms<sup>9</sup>: ESTAS CAZAS MAN/ DOU FAZ[ER] O COM[ENDAD]o[R] / DIOGO DE MELLO P[ERE]Y[R]JA / DE BERTIANDOS. / NO. ANNO DE / 1641 [THESE HOUSES WERE COMMISSIONED BY COMMANDER DIOGO DE MELLO PEREYRA OF BERTIANDOS IN 1641].

One of the bailiffs who succeeded him, Friar Martim Álvaro Pinto, was responsible for the reconstruction of the “small church” – as it was called by rector Francisco Xavier de Oliveira Barros Leite and vicar António Luís da Cunha in 1758. Furthermore, the memoirists explained that the commander and bailiff of Leça add improved the Church “as much as he possibly could in terms of territory and art” (Lopes, 2005: 230). With respect to the territory, they were probably referring themselves to the small size of the plain where the old Church had been built; it was the heiress of a Medieval hermitage whose extension implied deep changes in terms of the building’s restructuring and repositioning. In relation to art, they were surely referring themselves to the investment made on the renovation and improvement of furnishings and integrated heritage according to the Baroque taste that reflected the origin and status of its mentor.



Reproduction of the portrait of Diogo de Melo Pereira. Source: V. C. M. (Archive of the Ponte de Lima Town Council).



Commendation house (Celorico de Basto).



Coat of arms.

Martim Álvaro Pinto was the brother of the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Manuel Pinto da Fonseca (1681-1773), one of the two Portuguese men who marked the policy and diplomacy associated with the control of the Mediterranean over the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The other one was his predecessor Manuel Pinto de Vilhena (1663-1736), the son of the first count of Vila Flor. They both belonged to the landowning families of the Lamego region and, over the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, reached a position that was hard to match within the political and aristocratic contexts of Modern Europe and the two of them asserted their name and the name of their families from that small island.

<sup>9</sup> Above the inscription we find the coat of arms: a Portuguese shield, with a horizontal division over the Maltese cross; in the first area, we find the Melos’ coat of arms (a double golden cross with six byzants); in the second area, we find the Pereiras’ coat of arms (a cross fleury on an empty background). The inscription was already transcribed by Craesbeeck (1992: 350).



North and west façades.

While managing the vast heritage of the order in Portugal, the Maltese brought with them the taste and the artisans that were marking the European cultural scene from the Italian peninsula or France, via Malta. We should recall that, within the vast territory located between the Tâmega, the Douro and the Paiva, and between Vila Real and Viseu, the Maltese bailiffs, friars and grand masters made all efforts to leave their mark through art. Lamego was the epicentre of this influence. In this city, where some of the most important names of the old military order were born, there are still legacies of their family origin and their taste, such as the works of art in the hermitage of the Exile (Lamego), the result of a vow made by a bailiff and commander from Poiães, Friar Lopo Pereira de Lima, a brother of the already mentioned Diogo de Melo Pereira. Furthermore, the person responsible<sup>10</sup> for the commission of Nicolau Nasoni's first works and for his coming to Portugal – which was so decisive for stimulating the Baroque art in the northern areas of the kingdom – was a Maltese.

Through the inscription that the commander Martim Álvaro had placed above the portico of the Church of Veade we find out a little bit more about his origin:

ESTA IGR.A MANDOV REEDIFICAR DE NO  
VO. O COMENDADOR FR MATIM [SIC] ALVARO PINTO  
DAFONS.A E SOUZA DA CAZA DE CALVILHE  
ANO 1732<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Roque de Távora e Noronha (1706-1743). He was the brother of the dean of the Porto cathedral, who commissioned the cathedral's building works to Nasoni in 1725.

<sup>11</sup> Surmounting the arch that frames the portico we find the commander's coat of arms: it is an irregular shield, perhaps wishing to imitate the Italian shields, quartered for Sousas (Arronches); Pintos; Fonseca and Manuéis (although this last quarter is poorly depicted).



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East façade. Portal.

[THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THIS CHURCH WAS COMMISSIONED BY  
COMMANDER FRIAR MARTIM ALVARO PINTO  
DA FONSECA OF THE HOUSE OF CALVILHE  
IN 1732]

The House of Calvilhe, located on the outskirts of Lamego and close to the royal road that connected this city from the Douro region to the Castilian Extremadura, was the seat of a powerful majorat that, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, was associated with several individuals who had reached their importance, status and prestige due to the places and positions they held in the hierarchy of the State. Friar Martim Álvaro's maternal ancestors came from this house although both his father, Miguel Álvaro, and his mother, Ana Teixeira, descended from the Pintos lineage; they distinguished themselves and were greatly rewarded for their loyalty to the House of Bragança<sup>12</sup>.

So, it is within the sphere of this family and this institution – the Order of Malta – that we should understand the important reforms conducted in the Church of Veade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that, in some way, contradict or at least minimise the common idea that the commanders only “devoured” the benefits they were granted, without giving anything in return. The investment on buildings or reconstruction, despite being expensive, allowed its mentors to leave a mark of their prestige and power, often stimulating the influx of believers, pilgrims or offerers to the new or renovated space.

<sup>12</sup> His manor house, called the tower of Chã, was located in the municipality of Ferreiros de Tendais (Cinfães) and belonged to the domains of the House of Bragança ever since the latter was founded.



## THE "NEW" CHURCH

The reconstruction mentioned in the inscription of 1732 resulted in the reorientation of the chevet and in the addition of a chancel to the west. Because it was impossible to extend the old small Church to the east, the original axis was kept and the façade was turned to the commendation houses whose construction was ordered by Diogo de Melo Pereira in 1641. As it is known, in the Modern Period, there were plenty of interventions to extend or replace the primitive Romanesque chevets with larger ones so that, among other things, they could accommodate the grand main altarpieces, so carefully designed in the Baroque Period. Here we may recall the cases of Saint Vincent of Sousa (Felgueiras) or Saint Mary of Barrô (Resende). Knowing that the commendation houses had already been built a century earlier, and considering the quality and impact that its construction would have on the rest of the parish, the mere replacement of the chevet of Veade would surely smother them.

Besides, the 18<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the Baroque Period, exaggerated in the creation of public spaces that allowed the fruition of its monumental buildings. So, it is based on these assumptions that we should understand the reconstruction made in 1732 and the reorientation of the Church of Veade that, with its main façade now facing east, created a pompous ensemble opposite the Commendation Houses.

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North façade. Nave. Wall.

However, the preservation of the north and south walls and openings, which kept the Romanesque construction and decoration, is less understandable, at least from the pragmatic point of view. A close look at the nave's north elevation allows us to identify, through a projection found on the wall and through the cornice itself, the probable location of the primitive façade. However, the identification of the place where the Romanesque chancel used to start raises more doubts. On the wall section located between the Church's lateral portal and northeast angle, we find an extremely irregular masonry work, both in terms of shape and colour, which is surely the result of a reuse of ashlar from the Romanesque Period. The reuse of ashlar was rather common in this period when there were reconstructions and deep changes in the primitive plans of the Romanesque churches. In the Sousa basin, the Church of Saint Mary of Airães (Felgueiras) is a good example of that, because we know that around 1776 it was extended to three naves through the reuse of ashlar from the Medieval building, as proven by their initials<sup>13</sup>.

However, it was probably not just in order to value their antiquity that a significant part of the side elevations were preserved. Behind the preservation of part of the lateral Romanesque walls was possibly a practical (and economic) reason.

However, while the idea of a not completely rebuilt Church seems to clash with the reformist wishes of Commander Martim Álvaro, there was surely an obligation of Illuminist nature that forced the clergyman to leave for the memory of future generations part of that monument, so ancient both to his eyes and to the eyes of the people from Veade. The following statement written by the memoirist of 1758 seems to confirm it: "outside, on the north side of

<sup>13</sup> For further information on this subject, please read Botelho (2010b).

the old Church's wall, there was an inscription carved on a stone using a gothic font (...) such stone was left on the same side and in the same place by the Patron who rebuilt the Mother Church" (Lopes, 2005: 232).

It is rather curious that this "epigraphical" inscription "with Gothic characters is appreciated". We should not forget that, at the time, there was no compartmentalisation of the history of art as we have today yet and that, still following the path of the concepts professed during the Italian Renaissance, the word "Gothic" was understood as a synonym for "Middle Ages" and, therefore, was associated with a long historical diachrony<sup>14</sup>.

The quality of the Romanesque decorative elements is highlighted in the only, albeit laconic, description we have of the Medieval building, which is presented by Francisco Craesbeeck. According to the memoirist, the Church was "very old, as we can see in the chancel arch that shows a very peculiar masonry work, similar to the one found on the main door and on the two transverse doors of the same Church; it features only one nave and it is not large" (Craesbeeck, 1992: 348). It was unfortunate that the will to reorient the Church would lead to the loss of the Romanesque main portal, as narrated here. The various separate pieces we can still currently admire both in the annexes of the Church's sacristy and in the Archaeological Museum attached to the Public Library Prof. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa (Celorico de Basto) belonged, either to the main portal or to the primitive triumphal arch. We are talking of voussoirs, sections of chequered friezes or capitals that partly repeat the motifs we find on the lateral portals or, alternatively, themes commonly used in the region, from which we highlight the composition carved in capitals that depicts the theme of *Daniel in the lions' den*, which is also present in Travanca (Amarante) or Saint Martin of Mouros (Resende). As it is known, it is in the Romanesque style that spread from the Braga cathedral that we find the origin of this representation, so cherished by the Romanesque style of the Tâmega and Douro river basins.

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Sacristy. Several Romanesque decorative elements.



Public Library Prof. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa – Archaeological Museum (Celorico de Basto). Capital.

<sup>14</sup> For further information on this subject, please read Botelho (2010a: 29).



North façade. Nave. Portal. Tympanum, archivolt and capitals.

Judging by the remaining traces we may say that this would have been among the best works made by our Romanesque artisans. The remaining sections, which, according to Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, are influenced by the school developed following the construction of Braga-Rates, tell us that the Church of Veade was coeval of the Church of the Monastery of Travanca, Pombeiro and Unhão (both in Felgueiras), or also Arões (Fafe) (Almeida, 1986: 102), meaning that the chronology of the elements that we are able to observe today, integrated in a Church with a strong Baroque flavour, probably date back to the early or first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Almeida, 2011: 124). We should not forget that Gomes Alvite, who sold the Church and all its estates to the Order of the Hospital before 1258, was from Braga.

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We have already seen that in 1732 the Church was rebuilt in order to extend its space, an intervention that led to its reorientation. We accept that significant sections of the Romanesque walls were preserved and that these include precisely the lateral portals. However, unlike what has been argued (Barroca, 2000: 271), we do not advocate the complete reconstruction of these portals. It is a fact that they were changed, but not rebuilt. That possibility is suggested by the supposed location of the primitive Romanesque chancel because, as far as we know, the lateral portals are usually opened close to it and, although most Portuguese Romanesque churches have only one nave, they take up the area where a transept might have existed.

Regarding the lateral portal currently on the north side, there are two elements in its vicinity that corroborate the idea that it was moved during the 18<sup>th</sup>-century intervention: the location of the funerary inscription of Dórdia Gomes (which seems to have been forced into its place) and the opening of a large rectangular window above it. The current position of the portal, which is facing north, immediately stands out: almost in the middle of the façade, it is devoid of its primary function as a result of the lowering of the floor that occurred when the adjoining road was opened. In fact, we should notice the different colour of the granite on the lower part



North façade. Nave. Portal.





North façade. Nave. Portal. Bases.



North façade. Nave. Portal. Capitals.

of the entire elevation and the fact that the Church's foundations are still visible closer to the northwest corner, in the area where we find the triumphal arch.

As explained by Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, this portal was walled up and was only revealed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century during renovation works carried out at the time (Almeida, 1978: 279). Here we may also find a justification for its somewhat disrupted, although well-preserved, appearance. It has two complete archivolts supported by two columns. Considering the granite's colour, the inner archivolt may not be the original one. That is not the case on the outer one, which has many ornaments: on the voussoirs' extrados there is a composition defined by scotias decorated with spheres, a theme that was usual in the region and that was multiplied in the Church of Ribas (Celorico de Basto), located nearby. The scotias are separated by a double an elegant torus and limited, on the outside, by a frieze with rope-shaped motifs and, on the inside, by small stylised flowers repeated on the voussoir's intrados. The voussoir's internal face shows botanic and phytomorphic motifs carved in relief and, on the voussoir placed right next to the archivolt's keystone, we can see a cross pattée. In the Museum of the Celorico de Basto Library there is a voussoir that repeats this elaborate composition. Despite being quite damaged due to the passing of time, the capitals and bases of this portal confirm the idea that we are standing before the work of a regional workshop that interpreted a few erudite shapes – there are clear compositional (but not thematic) similarities with some of the motifs from the main portal of Saint Mary of Pombeiro – and adjusted them to the local scale. The absence of impostes is rather significant, considering that they play a key role in the opposite portal.

From the south portal we highlight the double-tailed mermaids that decorate the first voussoirs of each of the two archivolts that compose it; these archivolts have a subtle horseshoe shape, as we may also see on the inside. The narrow and elegant columns with plain and prismatic shafts have very well preserved capitals that suggest the quality of the ones from the north portal. With a somewhat turgid relief, they are dominated by botanic and phytomorphic themes (thus creating similar compositions to those of the capitals of the triumphal arch of Fervença (Celorico de Basto)), which did not prevent the insertion of affronted animals on the capitals' angles. On the impostes there are sculpted hybrid figures showing their mascarón-like faces on the angle. The bases are also richly decorated.







So, in Veade, we stand before a characteristic legacy of the late Romanesque style and an excellent example of the assertion of a regional workshop of Romanesque decoration, already working full speed, and to which we owe the best sculptures of the time: Pombeiro, Unhão, Ferreira (Paços de Ferreira), Travanca, etc. (Almeida, 1986: 102).

However, as we can see, it is by reading the north elevation that we may get more information about the primitive Romanesque building. Considering the use of a different type of masonry work on the upper part of the elevation, we believe that the primitive lateral elevations that were reused might have been raised. That fact did not preclude the reuse of primitive corbels and, in their absence, that a few plain corbels were added to the ensemble. On the north side there are also a few remaining corbels.

However, in Veade there is an element which is difficult to interpret. We are talking of the traces of arches visible on both sides of the nave, close to the main façade. They are clearer on the south side. Are these scars from arcosolia, despite the fact that these elements were usually preserved, as we can see in Real (Amarante) or Sousa? Or are these ornamental elements similar to the deep blind arcades that decorate the chevet of Arões? There is nothing more we can add.

However, inside there are only a few remaining elements from the Medieval organisation. The entire space was changed in order to receive the foundation of several lateral and collateral altars, which maintain their original position, as described by the memoirists in 1758:



South façade. Nave. Traces of arches.

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“It has four Altars, the one in the chancel and three collateral ones along the Church’s body, all new, namely, the Tribune of the Main Altar which includes the Blessed Sacrament, a full-body image of the Patron Saint on top, on the Gospel side a processional image of Our Lady of the Rosary, and, on the Epistle side, the Image of the glorious Martyr Saint Sebastian, in the Church’s body, on the Gospel side, close to the Arch, we find the Altar of Our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, which features the images of Our Lady of the Candles, the God Child, Saint Blaise, Saint Gonçalo and Saint Lucy, and, on the Epistle side, right opposite, the Altar of Lord Saint Anthony with the Image of Christ’s Precursor, the Lord Saint John the Baptist and in the middle of the Altar, between the two, the Holy Image of the Lord Ecce Homo. (...) § Close to this Altar, on the same side, we find the fourth Altar, the one of the Lord of the Good Death, which is in a wooden tomb that is well gilded on the inside, clad in marble on the outside and covered with a purple damask cloth; the altar is made of white carved stone and features a finely painted depiction of the Holy Image of Our Lady of Sorrows, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Mary Magdalene, and other Female and Male Saints, a portrait of the descent from the Cross that was placed anew by the same Patron who rebuilt the Church (...)” (Lopes, 2005: 230)<sup>15</sup>.

The most significant changes that occurred between the 18<sup>th</sup>-century description and our days are related to the locations of the images and to a few conservation interventions focused on the gilded woodworks carried out after the ones that the patron had commissioned in 1758<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> The underlines are ours.

<sup>16</sup> “All the other altars are newly gilded, a work sponsored by the same patron” (Lopes, 2005: 230).





General interior view from the nave.

The images of the Virgin of the Rosary (a processional image) and Saint Sebastian were removed from the main altarpiece; the latter was displayed on a corbel on the nave's north wall. The altar dedicated to Christ seems to have been the one that underwent the most significant changes in terms of devotional imagery. It accommodated a remarkable collection of sculptures, whose invocations revealed the popular attachment to certain propitiatory entities like Saint Blaise, Saint Gonçalo and Saint Lucy, three hagiotherapists that were specially worshipped in local and regional sanctuaries. The image of Saint Blaise was moved to the so-called altarpiece of Saint Anthony, on the opposite side. We do not know the whereabouts of the rest of the images and of the aforementioned sculptures of the Virgin of the Candles and the Infant Jesus, considering that such collection was surely made before 1758.

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Both the altarpiece of the Crucifixion and the opposite and symmetrical one, the so-called altarpiece of Saint Anthony, show complementary artistic, iconographic and symbolic languages. Although they were located in the nave, whose space was the parishioners' responsibility, both showed the coat of arms of the patron, Friar Martim Álvaro Pinto, with slight differences in terms of the position of the shield's fields<sup>17</sup>. The former, located on the north wall, shows a painting of Saint Francis receiving the stigmata on the attic. The imitator of Christ is kneeling and opening his arms to the crucifix that has blood-red lines or rays coming out of it and connecting Christ's stigmata with the thaumaturgy's body. The second altarpiece, on the same location but to the south, explores another representation so cherished within Franciscan iconography, the preaching of Saint Anthony to the fish. The composition and slightly inaccurate stroke of both paintings confirms they were made by the same author, a poorly skilled artisan

<sup>17</sup> Regarding the coat of arms placed above the main door, the second quarter represents the Pintos; on both coats of arms on the collateral altars they are replaced by the Fonsecas.



Chancel. Main altarpiece.

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that worked together with the carver and the other men who manufactured the two altarpieces.

Similar to the Church's body, these altarpieces incorporate different chronologies expressed through the woodwork's grammar; some woodwork depicts clearly Mannerist themes and designs, while others, according to the taste of the period when the Church was rebuilt (1732), include motifs from the so-called National Baroque style [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)], namely the frieze bordering the ensemble (decorated with angels, shells and birds), the small wings and the mouldings applied on the attic's paintings. Between them and the aforementioned moulding, the painted wreaths joined by a ribbon and the entire rib boned set make the transition between the Mannerist and the National Baroque works, filling a space that, if left blank, would disturb the overall picture.

In the altarpiece of the Crucifixion our look is focused on the painting that depicts the repeated scene of the *Calvary*. Painted with a rough stroke, we see a sorrowful Virgin wrapped in a purplish cloak and an effeminate Saint John the Evangelist wearing a white tunic and a red cape, who are turning their gazes towards a dying Christ that does not seem to match the crucifix integrated in the painting: a small cross (when compared to the images that surround it), on which a minor artist drew a suffering, yet peaceful, Christ, who seems to have been attached to the cross sideways; at his feet we see the bones and the rocky outcrop that characterise the Golgotha. You could say that this element was pulled out from a cross on the side of a road and brought here to work as a crucifix. However, it is natural that this altarpiece was intended to accommodate a full-body image, with a size that would be more appropriate for worshipping purposes, allowing the observer to be faced with a reading of the scene that was more in line with the overall work



Nave. South wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. South wall. Painting detail. Calvary.

designed for this altar, thus creating a bridge between the pictorial work and the imagery, which was, in fact, the goal that the artists tried to achieve throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>18</sup>.

The painting that depicts the bishops *Saint Blaise* and *Saint Fructuosus* facing each other is coeval of the already mentioned pictorial collection. Religious ethnography mentions that they were both worshipped as hagiotherapists or thaumaturgy's that were specially invoked against physical illnesses: the former was an advocate against throat diseases and the latter against the bites of mad dogs. It is likely that the paintings, while depicting them as two fancy prelates, were intended to deter the mainstreaming of the two saints, presenting them in their episcopal role, blessing and spreading the Holy Word<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, we should not forget the meaning and the power of the presence of an altarpiece from a bishop from Braga in a commendatory Church; in some way, it was a warning about the jurisdictions that should be respected. Saint Fructuosus was one of the first prelates of the diocese of Dume, and later of the diocese of Braga; he was born in Astorga in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

The altar that in 1758 was associated with the Lord of the Good Death is located almost next to the altarpiece dedicated to Saint Anthony of Lisbon. In fact, the entire structure intends to

<sup>18</sup> The Via Crucis is associated with the theme of and devotion to Christ and His Passion and headed from the Church of Veade to the top of a small hill located to the east of the temple. The bases of the crosses before which Easter processions used to stop are still visible. At the end, there was a beautiful series of elegantly carved granite crosses marking the place of the Crucifixion and the sepulchre. On the last cross, which marks the location of the Tomb of the Lord, a chest stand out from the first register; right above the two steps we find the coffin of the Lord, a curious and somewhat eccentric allusion to the Body as a Treasure kept in a stone "reliquary".

<sup>19</sup> The iconographic representation of the two bishops is very similar and they are only distinguishable by their attributes (Saint Fructuosus holds a closed book on his left hand), by the colour of their alb (Saint Blaise's is green while Saint Fructuosus's is red) and by the inscription at their feet: S. BRAS [ST. BLAISE] and S. FRVT.o. [ST. FRUCT.o.].





Nave. North wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. North wall. Painting detail. *Saint Blaise and Saint Fructuosus*.

exalt the lying condition of Christ, whose body (a sort of processional image with articulated limbs) is displayed inside a glazed wooden urn placed on the predella. The altarpiece, built as a sort of portico, was manufactured by the same person who was responsible for the portal and for the decoration of the façade. Above the entablature and the Ionic pilasters there is a semi-circular pediment with a Maltese cross in the middle. Although the ensemble was mentioned by the memoirists of 1758 as being made of “white carved stone”, it was covered with paintings, namely marbled effects intended to emphasise the structure’s nobility. In the middle, we see the already mentioned “magnificent painting” that, despite not having been made by the same individuals who manufactured the above mentioned panels, still fits within a context of local or regional production and was indeed painted by a poorly skilled artisan. In that sense, and unlike some of his relatives and commendatory predecessors and successors, friar Martim does not seem to have used the network of influences of the Order of Malta to bring leading European or Portuguese artists to Veade; instead, he resorted to artists from the regional sphere or circuit.

On the main altarpiece, the scenographic ornamentation seems to create a grandeur that the primitive Church did not bear. Although it seems to be squeezed into an opening which is too small for its grandeur, the Eucharistic throne surmounted by the semi-circular vault and by a pelmet from which two curtains held by angels are hanging still manages to give a certain monumentality to the ensemble. This structure fits into the so-called National Baroque Period, which is characterised by the exaggerated use of *putti*, birds, floral motifs, twisted columns and other elements.

The ornamentation of the chancel is complemented by an 18<sup>th</sup>-century tiled frieze whose motifs were drawn using cobalt blue ink. On the upper area, it shows a border frame, very popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, composed of botanic motifs that draw horizontal chained “ss”. On



Nave. North wall. Altarpiece. Lying Christ.

the lower part of the ensemble there is a band composed of wide twistings drawn over four tiles (2x2). On the central area we find a symmetrical composition along the entire extension of the frieze that alternates two types of flowery vases and pots.

From this point onwards there is no further information. We do not know much about what happened to the Church of Veade over the 20<sup>th</sup> century because it has not been classified yet. We only find a reference made by Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida to a work carried out in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (1967) (Avellar, 2005), which resulted in the reopening of the north portal because the Church's external whitewash layer was removed, a practice that was usual at the time.

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The altarpiece was restored in the 1980's and, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Celorico de Basto Town Council paid a special attention to the improvement of the Church's surrounding area; in addition to the construction of a new street and the conduction of improvement works in the churchyard, we highlight the restoration of the damaged crosses from the Via Crucis, as well as the renovation of their surrounding areas (Avellar, 2005).

In 2010 the Church of Saint Mary of Veade became part of the Route of the Romanesque.

[MLB / NR]



South façade. Nave. Portal before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1963). Source: IHRU archive.



Churchyard. Cross from the Via Crucis.

## CHRONOLOGY

1159: the “meana” Dordia Gomes was buried in Veade;

13<sup>th</sup> century: the private Church of Veade was associated with the Guedeões lineage;

13<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup> half): construction of the Romanesque edification of Veade, of which a few significant portions remain;

1220: the inquiries of King Afonso II mention the “monastery of Bialdi”, although the Church of Veade was already a parish church by then;

Before 1258: the canon Gomes Alvites, from Braga, sold the Church of Veade and all the estates to the Order of the Hospital;

1641: construction of the Commendation Houses, commissioned by Diogo de Melo Pereira (d. 1666);

1732: according to the inscription engraved on the main portal’s lintel, the Church of Veade was rebuilt by the commander friar Martim Álvaro Pinto, of the House of Calvilhe (Lamego);

18<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> half): design of the Church’s contents (liturgical furniture, woodwork and imagery);

1967: restoration works in the Church of Veade;

1980-1990: restoration of the main altarpiece;

20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century: improvement works on the Church’s surrounding area under the Celorico de Basto Town Council’s responsibility;

2010: the Church of Veade becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque.

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**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
ANDREW OF VILA  
BOA DE QUIRES  
MARCO DE CANAVESES



**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT  
ANDREW OF VILA  
BOA DE QUIRES  
MARCO DE CANAVESES



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The epicentre of the influence of the Portocarreiros – a lineage that was particularly important within the context of the manorial assertion of the 13<sup>th</sup> century –, in the Middle Ages, the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Vila Boa de Quires stood out as a centre from which family and ecclesiastical interests emanated (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 909). In the shadow of a “11<sup>th</sup>-century” monastic institute, according to José Mattoso’s (2002: 105) suggestion, various interests were hatched after the monastery’s rights were divided between several heirs. However, there are several doubts concerning its founders and the rule that it initially followed. José Mattoso roots it in the Gascos’ descent and wonders if it might have adopted the Cluniac rule (although the connection to Paço de Sousa, in Penafiel, almost surely confirms the adoption of the Benedictine rule).

The author of the article on “Vila Boa de Quires” summarises the situation of the territory in the 13<sup>th</sup> century: ““couto” of the monastery; “honra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Portocarreiro, which is similar to “couto”; and “honra” of Buriz” (Correia et al., 1963: 361-363). Until very recently there were still extremely expressive legacies of the local long-lasting land-owning nobility, which produced unique works such as the Portocarreiros’ tower (of which only the memory remains) and the exuberant façade of the palatial house whose mentor was, supposedly, António José de Vasconcelos de Carvalho e Meneses (1714-1799). The low income collected by the monastic institute, despite the legacies left by the nobility, must have contributed to its secularization. In 1320, it contributed with a tax of 30 “libras”

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Façade of the (unfinished) noble house of the Portocarreiros (also known as the unfinished palace of Vila Boa de Quires or the fidalgo's works) (Marco de Canaveses).

[former Portuguese currency unit] for the crusades of King Dinis; at the time it would already be a parish church and in 1536 it became a commandment of the Order of Christ, held by the House of Bragança (Sousa, 1745: 212).

The author of *Corografia portuguesa...* gives us more information on this aspect: “and because this is the first time we talk of a Commendation of the House of Bragança, what many do not know, because these news are not public to everyone, is that this Royal House has over forty Commendations in this kingdom, which it gives to whomever it sees fit, and makes a few noblemen, and ones and the others enjoy the rights made and granted by the Kings” (Costa, 1706-1712: 396). In fact, given that the House of Bragança was a state within the State, it managed its material and immaterial assets with the autonomy and the prerogatives that no other Portuguese noble house held. Within the sphere of this state there were several commanders who enjoyed close relationships with the dukes: Pedro de Castro (1536), Vasco Fernandes Caminha (around 1539), João de Tovar Caminha (around 1550-1614) and Rui de Sousa Pereira (around 1631), among others (Cunha, 2004). The connection between this commendation and the titled nobility is explained by its profitability: in 1706 the commander was earning 600 thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit], adding up to the income from the parish of Rande, Penafiel (Costa, 1706-1712: 396). So, it was a tempting commendation.

In 1758, the graduate Tomás António de Noronha e Meneses, who signed the memoir of Vila Boa de Quires, already clarified the temporal jurisdictions of his parish:

“It belongs to the land and county of Porto Carreiro that comprises only half of this Parish, and the Parish of Abragam, and the Parish of Maurelles, and the other half of the aforementioned parish is a “Couto”, which comprises part of the Parish of Reçezinhos and part of the Parish of Constança, and all of them are subject to the the said county, as far as criminal cases are concerned” (Meneses, 1758).

In 1853, Vila Boa Quires belonged to the municipality and judicial district of Penafiel, had 393 dwellings, was held by the House of Bragança and its rector received a rate of 250 “réis” from his parishioners (Marques, 1853: 275)<sup>1</sup>.

As a consequence of Law no. 11-A/2013, of January 28<sup>th</sup> 2013, regarding the administrative reorganization of the territory of the Portuguese parishes, Vila Boa de Quires was integrated into the parish of Maureles, being currently one of the 16 parishes that compose the municipality of Marco de Canaveses.

1 On this date the rector of Vila Boa de Quires presented the parish priest of Canas de Duas Igrejas, in the municipality of Penafiel, according to the information found in the same dictionary (Marques, 1853: 59).



## THE CHURCH IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

**A**lthough the foundation of the monastery of Vila Boa de Quires surely occurred before 1118, year in which there is already a reference to the “monastery [known as] Vila Boa de Quires” (Mattoso, 2002: 53), the Romanesque elements that still remain actually point out to a later chronology. Supposedly, an inscription with the date 1180 was discovered during the works that were carried out in 1881, which we shall mention further on; however, Mário Barroca emphasises that there is no information on this possible epigraph, of which there are no traces and whose existence and chronology should be seen with the necessary caution (Barroca, 2000: 430). However, besides the stylistic elements, there are several initials, some of them alphabetic, with a Gothic appearance that confirm that this construction may date back to the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or already to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.



South façade. Nave. Arcosolia. Voussoirs. Initials.

In a Romanesque building, the stonemason's initials or marks, as they are more commonly known, are crucial elements to the archaeological study of its architecture, and they are also reliable indicators of the chronology of its construction. These are small and usually geometric carved signs that appear on the ashlar's outer face and have been interpreted as marks related to temporary workers, that is, as a key to distinguish a job by a specific mason or group of masons (Nuño González, 2005: 95). Besides indicating the progress of the building works, they may also be useful elements to identify, for example, the (quite imprecise) number of stonemasons that may have worked in a given building. Since they were paid on a daily basis, the stonema-

sons identified the ashlar they carved and assembled with marks that could range from graphic signs to letters of the alphabet. Despite the fact that there are a few more elaborate symbols, which adopt figurative shapes, usually we find carved signs easy to engrave (Huerta Huerta, 2004: 121-149). However, in most cases, these marks are facing the wall's intrados, although occasionally we have the chance of finding them on the outside. However, we should highlight the fact that these initials should not be understood as a sort of emblem identifying a specific group; its use – unless they are very special signs or signs found in buildings that are closely related – should be analysed separately in each building, considering that their arrangement can be completely random (Nuño González, 2005: 95).

Furthermore, and despite the fact that we exceptionally find stonemasons' initials in a few Classical monuments, these are essentially a phenomenon from the late Middle Ages (Almeida, 1978: 44). Except for two Cistercian abbeys from the Beira region (Tarouca and Salzedas, both in the municipality of Tarouca), the use of initials prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century seems to have been very rare. Its use became rather common in the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, thus being quite regularly found in works that date back to the third quarter. According to Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, we should agree that, after the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, the habit of carving initials was common to all stonemasons who would do it out of pleasure or tradition; however, we should highlight that whenever the stonemasons were paid on a daily basis or worked for free, the initials were not required (Almeida, 1978: 45-46). We should not forget that the workers' wages only began timidly regulated in the late Middle Ages and the existing information on that subject is not enough to allow establishing general rules (Huerta Huerta, 2004: 126).

To this aspects we should add the ones associated with the graphic evolution that the initials underwent over the last three centuries of the Middle Ages (Almeida, 1978: 46). Despite the fact that we always find simple signs side by side with very elaborate ones, the general trend was for their drawings to become more complex and, ever more often, take the alphabetic or ideographic shape. So, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, these initials were predominantly simple, many of them alphabetic, and some of them with an ideographic appearance at the end, i.e., there were stonemasons who presented, as their initials, a representation of the object associated with their surnames.

So, we stand before a Church that was surely built from the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Although the Church's only nave was moved about 10 meters to the west in 1881, as we shall see further on, the truth is that in this large extension of the nave "there was great concern in respecting its architectural style, meaning that the existing façade, despite small differences, is quite similar to the one it had before the extension. It was moved just a few meters forward, preserving its elegant frontispiece which is currently more eye-catching and free" (Leal, 1873-1890: 674).

In terms of composition, this is one of the most elaborate façades in the Baixo Tâmega region. The frontispiece is surmounted by a large window, which reminds us of some of the features of the façade of Paço de Sousa, despite the fact that here we have a building with a single nave, meaning that the façade's elevated central area, which creates an illusive difference in heights, is entirely due to the somewhat excessive size (Graf, 1986: 101) of the window; the window features a polygonal mullion, a clear sign of its late chronology, way into the Gothic period. The



West façade.

tympanum is decorated with a hollowed cross<sup>2</sup>. It is surrounded by a series of three elongated archivolt, whose columns feature capitals with similar botanic motifs on the left side. On the other side the capitals are all different; the inner one depicts affronted animals on the edge, the central one features a small mask on the upper corner (perhaps a monk? (Basto, 2006)) and the outer one shows what seems to be a stylized human figure (a scowl? (Basto, 2006)).

The upper end of the main portal is only separated from the base of the window by a row of ashlar. The portal, which is stylistically close to the one of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa, has four slightly broken archivolt defined by a surrounding arch ornamented with the typically Romanesque decorative motif “no. 3”, defined by Joaquim de Vasconcelos as “secant circles with a double movement, centred; ribbon” (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 69). On the impost, which stretch along the façade much like a sort of plain frieze, we see motif “no. 10” of the same inventory, which is described as follows: “five-leaved stylized ivy; vertical, loose motifs” (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 69). On the flat tympanum, there is an inscription related to the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century expansion, which reads: AMPLIADA EM 1881 [EXTENDED IN 1881].

However, the greatest similarities with the portal of Paço de Sousa are identified in the carving style of the capitals and in the motifs of the corbels, shaped like bovine heads. Here, in Vila Boa de Quires, the typical bevelled cut of the so-called “nationalized Romanesque” style – which evolved within the sphere of influence of the Monastery where Egas Moniz, the Schoolmaster and Governor, is buried – shows one of its most eloquent examples. We should also notice the late chronology of the monuments that were built within this Monastery’s



West façade. Mullioned window.

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard N. Graf (1986: 101) believes that these were the elements introduced by the “embellishment” of 1881, considering the fact that the mullion was carved in a different material.





Church of São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim). West façade. Portal.



South façade. Nave. Portal.

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sphere of influence, most of which are the result of the reconstruction of pre-existing buildings carried out during the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, as in the case of Vila Boa de Quires, a fact that also contributes to corroborate what we have said before.

Reinaldo dos Santos identified an element to justify the unitary nature of the Romanesque group that sprung out from Paço de Sousa: the sculptural treatment given to the plane bas-relief decoration with a bevelled cut. This plasticity is the exact opposite of the plastic treatment given to Romanesque sculptures in the Braga-Rates axis, which is thicker and more turgid, providing the sculptural motifs with an enhanced volumetry and creating a real chiaroscuro effect. In the Sousa river basin, the sculptural treatment reminds Reinaldo dos Santos of the technique used in bas-reliefs on wood, which are more engraved than modelled, sometimes suggesting Visigoth or Byzantine art (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 69).

In the main portal of Vila Boa de Quires, the capitals show symmetrical motifs, with a botanic and stylized flavour, well attached to the frustum. The alternately prismatic and cylindrical columns that shape this portal are another sign of the chronological and stylistic integration, if we may say so, of this Church of Vila Boa de Quires in the so-called “nationalized Romanesque” movement<sup>3</sup>.

The south portal is also richly ornamented and is considered as being particularly interesting (Graf, 1986: 101). This very well-preserved portal presents, just like the main one, two sculpted corbels supporting a flat tympanum: a bovine head and a terrifying animal, with an open mouth, is biting a fruit. When Armando de Mattos (1949: 59) suggests that the capitals found in this portal are older than the ones on the main portal, being perhaps reused materials

<sup>3</sup> For further development on this matter, please read Botelho (2010: 453).





ESTABELECEDA  
EM  
1781



from an older building, we believe that the author still had not understood the strength that the local pre-existences and the autochthonous essence had in terms of Romanesque sculpture and, especially, in the formation of a language that was so specific of the Portuguese Romanesque context that deserved the epithet of “nationalized Romanesque”.

With capitals that show clear similarities with the ones found in the portal of Saint Genesis of Boelhe (Penafiel) (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 110), the south portal of Vila Boa de Quires is extremely well preserved. Carved with bevels, they show elaborate vegetal motifs combined with phytomorphic compositions and, in the left inner capital, affronted animals remind us of the strength that oriental influences had among us. We cannot fail to mention the contribution of the Muslim and North-African art that, by entering the Iberian Peninsula in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, introduced a new element (Correia, 1949: 1). Although the idea that “Romanesque decoration received abundant Oriental influences has been a consolidated doctrine in the History of Art for a long time”, Vergílio Correia was still very reluctant to accept that “part of that decoration with an Oriental nature met the Romanesque via the Muslim Spain and its cultural splendour” (Correia, 1949: 42).

From the three pointed archivolts, the two inner ones feature sharp edges, while the outer one is dotted with pearls in its chamfer. We should note the initials found in their voussoirs. On the impostes we see two motifs that were identified by Joaquim de Vasconcelos in a monumental work published in 1918 called *Arte românica em Portugal*. On the portal’s right side we find the “vertical, five-leaved stylized ivy (...)”, identified with no. 22, a similar motif to the one found of the impostes of the main portal, identified with no. 10 (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 69); the only difference is related to the fact that, in this portal, it is not a “loose” motif, but rather a “connected” one. On the other side, we find motif no.34 that, according to Joaquim de Vasconcelos, represents a “simple, seven-pointed fig-tree leaves, connected motif; half-relief. Sometimes it is mistaken for ivy due to its stylization” (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 72).

In this south elevation, we should also highlight the corbels that support the cornice which, for being mostly plain and with a square profile, confirm the late chronology of the building under study<sup>4</sup>. The existence of corbels (which are also quadrangular) halfway up the façade tells us about the prior existence of a porch-like structure. Because these structures were built using ephemeral materials (such as wood and tile) they did not reach the present day. Within the context of Portuguese Romanesque buildings, the purposes of these porch-like spaces may have been many: from a meeting place to a simple shelter for devotees. Narrow crevices illuminate the nave’s interior.

Three broken arcosolia are carved into this façade’s wall face, at the nave’s ground level, showing sepulchral lids whose shape does not match the arch’s space (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 110). By definition, funerary arcosolia are structures that were attached to or carved into the thickness of the walls and were intended to accommodate funerary monuments; depending on the period, they feature round or pointed arches (Barroca, 1987: 399). These three specimens of Vila Boa de Quires stand out for the complete absence of decorative



Church of Boelhe (Penafiel).  
West façade. Portal.



West and south façades  
and bell tower.

<sup>4</sup> We should not forget that some of these corbels are a result of the expansion works carried out in 1881.





South façade. Nave. Portal. Corbel, capitals and imposts.

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South façade. Nave. Portal. Corbel, capitals and imposts.



South façade. Nave. Arcosolia.

motifs and for not bearing any identifying element regarding who is actually buried in them (epigraph, coat of arms, etc.).

The north façade is extremely simple. Narrow crevices illuminate the nave's interior and the presence of corbels halfway up its elevation also confirms the presence of a now missing porch-like structure. However, its series of corbels is richer. Although they are mostly flat, there are two corbels that stand out for having the shape of a bovine head and a human face. A scar on the wall denounces the existence of a portal in front of the one on the south elevation, defined by a simple broken archivolt. The straight-lintel portal that allows accessing the Church's interior from this elevation most certainly belongs to the Modern Period.

The care put on the ends of the building's back walls shows the quality of the workshop (or workshops) that worked in the Romanesque construction of Vila Boa de Quires. The nave's back gable is punctuated by pearls, a theme that was taken to the extreme in the Church of Veade (Celorico de Basto); the chancel's terminal cross is pattée. The "Monastery Ville Bone de Queeriz" was still active in 1258 (Mattoso, 2002: 53), and the Church was only turned into a parish church in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, before 1320 (Sousa, 2005: 71). So, this Church was built as a monastic church, which helps to understand the quality and the elaborate nature of its construction.



North façade. Nave.



North façade. Chancel.





General interior view from the nave.

Let us go inside this Romanesque Church of Vila Boa de Quires. The sobriety of the granite from the nave's walls contrasts, in an almost shocking way, with the colourfulness found in the chancel. We should not forget that, in the Romanesque Period, seldom would sacred grounds present a plain atmosphere. The polychromy of the walls was combined with textile elements. The clean look of the stone inside the churches is the result of a recent interpretation that dates back to the restoration interventions carried out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite its somewhat *naïf* appearance, the polychromy found on the Church's Romanesque triumphal arch may allow us to conduct a good mental exercise on the actual appearance of our Romanesque architectural sculpture. The triumphal arch, also broken, is composed of three archivolts; the outer one is punctuated by pearls and surmounted by the same motif no. 3 that surrounds the main portal. The central archivolt is surmounted by a torus and the inner archivolt is punctuated on each of its voussoirs by a "high-relief, four-leaved myosotis, placed on the stone", which corresponds to "motif no. 23" of Joaquim de Vasconcelos's ornamental inventory. The capitals that support them are quite interesting; they feature sculpted palmettes and mermaids with intertwined tails. The sculpture is not very protruding and is not that well adapted to the capital's shape, revealing an author that was not the same that designed the Church's portals. With a similar composition to that of the apse of Abragão (Penafiel) (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 110), the chancel of Vila Boa de Quires is vaulted and features a transverse arch which defines two bays and is supported by pilasters decorated with palmettes carved in relief on the impost.



Chancel.



Church of Abragão (Penafiel). Chancel.







## THE MODERN PERIOD IN VILA BOA DE QUIRES

**A**fter mentioning the secular and temporal jurisdictions associated with Vila Boa do Bispo in 1758, the graduate Tomás António de Noronha e Meneses adds the following information on the parish:

“(...) it is located in the middle of the parish, out of place (...) § Its patron saint is Saint Andrew, placed on the main altar of the parish Church, on which we also find the Sacramentum, and, on the altar, there is also the image of Saint Peter, and it features three more Altars, one of Our Lady of the Rosary, the other of the Infant Jesus, the other of the Souls, with a single nave (...)” (Meneses, 1758)<sup>5</sup>.

Currently it counts the same number of altars, although these were modified according to new tastes and new intervention techniques (which were not always designed to ensure the conservation of the existing heritage). On the other hand, the ecclesiastical space was filled with new devotions from 1758 onwards. Their presence is a new record of local spirituality and religiosity for which several factors contributed, from the preaching itself to the waves of devotions that characterized specific periods (such as, for example, and since 1917, the Virgin of the Rosary of Fátima).

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The replacement of the Baroque altarpiece that existed in the chancel probably took place during the building works campaign of the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The one we can currently see shows a language with Neoclassical origins that incorporates ornamental elements from different styles, namely the Romanesque and the Baroque. It displays the images of Saint Andrew (17<sup>th</sup> century), the patron saint, on the Gospel side, and Saint Peter (18<sup>th</sup> century), on the Epistle side. In the middle, concealing the throne, there is a large-sized canvas showing the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Mystic Lamb by two angels who, bending one of the knees over the altar's pedestal, are solemnly praying. The scene is surmounted by the Eye of Providence and six angel heads hovering over an ostensory. This work dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

From the Baroque programme that used to decorate the chancel, only the tiles and the vault's paintings remain. These tiles, which were identified by Santos Simões (1971: 28), cover the wall up to the cove, with a height of 20 pieces. This tiled ensemble, in shades of blue and yellow on a white background, creates an effect of deep contrast with the granite from the Church's interior. Finding this cladding inside the chancel of Vila Boa de Quires is quite remarkable and shows that there was a will to ennoble this space; however, there was the need to use a more cost-effective technique that, even so, is still as monumental in terms of the noble character it provides the space with. We are before a typical example of the “carpet-type” tile, so characteristic of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The patterning technique took on a significant relevance,



Chancel. Main altarpiece.

<sup>5</sup> To answer question number 16, he states: “Half of this Parish belongs to the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division], has an ordinary judge and a weights and measurements inspector, and the other part, which belongs to the municipality of Porto Carreiro, also has an ordinary judge, and the Council, and both are subject to the Chief Magistrate of the “Comarca” [a type of Portuguese administrative and judicial division]” (Meneses, 1758).



Chancel. Tiles.



Church of Airães (Felgueiras). Chancel. Tiles.

especially during the first half of the century (Meco, 1989: 134); it was the most abundant and characterizing technique of this period in terms of wall cladding. Through the development of geometric compositions and the combination of tiles to form surfaces, we see repeated motifs that lead to the emergence of patterns or serial compositions of surface repetition. The module is repeated and a (diagonal) interconnection appears between the decorative motifs. Seldom do the patterns take up a single tile. In the Church of Saint Mary of Airães (Felgueiras) the chancel's tile motif takes up 2x2 tiles and its design only gains figurative meaning in a group of four tiles. In Vila Boa de Quires we see a 6x6 pattern instead. According to Santos Simões, the 6x6 modular patterns are intended for large surfaces, however, their repertoire is limited to a few variants (Simões, 1971: 111). The most common one, which he identifies as “P-604”<sup>6</sup>, is precisely the one we find in the chancel of Vila Boa de Quires.

The decoration that surrounds this 17<sup>th</sup>-century “carpet-type” tile of Vila Boa de Quires is known as F-10 (Simões, 1971: 28, 131) and, by far, it is the type of frieze more commonly used in Portugal (Simões, 1971: 127). As the author explains, the tile carpets were always limited by surrounding decorations that define their space, thus framing the patterns (Simões, 1971: 127). Furthermore, like true “carpets”, they have their borders that separate the central part from the architectural accidents (mouldings, openings, cornices, etc.).

In the chancel, two pictorial sets of the “brutesque” type still remain, narrating the painful mysteries of the religious and civil proceedings of the Passion and Death of Christ in eight

<sup>6</sup> The author documented the presence of this motif – presented in eight elements generated by six matrices – in almost 80 different places, from the church of Saint Christopher of Caminha to the remotest ends of Brasil (old convent of Our Lady of the Angels, in Cabo Frio) (Simões, 1971: 111).





Chancel. Vault. Paintings.

pictures. The author of *Portugal antigo e moderno...*, while describing the Church in 1886, mentions them using the following words: “vaulted chancel with panels and good oil paintings depicting the Passion of the Saviour”. On the first ensemble, from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, from the Gospel to the Epistle side we see: the kiss of Judas and the imprisonment of Christ (Mt 26, 49); the *Ecce Homo* (Mt 27, 28), the way to the Golgotha (Mt 27: 31-32) and the presentation before Pilate (Mt 27, 1-2). On the second ensemble or line of panels, according to the same direction of observation, we see: the Prayer and Agony in the Garden (Mt 26, 36-46; Mk 14, 34-42; Lk 22, 39-46; Jo 18, 1); the Mocking or Humiliation of Jesus Christ (commonly known as the “Lord of the Green Cane”) (Mt 27, 27-30; Mk 15, 16-19; Jo 19, 1-3); the Crucifixion (Mt 27, 34; Lk 23-33; Jo 19, 18; Mk 15, 23-25, 27-28); and the Flagellation (popularly known as the “Lord Tied to the Column”) (Mt 27, 26).

The reading of this visual narrative should be made according to a spiral and counter-spiral movement, beginning on the Gospel side and moving from the chancel arch towards the chvet, from there to the opposite point and, conversely, by returning to the second panel and going from this one to the panel below and returning up close to the altarpiece and from there to the panel below; in this way, the image of the Crucifixion is connected to the monumental depiction of the *Calvary* whose painting occupies the entire surface above the chancel arch, on the face that opens towards the nave<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The crucifix that should be placed at the crevice's level is missing from this composition. We do not know if it ever existed, either hanging from or attached to the wall. However, it was not possible to identify, among the Church's sculptural assets, a sculptural ensemble that could fit into that space.

Despite being chromatically attractive, these panels reveal the stroke of a painter or painters who were not very erudite, as proven by the lack of expression on the faces and the defective treatment of the volumes – which was aggravated due to the fact that the pigment was applied over a thin preparatory layer (the joints between the voussoirs damage the integrity of the paintings). However, it is a curious and eccentric example of a finishing painting (the expression mural painting is poorly applied in this case) that provides the stone vault with a type of work that is usually associated with carpentry and woodwork, like in coffered ceilings.

The composition, which repainted in a recent period, included the Romanesque decoration of the chancel arch, the archivolt and the intrados, up to the capitals' level, recalling, as we've mentioned before – despite the time gap, the techniques and the underlying function –, the custom of applying polychrome paintings over the decoration and the structure of Medieval churches.

In terms of the nave, we should highlight the collateral altars and their corresponding altarpieces, which were reconstructed at a date we ignore, reusing the Mannerist and Baroque structural and ornamental elements – despite being deeply damaged by the existing repaintings. The collateral altar located on the north wall is currently dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows and the one on the south wall is dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary of Fátima. Both are painted at the attic's level: the former depicts God the Father with a blessing gesture and the latter has a depiction of the Holy Spirit as a dove.

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Nave. Collateral altarpiece on the Gospel side.



Nave. Collateral altarpiece on the Epistle side.



Nave. North wall. Altarpiece.

There is another altar embedded on the north wall that, in 1758, was named the altar of the Souls. In fact, behind the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that currently gives it its name, there is a hidden picture from the transition between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century in which the Archangel Michael, judge and guide, assisted by another angel, weights the souls he will then lead to Paradise among the ones that are hanging or already burning in the fire of Hell. In the attic there is a representation – from the same period and author – of the Holy Trinity flanked by two figures (a male one and a female one, which may be the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist) that dominates the integrated ensemble of furniture, paintings and imagery, whose original appearance has been, unfortunately, corrupted. The altarpiece, embedded in an opening surmounted by a broken archivolt whose scar (externally visible on the elevation) was



already mentioned, still shows signs of its specific condition – perhaps an altar or chapel that was associated with a family from the local elites.

Along the nave's side walls, some corbels support images that appeal to the local community devotion: such as Saint Nuno of Saint Mary, the Immaculate Conception, Saint Anthony of Lisbon and Saint Joseph (18<sup>th</sup>-century gilded and polychrome sculpture), both carrying the Infant Jesus; the Virgin of the Graces, Infant Jesus Saviour of the World, The Little Flower of Jesus (Saint Thérèse of Lisieux), among others of minor artistic and aesthetic relevance.



Nave. North wall.



Nave. South wall.



## CONTEMPORARY EXTENSIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, while responding to the enquiry sent to all parish priests in the bishopric of Porto<sup>8</sup>, which, nevertheless, he claims not having received, abbot José Joaquim Duarte Pinto M. da Costa, parish priest of Vila Boa de Quires, reports that the parish Church, despite “a few repairs”, it is “in a state of complete ruin, extremely miserable in terms of decorations” (Rosas, 1995: 528-529). Considering “all that is still required for its repair!! Furthermore”, abbot José Joaquim, while addressed the Director of Public Works of the city of Porto, Victor Le Cocq, claims: “Your Excellency, it would be a good work, and even a most meritorious one, if Your Excellency would take us under your valuable protection” (Rosas, 1995: 528-529).

But it was only almost twenty years later that the Church of Vila Boa de Quires was subject to a deep intervention that, as we have already mentioned, actually tried to respect its primitive elements despite the “improvements” introduced at the time. We were unable to find any previously unpublished source about it, so we chose to quote the description provided by Pedro Augusto Ferreira, the abbot of Miragaia (1833-1913), who resumed Pinho Leal’s work *Portugal antigo e moderno...<sup>9</sup>*:

350 “The mother church is a very old, small, but worthy temple, with a Gothic style, walls clad in tiles, surmounted by several figures and mermaids sculpted in granite, a vaulted chancel with panels and good oil paintings depicting the Redeemer’s Steps; a main altar and 4 lateral ones, all in old gilded woodwork, and the confraternities or brotherhoods of the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady of the Rosary and the God Child, all founded a long time ago. § As the church was too small for the parish’s current population, it has been recently enlarged, expanding almost to its double in size, extending the lateral walls until they covered the galilee or porch it had in the front, which was slightly lower than the church, closed on the south side by the wall, supported by stone columns on the north and west sides, and attached, to the east, to the church’s frontispiece, which faced and is still facing west. § They also added a tower, because it only had a belfry with two bell openings that surmounted the temple’s façade. § The greatest care was taken to respect its architectural style, so its current façade is only slightly different from the one it had before the extension. It was placed only a few meters further ahead, thus preserving its elegant portico, which is currently more eye-catching and free, with its four orders of columns and their corresponding arcades supported by richly ornamented capitals, showing heads of oxen and other animals, all in granite and, above them, the crevice of the old temple, displaying the same style as the portico. § A stone with a date that was believed to be 1180 was found during the demolition and removal. § After the extension of the temple, the altars were restored and gilded anew and the parish residence was added. § All

<sup>8</sup> Victor Le Cocq, through an order issued by the Minister of Public Works, had been commissioned to draw up a map of the state of repair, corresponding repairs and authorised expenses of all the buildings under that Ministry’s management. These buildings included those that were considered monuments, parish churches and public chapels, among others (Rosas, 1995: 511).

<sup>9</sup> He is the author of the final part of volume X and of volumes XI and XII.

these works were carried out thanks to the spontaneous generosity of a few well-deserving parishioners, under the active and zealous supervision of the not less well-deserving priest Victorino José Alves, royal priest in this parish, who was very efficiently helped by Antonio de Vasconcellos, from the noble house of Chãos” (Leal, 1873-1890: 674).

This concern with the respect for the Church’s primitive style meets what was being done at the time in buildings subject to interventions, which did not prevent the addition of elements to the primitive construction. This is why there is a reference to the “small difference” on the façade that took the place of the primitive galilee. Considering the existing description of the galilee, it would have been extremely elaborate, with arcades and capitals “filled with decorations representing ox heads and other animals”. Where they corbels instead? Is the corbel with the bovine head that we identified on the north façade the result of a reuse, like a minimal reminiscence of this galilee?

Besides the expansion of the nave – an obvious transformation of the structure of the primitive Church –, we should underline the construction of a bell tower, which replaced a gable; it is positioned on the center of the façade and has openings for two bells.

The Church of Vila Boa de Quires was classified as a National Monument in 1927<sup>10</sup>. But, in the mid-1940s, an incessant struggle led by the then parish priest, Manuel Nogueira Coelho, begins. In



North wall. Nave. Corbel.

<sup>10</sup> DECREE no. 14425. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I*. 228 (1927-10-15) 1989.

fact, an analysis of the administrative processes of the now extinct DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments] shows us that the correspondence exchanged between the parish priest of Vila Boa de Quires and this institution was very active and lasted until the 1970's<sup>11</sup>. The former regrets the oblivion into which his parish church had fallen, the latter postponed the execution of building works. Or alternatively, as in the case of the clock that the parish wanted to install on the Church's tower, it established the requirements for its installation in a time-consuming process that lasted over two years<sup>12</sup>.

However, we should not get the idea that the interventions deemed minimum and urgent were not carried out. However, between 1967 and 1980, there were a series of interventions aimed specifically at the sacristy's roof system (1968), the chancel (1970) and the nave (1971-1972 and 1976). Naturally, other works were carried out, focusing on the masonry, the woodworks and the liturgical furnishings and that even included the Church's electrical installation (1967 and 1980)<sup>13</sup>.

We should not forget that, after the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, DGEMN's intervention policy became less and less visible, i.e., thus seeking, with a few exceptions, to preserve the existing buildings and not so much to restore what was considered to be their primitive image. That is why the removal of the plaster from the naves made in 1977 in Vila Boa de Quires is the intervention that introduced most changes in the building's image during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This intervention also included the "scraping and detachment of paint layers from the nave's wooden ceiling, including its waxing", as well as the conduction of surveys at the pavements' level for future works<sup>14</sup>. It is a shame that we were unable to ascertain anything about the latter.

In the 1990's the appeals came from the Building Commission instead<sup>15</sup>. They were more successful and it was possible to improve the Church's roofing in 1991<sup>16</sup>. [MLB / NR]

In 2010, the Church of Vila Boa de Quires was integrated into the Route of the Romanesque and, in 2013, it was subject to protection, preservation and valuation works. The implementation of the project was aimed at the general preservation of the Church's existing roofs in terms of ceramic cladding, woods, waterproofing systems, as well as tufts and gutters (Monte, 2010: 14-17). Under the scope of this intervention, the cleaning and preserving of the external walls, managed by the parish, was also carried out. In the future, plans have been made to intervene in the existing mural paintings found on the chancel arch and in the chancel, for which a preservation and restoration project has already been developed (Duarte, 2010a), as well as in the chancel's tile cladding (Duarte, 2010b). [RR]

11 Please refer to the documents related to this matter at PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0023 [Online]. Available at: [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [Nº IPA PT011307310006]. In this case, with the purpose of saving space, we decided to reference the process and not every single document as we have been doing, given the extent of the process in question.

12 Idem.

13 Idem.

14 Memória de 29 de março de 1977 [SIPA.TXT.01493656]. Idem.

15 Please refer to the documents related to this matter at PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0023 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [Nº IPA PT011307310006].

16 Memória de 20 de março de 1991 [SIPA.TXT.01493328 and SIPA.TXT.01493328]. Idem.



## CHRONOLOGY

11<sup>th</sup> century: possible foundation of the cenoby of Vila Boa de Quires;

1118: reference to the "monastery [known as] of Vila Boa de Quires";

1180: date supposedly found on an engraving discovered during the works that were carried out in 1881;

13<sup>th</sup> century: references to Vila Boa de Quires as a "couto", to the "honra" of Portocarreiro and to the "honra" of Buriz;

13<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter or mid-century): construction of the existing Romanesque building of Vila Boa de Quires;

1320: Vila Boa de Quires would already be a parish church;

1536: Vila Boa Quires becomes a Commendation of the House of Bragança;

17<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup> half): tiling campaign in the chancel;

1706: the commander of Vila Boa de Quires was earning 600 thousand "réis", adding up to the income from the parish of Rande, Penafiel;

18<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> half): painting campaign on the chancel's vault;

19<sup>th</sup> century (last quarter): replacement of the Baroque main altarpiece with the existing Neoclassical one;

1881: extension of the Church, displacing the main façade nearly 10 meters to the west, and construction of the tower;

1927: classification of the Church of Vila Boa de Quires as a National Monument;

1940-1970: conduction of several conservation works, paying a special attention to the Church's roofs;

1947: installation of the clock on the bell tower;

1977: removal of the plaster from the naves and ceiling;

1999: improvement works on the Church's roofs;

2010: integration of the Church of Vila Boa de Quires in the Route of the Romanesque;

2013: works for the general conservation of the Church, focusing on the roofs and external walls.

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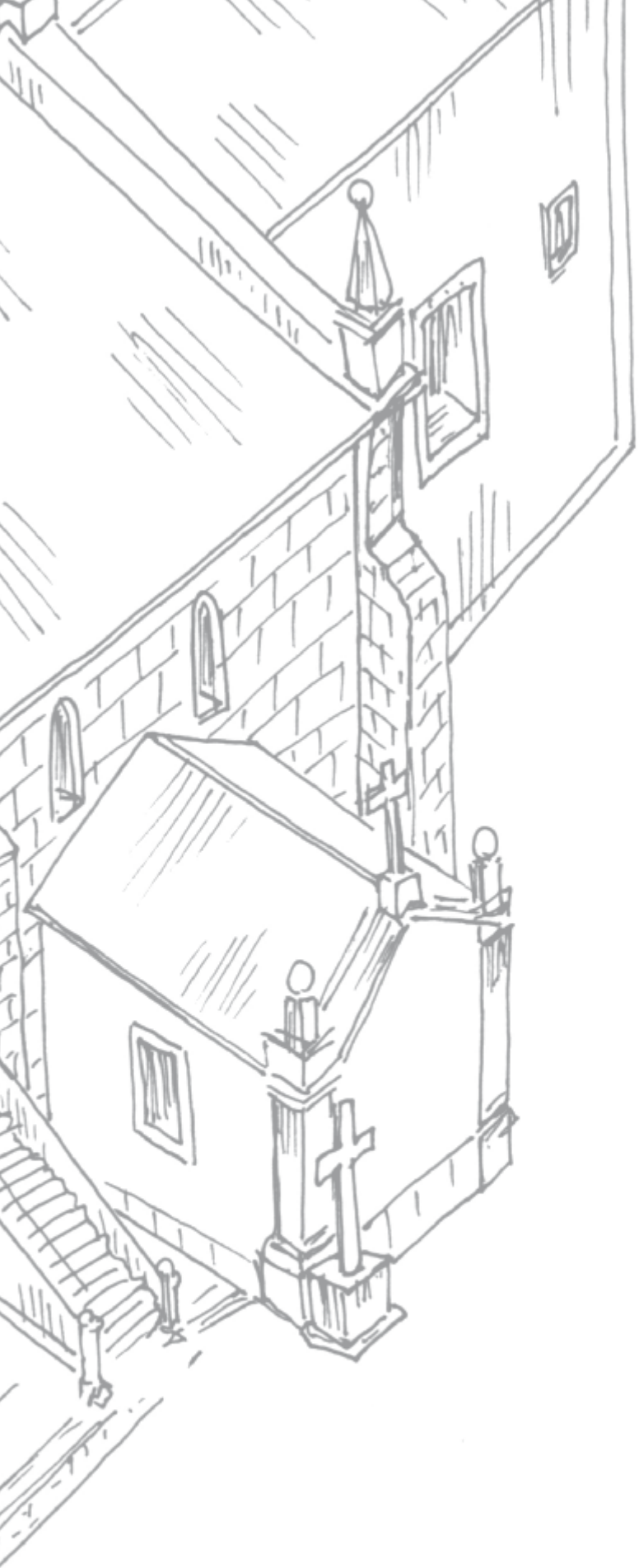
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**MONASTERY**  
OF SAINT  
MARY OF VILA  
BOA DO BISPO

MARCO DE CANAVESES

**MONASTERY**  
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Plan.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

It is called a “vila” [town] because it was visited by King Afonso Henriques; “boa” [good] because it has fertile lands; and “do bispo [of the bishop]” because Sizanando, the bishop of Porto, spent here the last five years of his life and is buried in its parish church (...)” (Aguiar, 1947: 141). These are the words used by Vieira de Aguiar to try and explain the origin of the toponym Vila Boa do Bispo. However, the writer of the corresponding entry in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira* states instead that “the determinative “do Bispo” given to Vila Boa, which was really very ancient, was only imposed by the bishop Sisanando in the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century” (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 363).

We do not know much about the history of Vila Boa do Bispo before the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (Mattoso, 2002a: 70). According to tradition, the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo was founded between 990 and 1022 by this bishop from Porto, the brother of Monio Viegas, in the place where a legendary battle between Christians and Muslims would have taken place, as mentioned in the chronicle of the Order of the Canons Regular, always focused on emphasising prodigious deeds (Santa Maria, 1668). According to the nobiliary by Count Pedro, one of the most important books of our Medieval Period, the first representative of the Gascos family from Ribadouro was Monio or Moninho Viegas I (+1066/68) (Mattoso, 2002a: 68). This noble family already had assets on the right bank of the Douro during the period of the reconquests made by Ferdinand the Great (1016-1065) in the region, between 1058 and 1065; they gradually expanded their property onto the other bank.

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Aerial view with the river Tâmega on the background.



Aerial view.

360 Vila Boa do Bispo is associated with the groups of monasteries built during the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the “civitas of Anégia”, such as Alpendorada (Marco de Canaveses), Bustelo (Penafiel), Valpedre (Penafiel), Vilela (Paredes) and perhaps Vila Boa de Quires (Marco de Canaveses) (Mattoso, 2002a: 124). It is hard to accurately define the extension of the territory of Anégia that, to the north of the Douro, encompasses almost the entire municipality of Baião, the entire municipality of Marco de Canaveses and most of the municipalities of Penafiel, Paredes and Gondomar; to the south of the river, the territory took up some area from the municipality of Castelo de Paiva and also a significant part of the northern areas of the municipalities of Arouca and Cinfães (Almeida & Lopes, 1981-1982: 133). We should not forget the strategic nature of its territory as a place crossed by the river, where it meets the mouth of the Tâmega. Besides, the Medieval documents mention an ancient road (probably Roman) that, coming from the south, from Arouca, would meet the Marco (Tongobriga)-Guimarães-Braga axis. Despite its strategic location during the Reconquest period, according to José Mattoso, the land of Anégia, whose seat was located on a promontory in Eja (Penafiel), presented a series of favourable conditions for monastic life in the following centuries: an uneven land that is seldom visited by travellers, with a well-rooted resident population, which was recently cleared for cultivation or repopulated (Mattoso, 2002a: 129).

The Gascos lineage managed to become the ruler of almost all the monasteries in the area located to the east of the Sousa such as Valpedre, Alpendorada, Tuías (Marco de Canaveses), Vila Boa de Quires and, of course, Vila Boa do Bispo (Mattoso, 2002a: 69). José Augusto de Sottomayor-Pizarro even mentions a certain “inclination” that this lineage had for the control of a large number of monasteries that were strategically located close to the affluents of the Douro, on both banks, along the route of the Reconquest<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> We may recall the examples of Cárquere (Resende) or Paço de Sousa (Penafiel). So, these monastic houses were ruled by members of the family and provided with relatively well-organized domains, a feature that, as a matter of fact, distinguished this lineage (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 446).





Aerial view of the river Tâmega near its mouth, in Entre-os-Rios (Penafiel) and Torrão (Marco de Canaveses). In the middle, the Duarte Pacheco bridge.

So, considering this context, José Mattoso finds it likely that the foundation of the Monastery under study is due to Sisnando, because, during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it was in the hands of the Gascos, who were strongly settled between the Sousa and the Douro and even beyond the Tâmega, in the territory of Benviver (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 70-71)<sup>2</sup>. Also according to this author, the oldest documentary reference regarding the “hermitage of Villanoua” dates back to 1079, meaning that its foundation was surely prior to this year (Aguiar, 1947: 53). Although made in a later period, perhaps in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by a descendant of the Gasgos lineage in seeking social prestige, the funerary inscription of Monio Viegas, the “Gasco” – the great-great-grandfather of Egas Moniz, the Schoolmaster and Governor – and of two of his sons, Egas Moniz and Gomes Moniz, dates back to 1022 (Barroca, 2000: 73-77):

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ERA M<sup>a</sup> . 2 . X<sup>a</sup>. OBIIT: < DONNUS > MONNI . VENEGAS . PROLI . QUI  
 DICITUR GASCUS et FILIIS EIUS / EGAS – MONIZ et GOMEZ . MO-  
 NIZ . REQUIESCANT . IN PACE AMEN<sup>3</sup>

This inscription is engraved in the lid of a sarcophagus framed by an arcosolium located in the Monastery’s cloister, which is currently private property. Although we don’t know if the death of the three noblemen occurred in the same year, what we should really highlight is the information on a son of Monio Viegas who was ignored by the books of lineages. The nobiliary of Count Pedro only mentions two sons of the first Gasco who came to Portugal and initiated

<sup>2</sup> The territory of Benviver, which stretched from Paços de Gaiolo to the Tâmega, included the parishes of Fandinhães, Paços de Gaiolo, Penha Longa, Paredes de Viadores, Sande, Manhuncelos, S. Lourenço do Douro, Magrelos, Ariz, Vila Boa do Bispo, Favões, Alpendorada, Matos, Várzea do Douro and Torrão, occupying the long slopes over the Douro river of the mountains Grelhal, Montedeiras and Rosém (Aguiar, 1947: 59).

<sup>3</sup> “Prior Múnio Viegas, called the “Gasco”, died in the era of 1069 (1022) and is buried here together with his sons Egas Moniz and Gomes Moniz. May they rest in peace. Amen” (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 365).





Cloister.

the Ribadouro clan<sup>4</sup>: Egas Moniz, the “Gasco”, founder of the monastery of Cucujães (Oliveira de Azeméis) and married to Toda Ermiges; and Garcia Moniz, who is mentioned as the “tenens of Anegia” (Mattoso, 2002a: 69)<sup>5</sup>, between 1043 and 1066 and also founded the Monastery of Travanca (Amarante). So, according to this author, we should consider that Monio Viegas, the “Gasco”, had another son called Gomes Moniz, who was ignored by Count Pedro, perhaps due to the fact that he died young and left no children (Barroca, 2000: 77).

According to Mário Barroca, the inscription from 1022, which may even be made using information found in an obituary, should not be separated from the tradition that places the grave of Sisnando in this very Monastery. One of these book of lineages also clarifies that “this Moninho Veegas, the first Gasco, came to Portugal... and another one, his brother, came with him; he was the bishop of Porto and his name was Sesnando; the latter died and is buried in Vila Boa do Bispo” (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 364).

Despite the great doubts arisen by its historic existence, the funerary inscription of Sisnando, the bishop of Porto between 1049 and 1085, was supposedly located in the hermitage of the Saviour, close to Vila do Bispo<sup>6</sup>. According to the chronicles, it was nearly a league away from the Monastery that the bishop – who had been living for a while in the Monastery of Saint Mary of Vila Boa, founded by his brother – was surprised by the Moors while celebrating Mass and was later buried by the Monastery’s monks under the altar in a stone memorial.

4 An excerpt from the book of lineages mentions the arrival of the Gascos to the Ribadouro area, where they eventually settled and took the lineage’s name from its geography: “(...) they came by sea to moor at Foz do Douro, between Porto and Gaia (...) and there they fought against a large number of Moors, several times, and there killed one of the sons, named Garcia Moniz, the Gasco. And above, the Moors won and went on conquering the land of Riba do Douro, on both sides” (Cunha, 1623 *apud* Barroca, 2000: 77).

5 For some time A. Almeida Fernandes (2001: 59) rejected this location, classifying it as fanciful and suggesting the hamlet of Gasconha, “close to the [lower] Sousa river”, as the Gascos’ place of origin. Rui de Azevedo suggested Cosconhe or Casconha, in the now extinct municipality of Sanfins (currently Cinfães) as the Gascos’ place of origin.

6 Despite the incompatibility between the date provided by the inscription – January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1035 – and the documentary references associated with the bishop, Mário Barroca (2000: 79-82) agreed with the reading made by Friar Nicolau de Santa Maria when discussing its credibility: “III Kal. Febr. Obiit / in Domino D. Sesnandus Epis/copus Portugal .a Maurorum / Telis Confossus Dum Sacrum / Faceret . Era M L XX III” [Inscription regarding Sisnando that, supposedly, was in the hermitage of Saint Saviour].

Mário Barroca continues the narrative – following the tradition passed on by Friar Nicolau de Santa Maria and Friar Timóteo dos Mártires – telling us that, when the bishop of Porto, Pedro Rabaldis (episc. 1138-1145), heard about the miracles that took place close to the Sisnando's grave, visited it in 1142. But, considering the poor state of repair of the chapel, he ordered the transference of the body of Sisnando to Vila Boa [do Bispo], placing it in a high tomb embedded on the wall to the right of the entrance (Barroca, 2000: 82).

There are also doubts about the existence of the – now gone – funerary inscription of bishop Sisnando; it was supposedly a fresco commissioned by Pedro Rabaldis when the body of the tortured bishop was moved to the Church of Vila Boa, mentioned in chronicles from the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Barroca, 2000: 205-206). First of all, Mário Barroca highlights the unlikelihood of the support used for an inscription that is intended to refer the date of October 11<sup>th</sup> 1142, an aspect corroborated by the fact that the text does not seem to match the suggested year<sup>7</sup>. However, it was in this period that the epithet “do Bispo” [of the Bishop] began to be used, which seems to be a sign of the major importance and of the local and regional impression on the above mentioned event, which was often mentioned in later chronicles (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 364). However, the connection between the Gascos and the foundation of this Monastery is confirmed by the ownership, for a specific period of time, by members of the lineage, their direct descendants, of assets in Vila Boa do Bispo or in the territory of the existing parish (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 366).

We cannot ignore the attraction that the manorial nobility had, in this period, for the foundation and donation of monasteries, turning them into their patronages. The fact that the noblemen took advantage of the different religious movements of the period to secure their own individual or collective interests, i.e., to maintain their social positions and, possibly, to improve them or to try to avoid threats from external sources, is well known (Mattoso, 2002b: 149). That is why José Mattoso states that “the success of a religious movement results from a simultaneous coincidence of interests both of the dominant class and a group of clergymen” (Mattoso, 2002b: 149). Besides, the association of a given family with a religious community was an important bastion of its prestige, especially in the eyes of the local lower-class population (Mattoso, 2002b: 96).

In his inventory called “Freguesias da diocese do Porto: elementos onomásticos alti-medievais”, Domingos A. Moreira identified several documentary sources regarding the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo which prove its early chronology (Moreira, 1989-1990: 99-101). While in 1012 this institution is still referred to as “Monastery Saint Mariae Villaebonae”, in 1120 it is already called “Monastery... of Villa Noua [sic] episcopi”.

On February 12<sup>th</sup> 1141 the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo, or more specifically, the prior Egas, his brother Monio and their friars, received the land charter granted by King Afonso Henriques (k. 1143-1185): “(...) facio cautum omni conventuj de Sancta Maria Ville Bone et vobis domno Egee Prior jet Fratri vestro Munionj et socijs vestries (...)” (Barroca, 200: 322).

<sup>7</sup> The archaeologist (Barroca, 2000: 205) follows the reading made by Friar Nicolau de Santa Maria, while being, at the same time, cautious: “Martyr & Antistes Jacet Hic / Rite Sepultus V. Idus Octob. In / Era M.C.LXXX. / Sesnandus Nomine Que Christus / ad Arthera Subsist / III. Kal. Feb. In Era M.LXXIII”.

It is yet curious that this charter calls, as regards the term “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division], such location of “villa”, at least once, without distinguishing the agrarian “villa” from the urban “villa” (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 366). Looking at the boundaries defined for the “couto” we can see that it encompassed the entire parish of the Monastery, i.e., Vila Boa do Bispo, except for Lidrais (Vidrais) (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 366).

The Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo had already belonged to the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine at least since the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century (Mattoso, 2002b: 53). After 1143, we already have references to the “canons of uille bone” (Moreira, 1989-1990: 100). So, the early privileges that were granted by King Afonso Henriques to the crosiers of Vila Boa do Bispo should not be surprising if we keep in mind the relationship that the first king of Portugal had with the mother-house of this order, which was based in Santa Cruz of Coimbra. In fact, “the Conqueror “commissioned” a great temple, with three naves, a work that he could call his own and that would serve as his royal chapel and burial place” (Gonçalves, 1894: 20). In the valley of Santa Cruz was the “balneum Regis” that the still Prince Afonso Henriques (1108/9?-1185) donated, in 1130, to the Archdeacon Telo for building the new seat of the new order (Alarcão, 2008: 155) which was founded on June 28<sup>th</sup> the following year, would be directly linked to Saint Rufus of Avignon (France).

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The pontiffs also granted several privileges to this Monastery of Vila Boa which, meanwhile, adopted the epithet of “do Bispo”. The Brief of Pope Lucius II (p. 1144-1145) allowed the priors of the Monastery to use a mitre in 1144 and in the Bull of Pope Anastasius IV (p. 1153-1154) from 1153, they were also granted the privilege of using a crosier (Monteiro, 1990: 85). This is why the lying figure of Nicolau Martins, which we shall analyse further on, features these insignias. In 1297, Pope Boniface VIII (p. 1294-1303) made an explicit confirmation of the rule of Saint Augustine in the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo.

The inquiries from 1258 are fine evidence of the importance achieved by the Monastery during the 13<sup>th</sup> century; besides many properties in neighbouring parishes, some of which quite distant, it held the patronage of several parishes that fulfilled their obligations towards it (Monteiro, 1990: 86). Among them, we find Saint Genesius of Boelhe (Penafiel) or Saint Martin of Várzea do Douro (Marco de Canaveses) that alternated between this Monastery and the monastery of Alpendorada (Marco de Canaveses). The 1258 document specifies that in the parish or “parish of Sante Marie Ville Bone Episcopi” where the “parish of the monastery of Villa Bona” himself took an oath, stating that the crown has no rights over it “quis cautavit ipsum cautum rex domnus Alfonsus senex”, i.e., that under King Afonso Henriques’s orders, the crown had “homens foreiros” [tenants] in the territory that became a “couto”, but subordinated them to the monastery or “gave them” (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 366). In this way, the Monastery was only forced to hand over to the Crown a quarter of its harvests, the so-called “vitualhas” [provisions, supplies] for the king.

In the catalogue of the Kingdom’s churches, commendations and monasteries from 1320, the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo is mentioned as having paid a sum of 1500 “libras” [former Portuguese currency unit], an amount that was relatively high in comparison with other monasteries and churches of the region (Almeida & Peres, 1971).



## THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

As we may infer from what has been said before, the oldest documentary traces regarding the existence of a monastery in Vila Boa do Bispo date back to the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. However, we have no knowledge on any material trace of the church and monastery that existed at the time, because what still remains as a legacy of the Middle Ages in the existing building is from a much later period.

Both in the Baixo Tâmega and in the Vale do Sousa regions, most of the buildings from the Romanesque Period show a somewhat late chronology – 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries – because they result from reconstructions of pre-existing buildings from the High Middle Ages. It is within this chronological framework that we should partly understand the rather interesting Romanesque sections that the Modern building shows as if they were “windows” opened during a restoration intervention.

First of all, considering its nature, we must henceforth acknowledge that when the Monastery’s Church was transformed during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the primitive Romanesque structure was reused, or rather, masked. Only thus may we understand the way in which the remaining elements stand today.

The most original elements from the Romanesque Period can be found on the Church’s façade. Despite being incomplete, the two blind arcades that flank the main portal – which was completely transformed during the Modern Period – show, in the region of Baixo Tâmega, a solution that was very popular in the Romanesque style that grew around the Braga-Rates axis<sup>8</sup>. The leading exponent of this formula can be found in the remaining elements of the main portal of the Braga cathedral: in its two archivolt there are sculpted birds and four-legged animals around the perimeter of the voussoirs, whose surface was sunken to highlight the figuration of their bodies, leaving a continuous edge on the corner. So, on both sides of the voussoirs, we find symmetrical and antithetical compositions with the animals joining their heads over the arcade’s corner. These ornamental schemes are more appropriate for the frustums of capitals and were adjusted to the archivolt’s voussoirs. On the inner arcade, the animals seem to be outraged, standing against a foliage background. This scheme also appears in São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim): on the archivolt of the main portal there is an Apostolate whose figures are represented a background with foliages. Belonging to a third stage (which was already developed in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century), the main portal of Rates, despite the fact that its initial programme was reduced and subject to several rearrangements, is still one of the most elaborated programmes of the Portuguese Romanesque style<sup>9</sup>: the two inner archivolt of the portal show a series of sculpted figures on the voussoirs’ corners. So, in the first archivolt we have a series of angels with two wings that are slightly open but sloping; the hand placed closer to the tympanum holds a thurible and the other one holds a cross. On the second archivolt



Church. West façade.

<sup>8</sup> On the matter, please read Botelho (2010a: 432).

<sup>9</sup> On the matter, please read Botelho (2010b: 213-228).







Church. West façade. Blind arcades.

there is an Apostolate, in which a group of seven apostles seated in cathedra hold a crozier on the innermost hand and a badge with an inscription on the outermost hand. In Saint Mary of Pombeiro (Felgueiras) we also find affronted animals, typical from the city of Braga, on the voussoirs of the main door.

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In the blind arcades of Vila Boa do Bispo, the themes of the animals that are facing forward on the voussoirs, whose origin lies in Braga, are already rather evolved and late, meaning that their chronology may be placed in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, if not already in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 111), in which case they would be almost coeval with Braga<sup>10</sup>. Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida drew our attention to the exceptional nature that this solution for the ornamentation of façades had among us; its origin lies in the influences of the French western region (Almeida, 1986: 99) or, most likely, from the region of Ourense (Galicia, Spain) and we may highlight the examples of the churches of “Saint Pelagius Diamondi” or “Saint Stephen of Ribas do Minho” (Almeida, 1978: 280-281). So, in this author’s words, we stand before a “unicum” in Portuguese Romanesque architecture” (Almeida, 1978: 280). In 1944, in the article he dedicated specifically to the Romanesque traces found on this Church’s façade, Armando de Mattos tried to identify several French and Spanish examples of façades in which the portal was flanked “by “blind arches”, or rather, “blind openings”” (Mattos, 1948: 72-75), concluding that the “mutual influences” are justified by the fact that the identified temples were located along “the pilgrimage route” to Santiago de Compostela (Espanha). So, according to this author “it is not hard to see that both the decorative sculptures of Vila Boa do Bispo” and even the geographically close sculptures of Pombeiro and Travanca, “in some way, an even despite their increased rusticity, fit into that decorative movement, which is quite

<sup>10</sup> On the matter, please read Botelho (2010c).





Church. South façade. Nave. Crevice. External view.



Church. South façade. Nave. Crevice. Interior view.

different from other movements found in other Portuguese, and even Spanish, temples” (Mantos, 1948: 75).

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It is indeed curious that the Romanesque elements that remain in the Church’s body lead us to a later chronology than the one suggested by the ones in the main façade. We refer ourselves to the corbels that are still preserved under the cornice, in the chancel, but on the side that is hidden by the remaining monastic structures; these corbels have a quadrangular profile, and one of them shows a face taking up all its available space. On the south side elevation, the narrow crevices that punctuate the granite wall, which was recently uncovered as we shall see further ahead, still allude to a Medieval nature that cannot be dissociated from the Church of Vila Boa do Bispo. Inside, they show a dihedral torus that works as a decorative element, which together with the remains of broken arches that are partially exposed inside the Church (for example, over the access door to the sacristy), confirms the thesis that the 17<sup>th</sup> century “masked” the building’s Romanesque nature. In addition, we consider the possibility that its interior may have been decorated with blind arcades, which would reinforce the prominent position that this building had within the context of Portuguese Romanesque architecture.

But one of the most curious Romanesque traces is found on the south elevation of the Church. Based on its visible elements, we can state that the primitive chancel would have been square with a stone vault (as the buttresses reveal) and it would have also been externally decorated with blind arcades. There are fragments of a chequered frieze that also point to a chronology that can surely be placed in the Romanesque Period. However, the most significant element is a capital featuring the mermaid theme, which we also find depicted in a capital on the north portal of the Monastery of Travanca. Among all mystical entities, the fish-tailed mermaid was one of the most depicted themes in our Romanesque style (Almeida, 1986: 157). According to Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, the lustful mermaid with a feminine face, long hairs and a fishtail in one of the most popular themes (Almeida, 2001: 160). In Portugal, this iconography of the mermaid, whose origin is probably post-Carolingian and it will be spread throughout central Europe, almost replaced



Church. South façade.

the Classical shape of the mermaid: the one that represents it with a female head and the body of a bird, which is also known as harpy (Almeida, 2001: 160).

So, these are the elements of the Romanesque building that are still preserved in Vila Boa do Bispo. There are also other traces from the Medieval Period integrated in the so-called funerary art, which we shall deal with later on.

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Church. South façade. Chancel. Capital.

## The tombs of Vila Boa do Bispo

It was during the Romanesque Period that tomb sculpture became increasingly important and reached its height in the Gothic period with the tombs of King Pedro and Inês de Castro, in Alcobaça. However, we should seek the roots of the personalization of the Medieval tomb in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Barroca, 1987: 387). Besides the development of masonry work during the Romanesque Period, the new mindset related to matters of the Afterlife and mortal remains greatly contributed to this phenomenon (Almeida, 2001: 165). In this period there was an emphasis on the belief that each soul was judged individually right after death. The most important members of the lineages began reserving a burial space close to the monastery they sponsored, a sort of pantheon, with a lifelong suffrage service. The patronage interests were passed on from one generation to the next, something which contributed to a gradual monumentalization of the grave; there was an increasing urge to customise the grave, using inscriptions, insignias, paraments and coats of arms for that purpose.

The inscription carved on the grave of Monio Viegas, the “Gasco”, the great-great-grandfather of Egas Moniz, the Schoolmaster and Governor (who is buried in the Monastery of Paço de Sousa, Penafiel), is a good example of how the preservation of memory, even though a simple inscription mentioning one (or more) name(s) and a date, was becoming a moral imperative and, simultaneously, in a response from a society with a feudal organization that was strongly hierarchical and fully aware of its social order (Almeida & Barroca, 2002: 210). However, the fact that this inscription was made after the date it shows, as we have already seen, also draws our attention to a phenomenon that was usual at the time: the renovation of sarcophagi with the mortal remains of people who had founded monasteries (Almeida, 1986: 60).



Cloister. Arcosolium and tomb of Monio Viegas.



Church. Nave. North wall. Tomb of Nicolau Martins.



On the tomb of Nicolau Martins, which is protected by an arcosolium opened on the Gospel side of the nave during an intervention carried out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is a carved inscription with the date November 25<sup>th</sup> 1348 (Barroca, 2000: 1692-1697).

+ AQUI : IAS : DON : NICOLAO MARTI(n)S : PRIOR : QUE : FOY :  
DE : VILA : BOA : DO BISPO : E : PAS(s)OU : [a XXV] / DIAS : DE  
: NOVENBRO : ERA : D(e) : M : CCC : LXXXVI : ANOS :<sup>11</sup>

But there is another element that allows identifying the person who was buried here: the coat of arms carved on the tomb chest, which constitutes its only decorative element. It is a carved coat of arms broken and had two sequences of three roses placed one on top of the other. Besides, the prior had himself portrayed in a voluminous lying statue. He is wearing the religious habit with a long cloak and the pleats are wide and a bit stiff, despite the fact that these already show certain realism. The prior is also wearing a mitre and a stole with its trapezoid fringed trims and is holding the crosier between his hands. An iconographic confirmation of the pontiff privileges granted to the Monastery's priors in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century.

We also find the same identifying elements in the tomb of Júrio Geraldés:

+ AQUI : IAZ : IURIO : GIRALDEZ : VAS(s)ALO : QUE : FOY:  
DELREY : DON : FERNANDO : E : SEU : COR(r)RGEDOR : /  
DANTRE : DOIRO : E : MINHO : E : PAS(s)OU : < XXX : DIAS >  
: DE < IANEIRO > : ERA : DE : CCCC : < XIX > : ANOS :<sup>12</sup>

Together with the funerary inscription engraved on the lateral section of the grave's lid, which shows the date January 30<sup>th</sup> 1381 (Barroca, 2000: 1878-1886), there are two heraldic shields carved in relief on the flat tomb chest. These are quartered coats of arms showing a corn stalk on the first quarter, three rosettes aligned in a row on the second and third quarters and a goat on the fourth quarter<sup>13</sup>. The pieces that integrate this coat of arms are similar to the ones that appear, in an isolated way, on the memorials of Nicolau Martins and Salvado Pires, thus confirming the strong kinship they shared.

Júrio Geraldés was a chief magistrate for King Fernando (k. 1367-1383) in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region, as he asked to be recorded in his epitaph. This brother of Nicolau Martins and Afonso Martins, the prior of Alpendorada (Marco de Canaveses)<sup>14</sup>, is represented wearing long civil clothes with large asymmetrical pleats. He is holding a sword with both hands; the

<sup>11</sup> It reads: Here Lies Nicolau Martins, who was Prior of Vila Boa do Bispo, and Died on November 15<sup>th</sup> of the Era of 1386.

<sup>12</sup> It reads: Here Lies Jurio Giraldez Vassalo, who was King Fernando's chief magistrate for Entre-Douro-e-Minho, and Died on January 30<sup>th</sup> of the Era of 419.

<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed approach to these heraldic coats of arms, in which some parts are inverted, please read Barroca (2000: 1884-1885).

<sup>14</sup> Mário Barroca (2000: 1881) mentions the several proposals that seek to explain the degree of kinship between Júrio Geraldés and Nicolau Martins considering the different patronymic names that, despite the lack of documentary grounds, would be more easily explained if they were considered half-brothers – sons of the same mother but from different marriages.



Church. Nave. North wall. Tomb of Júrio Geraldês.

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sword's sheath is decorated with a spiralled ribbon with rosettes rolled up around it (the chief magistrate's coat of arms), showing an option that is also noble. At his feet, there is a harrier, a dog trained to hunt hares, a symbol of nobility that practices hunting and horse riding.

The two tombs with lying figures of Vila Boa do Bispo were probably commissioned to the same workshop by Júrio Geraldês after 1362. Nicolau Martins' monument was personalised with a complete inscription while Júrio's featured an unfinished inscription showing blank spaces that would be filled after his death. The first engraver did not hesitate to engrave ERA DE CCCC, meaning that the commission was made in 1362 or after that year; besides, the author who was responsible for adding the missing information was unable to perfectly imitate the characters that had been previously engraved<sup>15</sup>.

The stylistic affinities between the two memorials are obvious. So, the tombs' authorship has been ascribed to the workshop of master João Garcia de Toledo, the architect responsible for the Gothic work of the cloister of Alpendorada; they may be considered as some of the best funerary statues in Entre-o-Douro-e-Minho and, in general, within the context of Portuguese granite statuary, for they reveal an unusual quality (Barroca, 1987: 461; 2000: 1883). Both Nicolau Martins' funerary inscription and the first stage of Júrio Gonçalves' inscription were made by the same person who carved the inscription in the cloister of Alpendorada in 1382 (Barroca, 2000: 1891-1897).

Salvado Pires' tomb is simpler; he was also a prior in Vila Boa do Bispo and his tomb is also from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, showing a funerary inscription carved on the lid of the sarcophagus (Barroca, 2000: 2025-2031):

<sup>15</sup> For more information on this matter, please read Barroca (2000: 1882).

+ ESTE : MOIMENTO : E : DE : DON : SALVADO : PIRES : PRIOR  
: DESTE : MOOSTEIRO : QUAL ERA : DOS : + / MILHACOS : E  
DOS : PEIXOES :<sup>16</sup>

Similar to Nicolau Martins' and Júrio Geraldês' memorials, this chest was also placed in the Chapel of Our Lady the Elder, according to the information provided by Rodrigo da Cunha in 1623: Salvado Pires' tomb was on the Epistle side and the other ones on the Gospel side; Nicolau Martins' closer to the chancel and Júrio Geraldês' closer to the west door (Cunha, 1623 *apud* Barroca, 2000: 2025-2026). Currently, this tomb is in the churchyard of the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo. However, the fact that the inscription and the heraldic blazon are engraved on the chest's right-side surface contradicts this information provided by Rodrigo da Cunha, because it shows that this tomb was clearly designed to be placed against the temple's north wall, thus allowing the simultaneous reading of these two identifying elements (Barroca, 2000: 2029-2030).

The depicted blazon is a quartered coat of arms of the Gothic or French type. On the first and fourth quarters, it shows two fishes, one over the other; on the second and third quarters there is a sorghum stalk with three leaves alternately arranged around the stalk, which is crowned by a cob. These "talking pieces" remind Mário Barroca of the two surnames in question, the Milhaços and the Peixões (Barroca, 2000: 2030). As we have seen, the Milhaços' coat of arms appears on Júrio Geraldês' tomb and on the tomb placed on the cloister of the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo, as well as on the sarcophagus that is preserved in the churchyard of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa, and even in one of the sarcophagi found on the back of the chancel of Tarouquela (Cinfães).

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Churchyard. Tomb of Salvado Pires.

<sup>16</sup> It reads: This Memorial belongs to Salvado Pires, Prior of this Monastery, which belonged to the Milhacos and the Peixoes.



## THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD

Although, in 1320, Vila Boa do Bispo was part of the most profitable monastic churches, two centuries later the effects of the commendatory management were already being felt. João de Barros, in 1549, states that “the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo is no longer inhabited by monks” (Barros, 1919: 117). Although this was not the case (the chronicler’s generalist analysis is well known), the monastic community of Vila Boa probably suffered, over more than a century, the effects of the commandment system that embezzled the revenues for private purposes and allowed the monks to be neglectful and licentious. The presentation of commendatory abbots began in 1475 and ended in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century with Miguel de Almeida<sup>17</sup>. The reformation was applied here in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, in 1605, a time when one of the monks refused to comply with it. This disobedience was described by the author of *Corografia portugueza...* as a mix of extravagance and bonhomie:

“This Convent was reformed in 1605 and one of the old Cloistral Canons, who are commonly known as Bravos, did not accept the reformation, and they called him André Carneyro de vasconcellos, son of Gaspar carneiro de vasconcellos and brother of maria Velho Carneyro, wife of Francisco Giraldes e vasconcellos, lady of Asa Nova. It always featured a door to the Convent, so he could come in from the house where he lived and pray with the friars, something he did until 1673, the year in which he died of a very old age and in perfect mood, after an honest life throughout which he gave plenty of alms; he occupied himself with hunting in the free time he had after his prayers and contemplation, praying everyday to all the churches he saw from the Monastery; he was nearly thirty years old in the year of the [Convent’s] reformation and lived sixty-eight years after that” (Costa, 1706-1712: 399).

Surely this was not an isolated case among the monasteries who came out of the commendatory management period. The sons of the Portuguese nobility who lived in these institutes were used to a certain lifestyle they refused to abandon in the reformist period, despite the threats made by the inspectors.

To oppose the place’s vulgarity and decadence, the chronicle of the Order of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine written in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century emphasizes the importance of the monastic complex by promoting the sanctity of its founders, namely of bishop Sisnando, who is seen as being responsible for several miracles. By adding value to his life they were adding value to his body, a relic that the men of the Monastery could turn into something profitable.

His proto-hagiography, written by the authors of *Agiologio lusitano...* and of the chronicle, presents him as a foreigner who rejected all pleasures and merits to become a hermit monk in the thickets of Vila Boa. Refusing the monastic luxury, he prayed and celebrated mass in

17 [S.a.] – *Galeria das ordens religiosas e militares, desde a mais remota antiguidade até nossos dias: adornada com muitas estampas*. Porto: Typographia na Rua Formosa, 1843. Vol. II, p. 93.



Church. General interior view from the nave.

neighbouring chapels, assuming the risk of being caught in one of the Muslim raids that, in the end, were the cause of his death. The circumstances of his demise, within a hermitic context, may provide very relevant leads regarding the construction of memorials or “marmoriais” [the same as memorials], whose origin may be explained by a period characterised by bellicosity:

“The year of his glorious martyrdom is not mentioned, but we can conclude from good conjectures that it was 1074, in the Chapel we called of Saint Saviour, in the monastery’s parish, between the hamlets of Adeguilhas and Bairal. And not the one of Our Lady the Elder, as some says. Because in Saint Saviour’s, which we mention [of which there are no longer more than traces], the local people show the very place where his memorial used to stand, and there, the stone that used to cover it, and from amidst the hill, a stone pillar built in memory of the tomb that had been there for many years, after his relics were transferred to the monastery, where they lie in the Church’s body, in the place where we can see a painting with the history of his martyrdom and an inscription that is now impossible to read due to its antiquity” (Cardoso, 1652).

Jorge Cardoso’s *Agiologio*... indicates the day of the martyrdom – January 30<sup>th</sup> –, as well as the day of the memory, despite the fact that the Church never included him in its altars. Nevertheless, it may have contributed to ascribe him a circumstantial aura of venerability, not just because of the glorious miracles that his body supposedly performed from the inside of the



Church. Nave. North wall. Balcony.

Church, but also due to the fame of a coeval and namesake thaumaturge for whom Alfonso III of Asturias (849-910) had a special interest. Like the Portuguese Sisnando, the one from Cosgaya (Camaleño, Cantabria, Spain) was also a bishop and monk; he died in 92 (Lorente Fernandez, 1882: 357). Both were popularly adopted as examples of beatitude.

Despite the fact that the monks of Vila Boa do Bispo were not interested in this confirmation of sanctity – but only in adding prestige to the decadent abbey – the laudatory speech that in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century rekindled the wonderful memory of the local martyr seemed very convenient.

The distribution of several dated cartouches inside the building whose dates span between 1599 and 1686 confirms a new impulse and investment dictated by its integration in the congregation of Santa Cruz of Coimbra in 1593 (Sousa, 2005: 197). The most important building campaign is Baroque.

In 1758 the vicar Manuel Moreira, by order of Francisco do Rosário, the people's priest, wrote a parish memoir that tells us, among other things, that the Church was “out of place”, that it was dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption and that it had a single nave and four altars. About their titles, the vicar mentions that the main altar (altarpiece) had the images of Saint Augustine and Saint Theotونیus – devotions that were well loved by the Canons Regular; one of the collateral altars was dedicated to Holy Christ, another was dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and, finally, there was one dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament where the Virgin and Saint Anthony were worshipped (Moreira, 1758).

Despite the fact that the reporter does not make long descriptions about the mobile and integrated assets, it is likely that in 1758 the building's interior already had a similar look to the one we can admire today: in addition to the referred altarpieces, there is a choir and an extravagant balcony with balustrade (placed above one of the arcosolia) whose base or box, decorated with *chinoiserias*, is supported by an atlas standing on a half-shell and flanked by angels, asexual





Church. Arch that supports the choir. Painting detail.



Church. Access to the pulpit. Painting detail.

figures and extravagant women with serpent-shaped bodies, perhaps representing Echidna, a nymph from Greek mythology. Right next to it, the pulpit and the door to the sacristy – which were probably made in 1686, as suggested by the date added above the jambs – are proof of the reformist needs that privileged preaching and encouraged the space to be reorganized according to an increasingly scenic liturgy.

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Almost all the faces of the nave's openings show *trompe-l'œil* paintings, either with the use of faux marble elements (on the sacristy's door, on the pulpit and on the arch that supports the choir), or with scenic decorations (chapel of the Blessed Sacrament) where there are plenty of fake architectural elements and the usual floral ornaments with brutesque elements, much to the taste of the theatrical Baroque celebration.



Church. Arch of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. Painting detail.









Church. Nave. South wall.  
Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

The tiles that cover the chancel together with the woodwork and the coffered ceiling are an ornamental ensemble associated with the scenic luxury that the society and the Church were so fond of in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Here we see a series of tiles that dates back around 1740 and shows the most common types of separate figures – “little stars”, vases and dolphins – arranged in 4x4 panels divided by lines of jugs (Simões, 1971: 109). The ensemble is surrounded by a common stripe with twisted leaves.

The main altarpiece features a National Baroque style [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)] and the one in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament (currently called of Our Lady of Grace) is from the Johannine period [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)], when the *horror vacui* was more meaningful. Together with the scenic woodwork whose decoration imitate fabrics and an entire series of ephemeral ornaments, there is a “faux damask” background painting that “extends the grammar of the Johannine repertoire” (Rodrigues, 2004: 311-312). The artwork ensemble is completed by an “a secco” painting on the ceiling, with the usual hagiographic themes. From the altarpiece to the chancel arch we see the Apostles and the Evangelists, Saint Theotonius – an invocation that was well-loved by the Canons Regular – the bishop Saint Herculanus, Saint Anthony of Lisbon and the martyr Saint Possidonius. Despite being extravagant, the presence of venerable men whose lives somewhat resemble Sisnando’s, the bishop and martyr, is actually an interesting proposal for the analysis of the intensification of his worship during the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century campaigns.

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In the sacristy, there is a granite lavatory from 1727 that extends the Baroque aesthetic language of the nave and chancel. Divided into three levels – a lower one, a central one from which there was water spouting from two mascarons or masks, and a third one decorated with little wings that frame a mitre –, this washbasin reminds us of one of the sacristy’s purposes: that of preparing people for liturgy through ablution.

The mitre above a heart, the symbol that closes the woodwork lining of the chancel arch, reminds us of the importance of the abbey within the context of the Augustinian rule. Above this element, which is immersed in the effusive Johannine decoration, and taking advantage of the narrow crevice that illuminated the nave, a full-body image of Our Lady of the Assumption resting on a cloud from which three angel heads emerge recalls the Church’s faithful patron saint.



Church. Sacristy.



## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

“**B**y an Order issued by the Public Works Department on August 8<sup>th</sup> last year, the Directorate for Public Works of the District of Porto has ordered the demolition of the tower of the Church of Villa Boa do Bispo, in the Municipality of Marco de Canavezes and, after, its reconstruction”<sup>18</sup>. It is with these words that the explanatory statement, dated January 21<sup>st</sup> 1882, informs us on the decision to rebuild the tower of Vila Boa do Bispo. Such a radical option is justified by the serious state of ruin in which the tower found itself.

In response to a request from the chairman of the Parish Council, the chief-engineer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Section of Public Works of Porto was sent a “project for the internal stonework stairs surrounding the walls of the tower” of the Church of Vila Boa do Bispo<sup>19</sup>. This project dates back to November 1886. In the following year, the works were already being carried out and duly inspected<sup>20</sup>. It was expected for the work to be completed by June 11<sup>th</sup> that year<sup>21</sup>, because part of the cornice was already set up on the previous day, a request was sent to Porto for orders “to build the dome of the same tower, before the stonemasons left”<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, in the following month, they were working on the bell tower’s finishings, although the “stone placed as a clock display (...) had not” been cut yet.

However, on January 24<sup>th</sup> 1888, the Palace directly informs the Director of Public Works of Porto that His Majesty, King Luís I (1861-1889), ordered the suspension of the reconstruction works in the tower of the Mother Church of Vila Boa do Bispo, which he had previously approved by the Decrees of August 8<sup>th</sup> 1881 and September 27<sup>th</sup> 1883<sup>23</sup>. However, by contributing with an allowance of one hundred and sixty thousand “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit], the completion of the works would be left to the parish’s own responsibility. We should note that, in the previous year, the monarch had already contributed with four hundred thousand “réis” “for the Mother Church’s repair works”<sup>24</sup>.

Lúcia Rosas tells us that it was during the 1940’s that the tombs of Nicolau Martins and Júrio Geraldés were placed in arcossolas opened on the nave’s wall, on the Gospel side (Rosas & Sotomayor-Pizarro, 2009: 113). In 1946, the Building Commission was already working on “the accommodation of the stone tombs that formerly belonged in the cloister. Two years later, 9500\$00 [former Portuguese currency unit] had already been spent in the Church’s works, including the construction of the loculi to accommodate the two tombs” (Monteiro, 1990: 149-150).

The following news regarding Vila Boa do Bispo were found in 1955 and these relate to the opening of the process for the classification of the Church as a National Monument, including

18 *Memória justificativa*, 21 de janeiro de 1882. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM 1706/14. Igrejas do bispado do Porto: concelhos de Lousada e Marco de Canavezes.

19 Silva, Augusto Anthero da – Missiva e projeto das escadas interiores, de pedra torneando as paredes da torre: medição e orçamento, 16 de novembro de 1886. Idem.

20 Silva, Augusto Anthero da – Missiva, 8 de julho de 1887. Idem.

21 Silva, Augusto Anthero da – Missiva, 9 de junho de 1887. Idem.

22 Idem.

23 [illegible] – Missiva, 24 de janeiro de 1888. Idem.

24 [illegible] – Missiva, 18 de fevereiro de 1887. Idem.



South façade. Bell tower.

its tombs<sup>25</sup>. Taking the opportunity, Father Manuel de Oliveira Sousa Vales – the parish priest of Vila Boa do Bispo at the time – quickly contacted the DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments], requesting the implementation of works he deemed urgent: the complete electrification of its interior, the repair of the woodwork that covered the chancel arch and several roof works<sup>26</sup>.

As, at that time, the conservation of the monument was the “sole responsibility of the Parish that has the usufruct of its property, due to the fact that the legislation stating that the minimum conservation works needed in classified buildings, despite being privately owned, may be financed by the State whenever the financial inability of their owners is duly proved”<sup>27</sup> had not been approved yet; the DGEMN, being unable to give its contribution, made an offer to “provide technical assistance to the works that might be carried out by the Parish Priest of the Church of Vila Boa do Bispo in the future”<sup>28</sup>. So, as far as we could understand from the analysis of the documents regarding this monument, the “electrical installation” was a priority; the specific reference that this intervention included both the lighting of the entire church and the installation of a sound system provided with a loudspeaker circuit<sup>29</sup>.

Only in the 1990’s do we notice an active intervention of the responsible governmental institutions in the Church of Vila Boa do Bispo. Although there was a verification of the state of repair of the gilded woodwork altars in September 1990 – carried out by the former Instituto Português do Património Cultural [Portuguese Institute of Cultural Heritage]<sup>30</sup> –, six years later, the technicians from the Centre of Conservation and Restoration of the then IP-PAR – Instituto Português do Património Arquitectónico [Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage] conducted an inspection in the monument under study<sup>31</sup>. Although, by then, the “existence of a numerous artistic collection, comprising gilded woodwork altarpieces, tiles, a coffered ceiling and the stalls, some of which required interventions in terms of conservation and restoration” had already been detected, the truth is that the previous conduction of a study on the “built part, particularly focused on the stability of its structures”<sup>32</sup>, was considered as being important. We cannot forget that the good state of repair of the collection integrated into a given monument depends necessarily – in addition to the required cleaning and maintenance operations, preferably conducted by technicians who are specialised and have a thorough knowledge regarding the materials that were used and the variations that these are subject to –, on the stability and conservation of the architectural structure that accommodates them. Naturally, the occurrence of water infiltrations in a vault such as the one of the chancel of Vila Boa do Bispo would cause serious damages in the structure concealed by the coffers, damages that, in most cases, are silent... Therefore, it is deemed “obvious that it is not possible to separate the

25 Ofício n.º 1250 da Direção-Geral dos Assuntos Culturais, 28 de janeiro de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.00671971]. DGEMN: DSID-001/013-005-1981/3 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [N.º PT011307300016].

26 Vales, Manuel de Oliveira Sousa, Missiva de 20 de junho de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.00671974 and SIPA.TXT.00671975]. Idem.

27 Ofício n.º 453, 11 de junho de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.00671976 and SIPA.TXT.00671977]. Idem.

28 O.S. n.º 1094, 21 de julho de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.00671978]. Idem.

29 Memória, 26 de abril de 1977 [SIPA.TXT.00671985 and SIPA.TXT.00671986]. Idem.

30 Ofício do Instituto de José de Figueiredo, 21 de setembro de 1990 [SIPA.TXT.00671994 and SIPA.TXT.00671995]. Idem.

31 Ofício da Secretaria de Estado da Cultura, 29 de janeiro de 1991 [SIPA.TXT.00671996 and SIPA.TXT.00671997]. Idem.

32 Idem.

intervention on the building from the intervention on the elements that became attached to it over time”<sup>33</sup>. So, carrying out inspections and ensuring a permanent control are essential to preserve our historic and artistic heritage for future generations.

In April 1991, an extensive “Diagnosis of the building’s state of conservation and pathologies” had already been conducted, accompanied by a prior proposal of intervention for the building’s conservation and improvement<sup>34</sup>. The scope of this study does not include a specification of all the items observed, as well as of the solutions suggested and, among these, of those that were actually implemented. The truth is that, although the documentary sources we were able to analyse do not clarify it, through the analysis of several photographic sources we may say that, at least externally, the building was only subject to a conservation intervention after 2006.

So, following one of the proposals from the 1997 document, the (lime and gravel-based) plaster was restored on the Church’s external wall faces, thus giving them the appearance that we see today. We do not know the reason why, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was a certain urge to contradict an intervention strategy that had almost become “standard” in terms of intervention in the built Romanesque heritage in Portugal, which has to do precisely with the elimination of the Church’s external whitewash layer. We also question if this option wasn’t ultimately intended – and this is merely our conjecture – to add aesthetic value to the ornamental elements of the portals and, particularly, their Romanesque elements that, here and there, punctuate the external walls much like “restoration windows”. Is this intention of granting visibility to specific elements of the Romanesque construction that were integrated in the “new” structure during the Modern Period and emphasised by the contrast between the granite and the Contemporary whitewash related to the idea of the “rememoration” values that Alois Riegl associated with the concepts of antiquity and historicity?<sup>35</sup>. The question remains.

There have already been some interventions focused on the (silent) damages caused by water infiltrations in the roofing systems and, in this particular case, in the chancel’s vault. This intervention offered the possibility of admiring the 17<sup>th</sup>-century mural painting with hagiographic themes that covers the vault and had been hidden by the coffered ceiling. [MLB / NR]



Church before the intervention carried out in the 1990's.  
Source: IHRU archive.



West façade before the intervention carried out in the 1990's. Source: IHRU archive.

33 Ofício n.º 92/DSDREMNI, 15 de abril de 1997 [SIPA.TXT.00672005]. Idem.

34 Documentação vária [SIPA.TXT.00672004 a SIPA.TXT.00672015]. Idem.

35 About this matter, please read Choay (2000: 138).





S. IACOBVS

S. IACOBVS

S. IACOBVS

S. IONAN

S. IACOBVS

S. IACOBVS

S. PAVLVS

S. IONAN

S. MARCVS

S. PAVLVS

S. PETRVS

S. IACOBVS

S. PAVLVS



## CHRONOLOGY

990-1022: according to tradition, the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo was founded by Sisnando, the brother of Monio Viegas;

1012: first reference to the "Monastery Saint Mariae Villaebonae";

1022: date included in the funerary inscription of Monio Viegas and of two of his sons, Egas Moniz and Gomes Moniz, engraved in a sarcophagus lid found in the cloister of the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo;

1120: reference to the "Monastery... Villa Noua [sic] episcopi";

1141 (February 12<sup>th</sup>): the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo – or, more specifically, the prior Egas, his brother Monio and his monks –, received the land charter granted by King Afonso Henriques;

1142: the bishop of Porto, Pedro Rabaldis (epic. 1138-1145), visits the chapel where Sisnando was buried; later, he would have his tomb transferred to the Monastery of Vila Boa [do Bispo];

1143: there are already reports on the presence of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine in Vila Boa do Bispo;

1144: in the Papal Brief of Pope Lucius II (p. 1144-1145), the priors of the Monastery were allowed to use a mitre;

1153: in the Bull of Pope Anastasius IV (p. 1153-1154), the priors were also distinguished with the permit to use a crosier;

Late 12<sup>th</sup> century/13<sup>th</sup> century: chronology of the remaining Romanesque elements of Vila Boa do Bispo;

1297: Pope Boniface VIII (p. 1294-1303) made an explicit confirmation of the rule of Saint Augustine in the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo;

13<sup>th</sup> century: the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo held many farmhouses and patronages in several parishes of the region;

14<sup>th</sup> century: design of the tomb of Salvado Pires;

1320: the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo pays a tax of 1500 Portuguese "libras" [former Portuguese currency unit];

1348 (November 25<sup>th</sup>): inscription engraved on the tomb of Nicolau Martins, the Monastery's prior;

1362: after this date, the tombs of Júrio Geraldês and Nicolau Martins were commissioned by the former to the same workshop;

1381 (January 30<sup>th</sup>) funeral inscription engraved in the lateral section of the lid of the tomb of Júrio Geraldês, chief magistrate of King Fernando (k. 1367-1383) for the region of Entre-Douro-e-Minho;

1475: the presentation of commendatory abbots in Vila Boa do Bispo begins;

1593: the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo is integrated in the congregation of the Holy Cross in Coimbra;

1599-1686: earliest and latest dates of the various cartouches placed inside the building, which offer evidence of the great transformation it underwent during the Modern Period;

1605: reformation of the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo;

17<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> half): transformation of the Romanesque building of Vila Boa do Bispo;

1650-1660: tiling of the baptistery;

1686: possible construction of the sacristy, purposely opening an access door to the chancel, duly identified over the jamb;

18<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup> half): chronology of the Baroque intervention in the Church's interior, based on existing stylistic elements;

1727: date engraved in the sacristy washbasin;

1740: tiling of the chancel;

1758: according to the information provided by the parish memories, the building of Vila Boa do Bispo would already present an identical look to the one we see today;

1834: under the scope of the extinction of the religious orders, the Monastery was sold and became private property;

1882-1888: disassembling and reconstruction of the tower;

1886 (November 16<sup>th</sup>): project for the inner stairs surrounding the tower's walls;

1977: classification of the Church (and tombs) as National Monument; classification of the area of the former Monastery as Public Interest Building;

1997 (onwards): restoration of plaster coatings on the Church's internal and external walls;

2010: the Monastery of Vila Boa do Bispo becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque's complex of monuments;

2012: conservation intervention on the chancel's vault, revealing a 17<sup>th</sup>-century mural painting, after the removal of the existing coffered ceiling.



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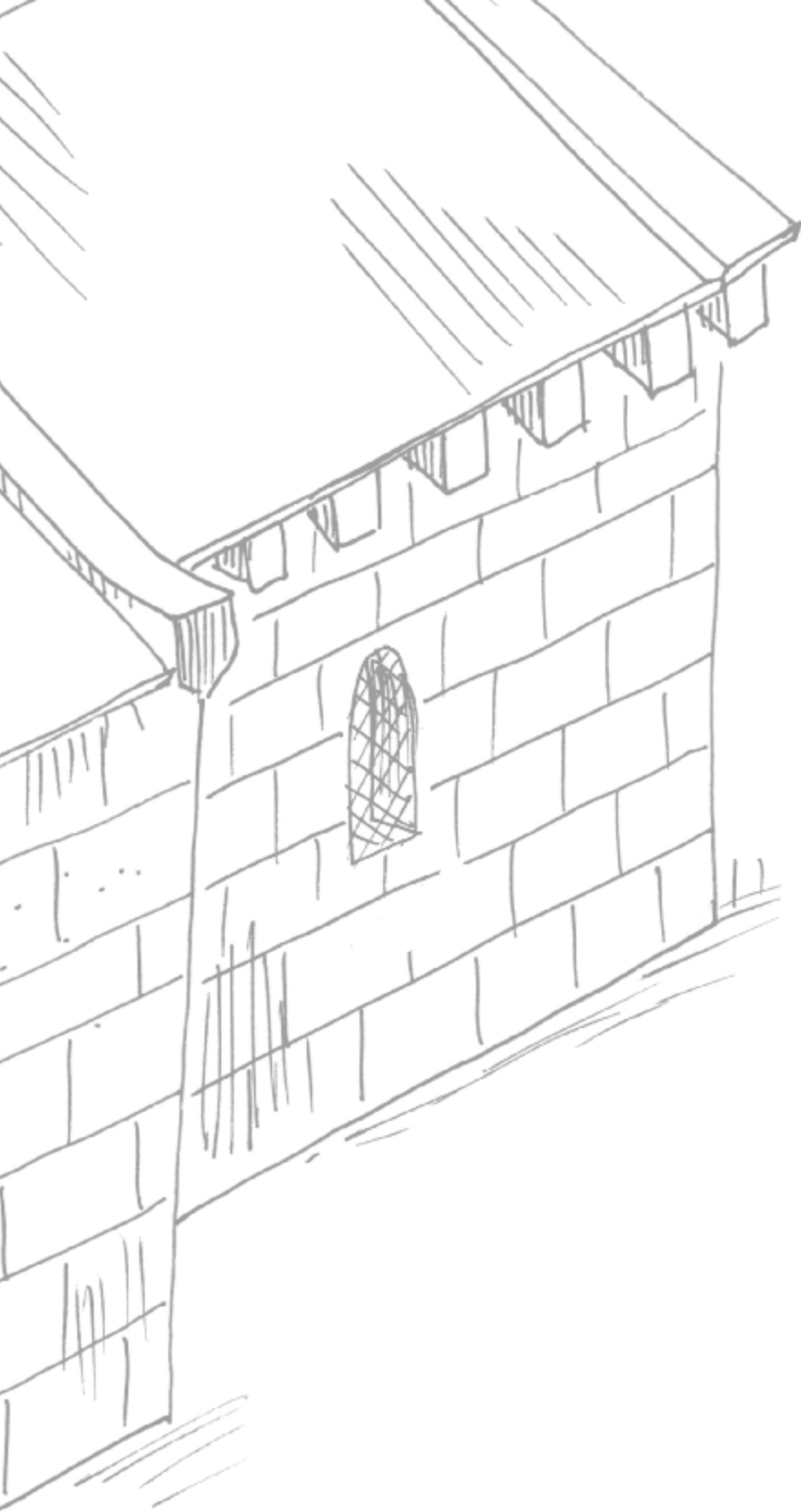
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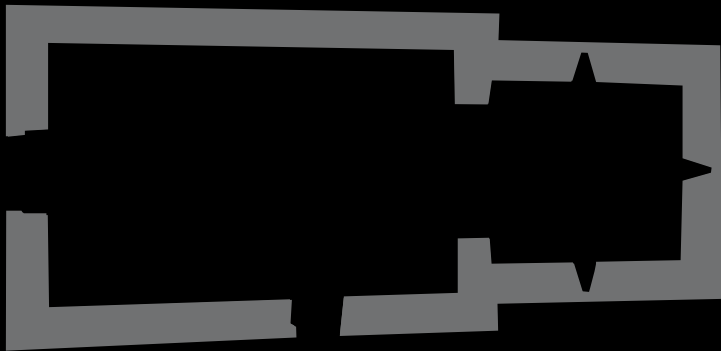


**CHAPEL**

**OF OUR LADY  
OF PIETY  
OF QUINTÃ**

PAREDES

**CHAPEL**  
OF OUR LADY  
OF PIETY  
OF QUINTÃ  
PAREDES



Plan.

**B**altar – once a “honra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of the House of Bragança and currently a parish of the municipality of Paredes – is still one of the main crossing points in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region, as proven by the heavy traffic and the new communication routes<sup>1</sup>. It was part of the old Medieval road from Porto to Penafiel and the writer Camilo Castelo Branco spent quite a long time describing it in his novel *Vinte horas de liteira* [Twenty hours by litter] – the time that, according to him, took to go from Vila Real to Porto in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Castelo Branco, 2002: 161-168). In the short story *Os percevejos de Baltar* [The bedbugs of Baltar], compiled in this book, Camilo goes on, and in a somewhat jocose tone, about the eccentric episodes that happened at the inn that once existed here, one of the many inns that provided support to travellers from the Entre-Douro-e-Minho and Trás-os-Montes regions. Furthermore, the toponymy preserved the memory of the place as a point of convergence: “Ponte da Pedra [Stone Bridge]”, a sign that the road was safe. And this is not a recent memory, since the stone bridge is already mentioned in the archives of the church of Baltar, which date back to 1600<sup>2</sup>.

The Chapel of Our Lady of Piety is located close to this road, not very far from the hamlet of Quintã; it is a building with discrete volumes, whose chronological span shows the hardships of the men and times that conceived it. In 1758, the parish priest of Baltar refers to it as a hermitage and calls it Our Lady of Quintã because it was close to the hamlet with that same name (Ferreira, 1758 *apud* Capela, Matos & Borralheiro, 2009: 475); the toponym derives from the Latin word *quintana*, meaning a small manorial housing unit or farmhouse, which reveals the importance of the place in the Medieval humanization process.

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Aerial view.

<sup>1</sup> The “honra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] became part of the assets of the House of Bragança at the time of Nuno Álvares Pereira. However, it had previously belonged to the Pereiras who swapped it with the Constable. This was its status in 1706: abbey dedicated to Saint Michael, belonging to the patronage of the House of Bragança, with rents divided between the former and the monastery of the Stigmata of the Nuns of Saint Francis of Vila Viçosa. The election of the judge of the “honra” was made by the people and confirmed by the “ouvidoria” of Barcelos (similar to a judicial district and one of the institutions supervised by the House of Bragança in the Northern region), where the registrars of the municipality of Aguiar de Sousa worked (Costa, 1706-1712: 378).

<sup>2</sup> “Ponte da pedra” (ADP, 1600: fl. 226 v.º). This bridge is a common reference point for the definition of property limits; “(...) starts on the west, along the Brook streaming from the stone bridge and is surrounded by vines and, on the north, along the path that comes from the dolmen to the Church (...)” (ADP, 1600: fl. 227). Further ahead there is a reference to a place located between two bridges, possibly intended for different types of traffic (local and regional): “A so-called swamp between the bridges (...)” (ADP, 1600: fl. 229 v.º).









Chancel. Back wall. Niche. Sculpture. Virgin of Piety.

The hermitage of Our Lady of Piety, in the parish of Baltar, fits into the worship building typology whose axial door, opened towards the public space, is associated with a communitarian or patron-related devotional space. This type of structure with a simple plan, where usually there is no chancel (although this one features one), is different from chapels – small buildings that are privately managed and attached to manorial houses or churches – because they were dedicated to saints or had Christological or Marian invocations that were specially focused on attracting communitarian devotion. So as to understand the origin of the hermitage it is essential to learn about its location. Although it may appear within an urban context, its origin lies, as the etymon refers, in a devotion site that is outside the town, in an uninhabited, isolated or peripheral place. Nevertheless, it is usual to mix chapel and hermitage, mainly after the 18<sup>th</sup> century, since these words were used to express the same referential: a small building used for worshipping an invocation that is especially famous among commoners<sup>3</sup>.

So, the hermitage or chapel of Our Lady of Piety is part of the peripheral communal space of the hamlet of Quintã and it represents its collective religious expression, as an element that takes on the protective and unifying sense of the word communal. Its location is extremely expressive: built according to the canonical orientation on the side of the Medieval road, it took advantage of the surrounding agricultural area to lay its foundations. It is, therefore, natural that its origin was a small building intended to worship a propitiatory Christian entity<sup>4</sup>. The different construction stages, which are clearly visible in its structure as we shall see, lead us to the conclusion that these different construction periods are also associated with different interests regarding the invocation worshipped in this hermitage. Over one or more worships, it was the Marian that eventually prevailed and it was later called Virgin of Piety, an expression of the maternal suffering as a response to the tragedy that took place in the Golgotha – a subject related to the reformation that was probably behind the change in patron saint.

Despite the fact that it is not located on the summit or on the slope of a hill, as most of the Calvary-hermitages that left their contours in the landscape over the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (partly influenced by Franciscan preachings), it is likely that the Chapel of Our Lady of Piety was part of the Calvary or Via Crucis theme, being the destination of one of the processions that took place during Lent<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately, the documents fail to mention any such references, so we can only speculate about this circumstance.

This building is hard to date. In his reply to the survey sent to all parish priests from the episcopate of Porto in 1864<sup>6</sup>, abbot Agostinho Lopes Coelho Ferraz, the parish priest of Baltar, mentions the existence of the “Chapel of Our Lady of Piety, located in the hamlet of Quintã, which is in good state of repair”<sup>7</sup>. However, the parish priest is unable to specify “the date of its construc-

<sup>3</sup> About this issue, please read Resende (2011).

<sup>4</sup> We assume that the following excerpt is a reference to the hermitage: “The Campo de Viso located in the field of Our Lady (...)” (ADP, 1600: fls. 232 v.º-233).

<sup>5</sup> Close to the hermitage we find the hamlet of “Calvário [Calvary]”.

<sup>6</sup> Victor Le Cocq, through an order issued by the Minister of Public Works, had been commissioned to draw up a map of the state of repair, corresponding repairs and authorised expenses of all the buildings under that Ministry’s management. These buildings included those that were considered monuments, parish churches and public chapels, among others (Rosas, 1995: 511).

<sup>7</sup> Ferraz, Agostinho Lopes Coelho – Missiva, 21 de outubro de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM, Cx. 3215/21. Igrejas do concelho de Paredes. 1864-1869.

tion, although it seems to be extremely old because its architecture fits into the Gothic style”<sup>8</sup>.

First of all, we should note that the first study in Portugal specifically focused on the subject of Portuguese Romanesque architecture, which was then called “Roman-Byzantine” architecture (Simões, 1870), was only conducted in 1870. Following the trend of foreign historiography on the matter, despite showing a significant time lag, the truth is that Medieval architecture only began being appreciated as such over the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which definitely released it from the stigma created by Italian Renaissance. Since the word “Gothic” was understood as “Barbarian” (because it was not Roman), thus, taking on a pejorative sense, it was applied since then to all architectural types that, considering their features, did not fit into Classical architecture or into the one that resulted from its “renaissance”. In other words, and being aware that the Goths were responsible for the construction of all the architecture built between 410 (the date of the destruction of Rome by Alaric) and 1419 (the date of the first record regarding Brunelleschi’s work), the “Gothic” style and the Middle Ages came to be understood as synonyms; both pejorative concepts associated with a long historical diachrony. Besides, the word “Romanesque” wasn’t commonly used in Portugal yet. Augusto Filipe Simões only studied this architectural style as such for the first time in Portugal in 1870, despite the terminological inaccuracy that was still associated with it<sup>9</sup>. So, the classification of the Chapel of Our Lady of Piety as “Gothic” by the parish priest of Baltar is not surprising. Furthermore, this rapporteur mentions its “antiquity”. We should not forget the Romantic context of the period, the common feeling of some nostalgia for the past, which was reflected on the appreciation of the historical value and of the antiquity value of built heritage that was beginning to be acknowledged and protected in Portugal<sup>10</sup>.

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South façade.

8 Idem.

9 For further development on this matter, please read Botelho (2010).

10 For further development on this matter, please read Rosas (1995).





South façade. Chancel. Corbels.

Comprising a single nave and a rectangular chancel, the Chapel of Quintã stands out for its small size; this feature is understandable considering its function, which was emphasised in 1758. We should look carefully at its external ashlars: the chancel was built using isodomic ashlars that, despite featuring different sizes, define rows with similar heights. In the nave the ashlars are completely irregular and the construction is characterised by a vernacular *modus aedificandi*. This is the reason why we believe that this building had two different construction stages; the first one corresponding to the apse, probably dating back to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century of to the first quarter of the following one.

Therefore, we think that, in the case of Quintã, the chevet only existed for some time, thus standing as a hermitage. The ashlars in this section of the building provide evidence that its structure was more carefully built. On the other hand, its sparse decorated elements are also located here: there is a cornice showing floral motifs carved in relief. The variety of themes leads us to consider the possibility that there was some kind of reuse of the ashlars that had been previously carved in relief, or even of the ashlars that came from another building, perhaps earlier. Among them we identify specimens similar to the motif defined by Joaquim de Vasconcelos with “no. 45 – four-leaved ivy flower with chamfered leaves; isolated motif; high relief” – in his inventory called “Formas ornamentaes extrahidas dos monumentos portugueses e classificadas segundo a sua analogia” (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 71-72). The cornice is supported by a series of corbels where we can also depict irregularities in terms of shape and motifs, although most of them are protruding corbels and some of these are occasionally distinguished with a floral motif or a mask. The protruding corbels found in the chevet of the Church of Cête (Paredes), which are identical to the ones in the Chapel of Quintã, have been dated back to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and even to the first quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Rosas, 2008: 162).



South façade. Chancel. Corbels.

At some point, the nave was added to the building, as shown by the difference in the walls. Several reasons may have been behind the temple's extension. Where there more devotees? Was there a local lord, brotherhood or confraternity that wished to ennoble the building by extending it? Was it due to the change of patron saint that we have already suggested? The lack of documentary sources regarding the building does not allow concluding anything else about this issue. Only the traces found in the building itself allow us to suggest these possibilities, whose causes we cannot explain and whose chronology we cannot specify.

Just like the Church of Saint Mammes of Vila Verde (Felgueiras) or the church of Saint Peter of Ermida (Cinfães), the Chapel of Quintã fits perfectly into a category that has been called the “popular Romanesque” style. All these churches show a similar structure to that of many other Portuguese Medieval buildings, thus proving the persistence of the Romanesque *modus aedificandi* and of the shapes that are associated with it beyond the Romanesque Period itself. The most recent historiographical theories have been considering this architectural typology – if we can call it so – as one of the faces of the “resistance Romanesque” style, because it is still possible to be identified in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are several reasons why Romanesque formulas persisted over such a long period of time. To some extent, the technical, cultural and socio-economic isolation may lead to the survival and stagnation of specific construction formulas and, consequently, to the inability to adopt new models, even if they are known. At some point, the





West façade.



Church of Vila Verde (Felgueiras). West and south façades.

Romanesque construction mode was so deeply assimilated in certain contexts that a new style, such as the Gothic style or even the aesthetics of the Renaissance, would eventually become “erudite luxuries”. Only so may we understand this out-of-time “ruralisation” and persistence of certain artistic models; these were more coherent with the socioeconomic and spiritual conditions of specific contexts that had a more peripheral nature when compared with the most important artistic centres of the period, which were more cosmopolitan and more attractive for artists and artisans with a more erudite education.

We believe that, more than in the church of Saint Peter of Ermida, the Chapel of Quintã takes on a vernacularisation of shapes, as proven by the irregularity of the ashlar that build the nave or by the profile of its main portal, which is only inscribed in the thickness of the wall, thus not featuring any decorative elements. The portal is slightly broken and its voussoirs also show irregular profiles. In addition to the portal, only a belfry seeking to create an illusion of verticality stands out from the main façade. It is positioned at the centre, on the gable’s apex. If it weren’t for the south portal, we could say that the nave’s elevations were blind walls. Closed in on itself, the Chapel of Quintã features a rather sober interior. Here we are also able to pinpoint the differences in terms of the quality of the walls. A careful analysis of the triumphal arch leads us to assume that it was modified during the Modern Period, considering the regular appearance of its voussoirs (when compared to the rest of the building), although there is a decorated frieze with floral motifs carved in relief from a previous period that was reused and adapted to stand as an impost. A narrow crevice with a Romanesque flavour stands out from the apse’s back wall.

Using a Contemporary concept as its starting point, art historiography tends to consider buildings such as the churches of Saint Peter of Ermida, Saint Mammes de Vila Verde or the Chapel of Quintã as archaic<sup>11</sup>. There are several features that allow us to understand the

11 On this matter, please read Dias (1994: 151)



scope of this architectural type, considered as being essentially rural, although we would rather consider it as popular, thus alluding to the cultural reality of the period in a more truthful manner<sup>12</sup>. There are various parameters that allow us to understand what some authors have called the “popular Romanesque” style: the existence of a first-order need (the worshipping, by the community), financial limitations and, consequently, technical limitations in terms of the structural solutions chosen and of the materials and ashlar used, showing a clear symbiosis with the built surroundings. By using shapes that became timeless themselves, the popular Romanesque style eventually takes on a nature that is considered as archaic, showing an inversely proportional ratio between chronological distance and technical evolution.

Considered what has been mentioned above, we may suggest the following construction stages for the current Chapel of Our Lady of Piety. Using protruding corbels similar to the ones found in the chancel of the Monastery of Saint Peter of Cête as a central element, we may say with some degree of certainty that the existing chevet was built between the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. First, it stood as a hermitage and, in the Modern Period, it was extended with the addition of a nave, thus justifying the use of the word chapel that became common from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. However, it is hard to specify the date of this intervention in a more accurate way, considering the more erudite nature of the ashlar used in the triumphal arch, which contrasts with the markedly vernacular appearance of the walls that shape the nave.

The Chapel of Quintã became part of the Route of the Romanesque in 2010 and is currently awaiting its formal classification. Its new condition of protected building was based on the fact that this Chapel “features heritage values grounded on the materialisation of its historical past as a “honra” and abbey “of the House of Bragança, thus maintaining its Medieval Romanesque features”, as well as on the fact that the rural nature of its surroundings is still preserved, an aspect evidenced by the toponym Quintã<sup>13</sup>. [MLB / NR]

Together with its classification, the Chapel of Quintã is awaiting the implementation of the protection, preservation and valuation project, which is due to begin early in 2015. The project’s ultimate goal is to “provide the building with better conditions for the function it keeps alive – being a place of worship and organization of ceremonies” (Silva, 2012: 1). The intervention shall be based on the principle of reversibility to ensure the building’s continuity, resorting both to traditional and current techniques in order to achieve so; many different actions shall be carried out, focusing mainly on issues related to infiltrations and moisture, which are the cause for main existing problems (Silva, 2012: 4). [RR]

12 On this matter, please read Botelho (2010: 395).

13 ANNOUNCEMENT no. 11820. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series II*. 104 (2012-05-29) 19263.







## CHRONOLOGY

1600: reference to the hermitage of Our Lady;

1758: referred to as hermitage of Our Lady of Quintã;

1864: referred to as Chapel of Our Lady of Piety, featuring "a Gothic style";

2010: the Chapel of Quintã becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque;

2012: opening of the process for the classification of the Chapel of Quintã.



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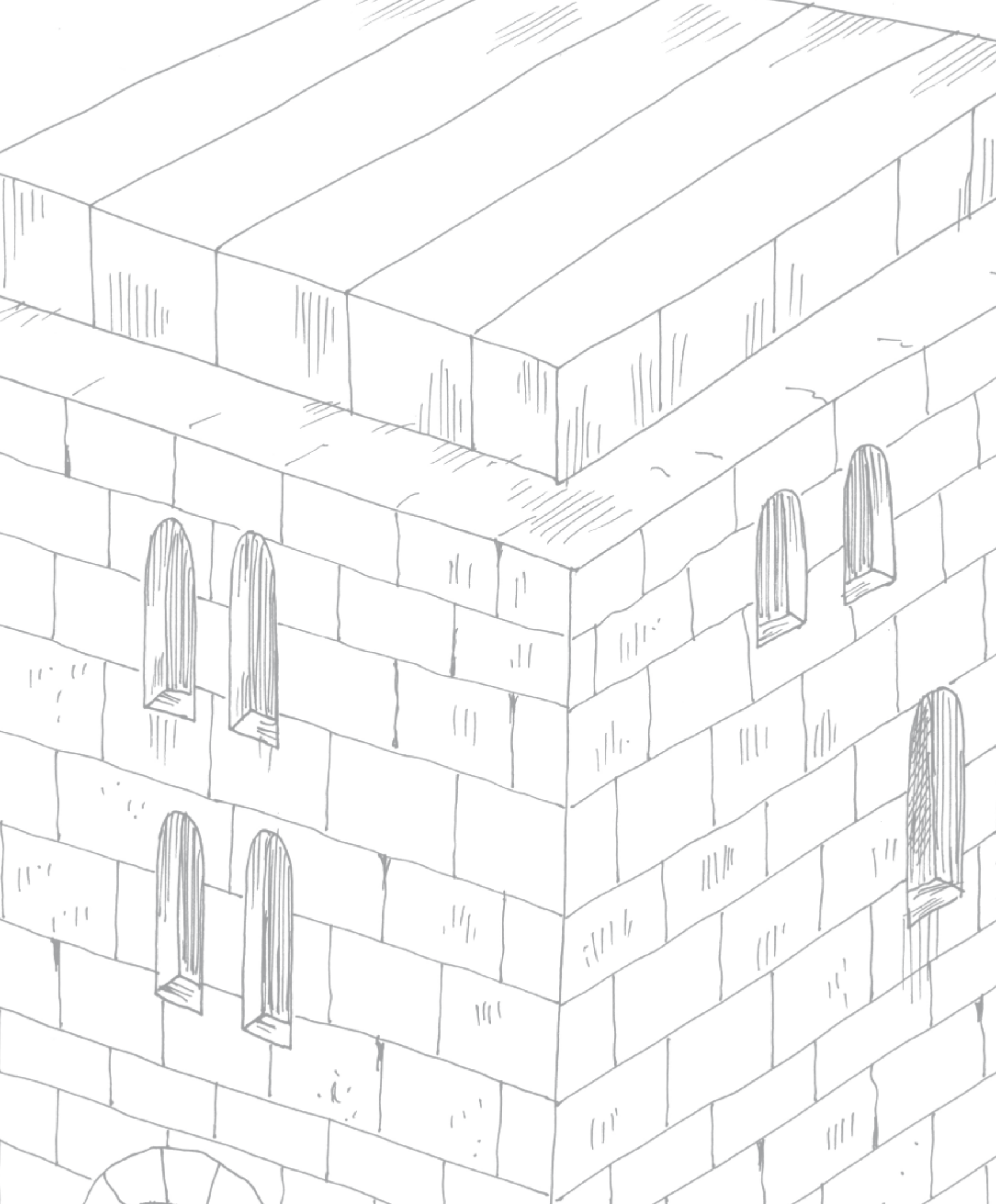
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**TOWER**

**OF THE ALCOFORADOS**

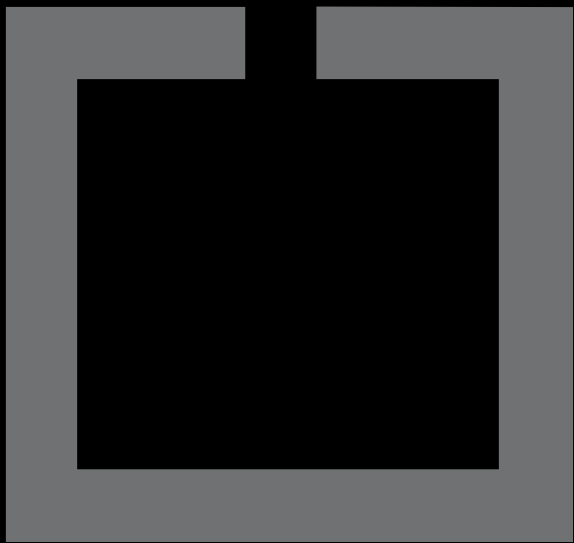
PAREDES



**TOWER**

**OF THE ALCOFORADOS**

PAREDES



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

**A**lthough both Felgueiras Gaio and Alão de Morais are quite assertive in stating that the mother-house of the Alcoforados was located on a tower in the parish of Lordelo, bishopric of Porto, there are many inconsistencies, gaps and hiatus that do not allow defining a continuous line in the historical approach to the path of this monument. Alão de Morais also mentions the archives of the monastery of Lordelo, where it is stated that certain Brandões were lords of at least five estates in Lordelo (Morais, 1673: 214). However, unable to see beyond the genealogical tradition, which is eager to find in the typology of the tower-house a symbol of power and prestige, he states:

“The manor of the Alcoforados is located in the parish of Lordelo which stands opposite Valongo in a village currently called Ferregenta that took on the name of the farm which was “forra-izenta” [exempt from taxes] and where, nowadays, an ancient tower and the ruins of the manor house where they lived still remain” (Morais, 1673: 158).

We believe that the issue of the Tower’s name, which is associated with the identification of its founders, has already been addressed by A. de Almeida Fernandes, in the article relating to the word “Tower”, in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira* (Correia et al., 1936-1960). In this short essay, the author discards the idea of the place as the manor house or the origin of the Alcoforados, introducing the “milites” Brandão clan, which had assets in the area in a period between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Based on the text of the inquiries of 1258, the author mentions a man called Martim Brandão who was married to Teresa Fernandes, the daughter of Fernão Gonçalves de Sousa and Ximena Dias de Urrô (Correia et al., 1942: 175). Probably, Martim was the grandson of the first Brandão, who was called Fernando and possibly lived in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that these were knights of little wealth, something which is in line with the reasons underlying the construction of other towers, i.e., that the members of the lower ranks of nobility or secondary lineages intended to assert themselves within the local and regional political social circle through this type of construction<sup>1</sup>.

However, it is difficult to establish family connections at a time when documentary sources were scarce and those that existed were mainly focused on the higher ranks of nobility. After the few references found in the inquiries of 1258, we are only able to assess the importance of the Brandões lineage again after the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when they emerge within the noble families of Porto in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, are these descendants of the Brandões from Lordelo or merely their relatives? The fact is that, by this time, their connections to that parish are practically non-existent, since they’re moving within a sphere that is immediately concentric to the urban area of Porto<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In this regard, please read Barroca (1989: 9-62).

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Felgueiras Gaio distinguishes between old and new Brandões. The former correspond to the ones mentioned in the documents related to “Lordelo” (Gaio, 1938-1941). Regarding the latter, please refer to “Brandões” in Brito (1997).







While regarding the Brandões, the involvement they might have had in the foundation of the Tower is practically unknown, regarding the Alcoforados, the scenario is even bleaker. Assuming the possibility that the Tower did not exist in 1258, it seems that the area of influence of the Alcoforados moved from the Aguiar region to the Sousa region around the same time. Indeed, their origin is a territory in the surroundings of Chaves, as José Augusto de Sottomayor-Pizarro explains: “being a branch of the Guedões from Aguiar da Pena, the Alcoforados settled in the valley of the Sousa at an early stage, and from there they spread to the neighbouring areas” (Sottomayor-Pizarro, 1997: 1159) – and early stage means that by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century they no longer had assets in Aguiar. Alcoforado seems to come from a nickname and does not reflect their toponymic origin. Rootless, they seek fortune and prestige to the southwest. If this displacement, through the marriage with someone from the Sousa region, led to the creation of a manor house, there are no guarantees that it happened in Lordelo. And we may even consider the idea that they got hold of it through a marriage or an inheritance on a date that, unfortunately, remains unknown.

The reference to its owner that is provided by Father António Carvalho da Costa in the 18<sup>th</sup> century allows us to confirm part of our idea. In 1706, the lord of the Tower of the Alcoforados was Pedro Vaz Cirne de Sousa (Costa, 1706-1712: 375). This military man, Porto city councillor and writer, was the son of Manuel Cirne Soares and Antónia de Sousa Alcoforado<sup>3</sup>.

Despite being a descendant of two paternal lines of Brandões and Brandões Sanches that were associated with Porto’s oligarchy, we don’t believe that this was the way in which Pedro Vaz got to inherit part of the Tower of the Alcoforados<sup>4</sup>. In fact, he inherited it from his mother, the granddaughter of the couple Gonçalo Vaz Alcoforado and Margarida de Sousa, who lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Gaio, 1938-1941). Margarida de Sousa was a descendant of a family from Urrô (a place that currently belongs to the municipality of Penafiel), since her great-grandmother was Inês Vasques (said “of Urrô”) who probably lived in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. As we’ve already seen, this family was linked to the Brandões through the marriage of Teresa Fernandes, the daughter of Ximena Dias “of Urrô”, to Martim Brandão. We should also add that Ximena Dias was the sister of an ancestor of the aforementioned Margarida de Sousa, through whom the representation of the Alcoforados and the Tower’s lordship persisted; maybe the Tower wasn’t a work of the Brandões, but rather of individuals belonging to the Urrô family circle, which later diluted in the Brandões, who then diluted in the Alcoforados.

The Tower was probably abandoned early on, due to the dispersion of its lords among families from Porto and Entre-Douro-e-Minho region, but it still remained as a nominal symbol of prestige. The accumulation of references to lordships of houses and towers was rather frequent and fostered by the nobility as a way to address the lack of nobiliary titles and balance its status. Living within the laws of nobility involved managing a condition that survived on domanial asset management (albeit mostly based on lease payments) and on the maintenance of a series of positions and (or) privileges that were inherited through links of affinity or consanguinity.

<sup>3</sup> He is mentioned in the seventh volume of the *Diccionario bibliographico portuguez* (Silva & Aranha, 1862: 10). After becoming a widower, he followed the ecclesiastical career, becoming a Maltese. He was one of those who acclaimed King João IV in Guimarães.

<sup>4</sup> As we have mentioned, there aren’t enough data to assess the direct connection between the Brandões mentioned in Lordelo, in 1258, and the Brandões and Brandões Sanches connected to the most important families from the city of Porto.

## ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF ITS ARCHITECTURAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSION

The so-called Tower “of the Alcoforados”, which was surely built after 1258, stands on a hill and is currently engulfed by the houses of the hamlet that, due to its existence, adopted the toponym “da Torre” [from the Tower]. The buildings that surround it were built in recent periods and there were deep excavations carried out in the plots of land that are located in its immediate surroundings (Oliveira, 2008: 154). The Tower was built on a granite outcrop that stands out from the centre of the agricultural valley wedged between the Agrela mountain and the São Tiago mountain, which is irrigated by the Ferreira river (to the southeast) and by the Feteira brook (to the northeast) and is also punctuated by several wells and specific devices related to intensive farming activities<sup>5</sup>. This manorial structure, with a strong presence within its immediate surroundings as a symbol of domination, ended up losing its pristine function over time. When the idea of territorial control (of a specific manorial domain) was lost – as an immediate effect of the feebleness of the bond to a given lineage – the truth is that, at some point, the Tower of Lordelo eventually became, more than a ruin, a vacant building since its remaining elements, when analysed in comparison with other coeval specimens, allow us to have a clear notion of what this *domus fortis* was during the Medieval Period. It was due to their strong symbolic meaning that manorial towers were preserved, even when they had been emptied of their usefulness (Almeida, 2002: 106).

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Surrounding area.

<sup>5</sup> Currently more urbanized and deforested, the landscape surrounding the Tower of the Alcoforados consists of cultivated plots separated by vineyards and small watercourses. The small patches of forest, known as saltus, provide material for the sawmills. Toponyms such as “Vinhãl”, “Bouça”, “Agra”, “Campónio”, “Lameiro”, “Cavada”, “Devesa”, “Bouço”, “Agrela”, “Campos” or “Nabeiros” confirm the presence of this agricultural activity, while others like “Soutelo”, “Outeiro”, “Tapadinha” and “Gandara”, refer us to the practice of herding (Oliveira, 2008: 154-155).

The chronology of this Tower should be placed in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century because, in addition to the fact that it didn't exist in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, its structure features a series of elements that contribute to this conclusion: windows of a Gothic flavour, with a mullion that delimits narrow broken arches. However, the structure of this Tower undoubtedly finds its origin in the Romanesque keeps. Both Mário Jorge Barroca (1989: 9-62; 1997: 39-103) and José Custódio Vieira da Silva (1999: 99-115) agree with this thesis.

The fortified manorial residence is a clear reflection of the gradual sedentarisation of the peninsular society in its various aspects – “Towers”, “Tower-Manors” or “Fortified Manors” (Barroca, 1997: 16). So, the *domus fortis* is a result of an adjustment of the structure of the Romanesque keeps by combining civilian elements component with military ones (Barroca, 1997: 66). It is to the Templars, and more specifically, to Gualdim Pais (1118-1195) that we owe the import of the keep, a crucial element of the Romanesque castle in Portugal. It was in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century that the construction of the castle of Pombal began, the first major work of master Gualdim Pais within the Portuguese territory. Being an unusual structure within its period and the Portuguese panorama, it is a remarkable building, whose keep stands close to the castle's entrance, completing its defence<sup>6</sup> system and clearly showing how, at the time, this order was the institution that held the most advanced technical knowledge in terms of attacking and defending fortresses across the territory (Barroca, 2000: 391). An epigraph dated back to 1174 reports the construction of a keep in the castle of Longroiva (Meda) by Gualdim Pais (Barroca, 2000: 389-391).

In addition to its inherent defensive functions, the keep was associated with an image of power and a demonstration of strength early on, and so the housing function soon got attached to it. Together with the numerous remaining testimonies, the presence of the toponym “Torre” [Tower] across the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region is a good example of the popularity that these structures achieved, when they were already detached from an exclusively military context of territorial defence and reorganization, once associated with a manorial society in full assertion and ascension. It was mainly second-line lineages, “milites” aspiring to become “ricos-homens” [rich men], who adopted this architectural solution of the *domus fortis* in the first place, as a way to lead their domains (Barroca, 1997: 53). To Mário Jorge Barroca, this architectural typology from the Romanesque Period “is one of the most extraordinary examples of harmony between architectural model [derived from the keep], function [residential] and symbolic power [nobility and antiquity]” (Barroca, 1997: 99).

Like most of the keeps in castles, tower-manors are high-rise constructions. Currently, the Tower of the Alcoforados measures about 8.60 meters, although there are a few rows of ashlar missing on the top (Oliveira, 2008: 158), as it surely had merlons once. The battlements or merlons, which are crucial elements to define the military nature of a given structure and have a highly symbolic significance, were the main responsables for providing the manor house with a fortified profile (Barroca, 1997: 66). We may recall the case of the Tower of Vilar (Vilar do Torno e Alentém, Lousada) (Rosas, 2008: 349-355) that, with a height of nearly 14 meters, dominates a fertile and well-irrigated valley, is a symbol of the dominial power over the territory and saw its merlons disappear over time.

<sup>6</sup> About the subject, please read Botelho (2010: 125-138).





Northeast façade.

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Standing directly on a granite outcrop, which accentuates its verticality and gives strength to its foundations, the Tower of the Alcoforados has good-quality masonry walls, despite the different dimensions of the ashlars that create rows with various heights. The narrow crevices, with a more militarized nature than the ones opened on the Tower of Vilar, are behind the origin of the twin windows of Lordelo, which we've already mentioned. While the former most certainly belongs to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century/early 14<sup>th</sup> century, the latter, is surely a legacy from a later chronology. As we've already mentioned, the mullion is a characteristic element of the Gothic aesthetics. Here, the central mullion has bevelled edges on the outside and a horizontal stone with a locking system on the inside. Opened within the thickness of a deep wall, which is about 1.10m thick (Oliveira, 2008: 158-159), these windows are internally framed by a subtle three-centred arch which also shelters the masonry benches that are located just below the windowsill, siding the openings on the wall.

Fitting within the “model” that was common to most manorial residences, the Tower of the Alcoforados has an access door that is already located on the ground floor and not on the first floor; unlike the rule that was applied in the keeps and as the one we can see in Castle of Arnoia (Celorico de Basto). Therefore, first of all, this two wooden-floor Tower takes on a residential function – i.e., a manor house – and its role as an element of military nature is a secondary one. The pavements of the upper floors, like the stairs that allowed accessing them, were made of wood, as evidenced by the fittings of the beams that supported the wooden floor. Limited by a round arch, the door opened on the ground floor level features a flattened arch lintel, composed of four voussoirs. Its locking system was quite simple (Oliveira, 2008): consisting of two rails with a central stop, evidenced by the two upper fitting slots which ran the axes, the door was protected by a lock of which the negatives are still preserved on the opening's wall, despite the signs that suggest subsequent changes. Above this door there was probably a structure that



Tower of Vilar (Lousada). Aerial view.



Northeast façade. Upper floor. Detail of the mullioned window. External view.



Northeast façade. Upper floor. Detail of the mullioned window. Interior view.



Northeast façade. Intermediate floor. Detail of the mullioned window (interior view) (1951). Source: IHRU archive.



Northeast façade. Intermediate floor. Detail of the mullioned window (interior view) (1951). Source: IHRU archive.



Northeast façade. Door (1951). Source: IHRU archive.



Northeast façade. View from the door during the intervention carried out by the Route of the Romanesque (2014).



fulfilled the same sheltering purposes, as suggested by a scar that exists on the wall, which is possibly the negative of a porch with a shed roof.

It is worth mentioning the fact that there was a balcony on the first floor, which probably had machicolations, as evidenced by the cantilevers located just outside the door that, facing north-east, opens the central floor to the outside. The corbels suggest that this balcony was equipped with a porch that would form a small roof. We believe that this would be the main floor of the building, the so-called *piano nobile*, taking into account the presence of this element that opens the manorial Tower to its surrounding agricultural property.

However, we believe that this Tower would include a series of supporting outbuildings such as the kitchen, the barns or the stables, etc., of which there are currently no traces as they were built with perishable materials, such as wood. Furthermore, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the dimensions of the Tower were already showing signs of being too scanty for the needs of everyday life, giving rise to the emergence of residential annexes (Almeida & Barroca, 2002: 106). Besides the lack of any symbolic value, we believe that we will hardly be able to retrieve any archaeological information, taking into account the relationship between the houses that were built in recent periods and the Tower of the Alcoforados.

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General view of the interior walls before the intervention carried out by the Route of the Romanesque (2014).



General view of the interior walls before the intervention carried out by the Route of the Romanesque (2014).





Northeast façade during the intervention carried out by the Route of the Romanesque (2014).

## THE TOWER OF THE ALCOFORADOS TODAY

In late 1987, the Paredes Town Council aware of the historical and artistic value of the Tower that existed in the parish of Lordelo, “popularly known as the “Tower of the Moors” or the “High Tower””, in addition to the more common designation of “Tower of the Alcoforados”, proposed the classification of this building<sup>7</sup>. However, we should note that the Paredes Town Council, as well as the Parish Council of Lordelo, had already “taken precautionary measures” for the conservation and protection of this building<sup>8</sup>.

The Instituto Português do Património Cultural [Portuguese Institute of Cultural Heritage], the entity responsible for the classification of built heritage, approved the proposal for the classification of the Tower of the Alcoforados. Since this is a long and complex administrative process, the classification of this Tower as a Public Interest Building was finally recognized by Decree no. 45/93 of November 30<sup>th</sup> 1993. [MLB / NR]

Since it currently belongs to the Route of the Romanesque, the Tower of the Alcoforados was subject, in 2014, of an intervention “of protection and improvement of the monument as a physical structure of cultural interest, but also as a generator of a specific atmosphere that is still legible on site, which includes its existing agricultural property, and is worth preserving” (Costa & Monte, 2011a: 1). The intention was to intervene in the Tower “through the conservation and restoration of its monumental structure”, creating conditions for its use and interpretation, building the roof, closing its corresponding openings and recreating the floors at their primitive levels (Costa & Monte, 2011a: 2). In a future stage, for which a project has already been developed, the works shall focus on the construction of accesses for vehicles and pedestrians, the rehabilitation of the surrounding green areas, the creation of recreation areas and the completion of the visitors’ support centre (Costa & Monte, 2011b: 2). [RR]



General view before the intervention carried out by the Route of the Romanesque (2014).

<sup>7</sup> *Documentação vária*. In PT DGEMN: DSARH-010/187-0015, SIPA.TXT.01572449 to SIPA.TXT.01572455 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N° IPA N° PT011310130008].

<sup>8</sup> Idem.

## CHRONOLOGY

14<sup>th</sup> century (first half): suggested chronology for the construction of the Tower of the Alcoforados;

1987: the Paredes Town Council proposed the classification of the Tower of the Alcoforados;

1993: the Tower of the Alcoforados was classified as a Public Interest Building;

2010: integration of the Tower of the Alcoforados in the Route of the Romanesque;

2014: preservation and protection works conducted under the scope of the Route of the Romanesque.

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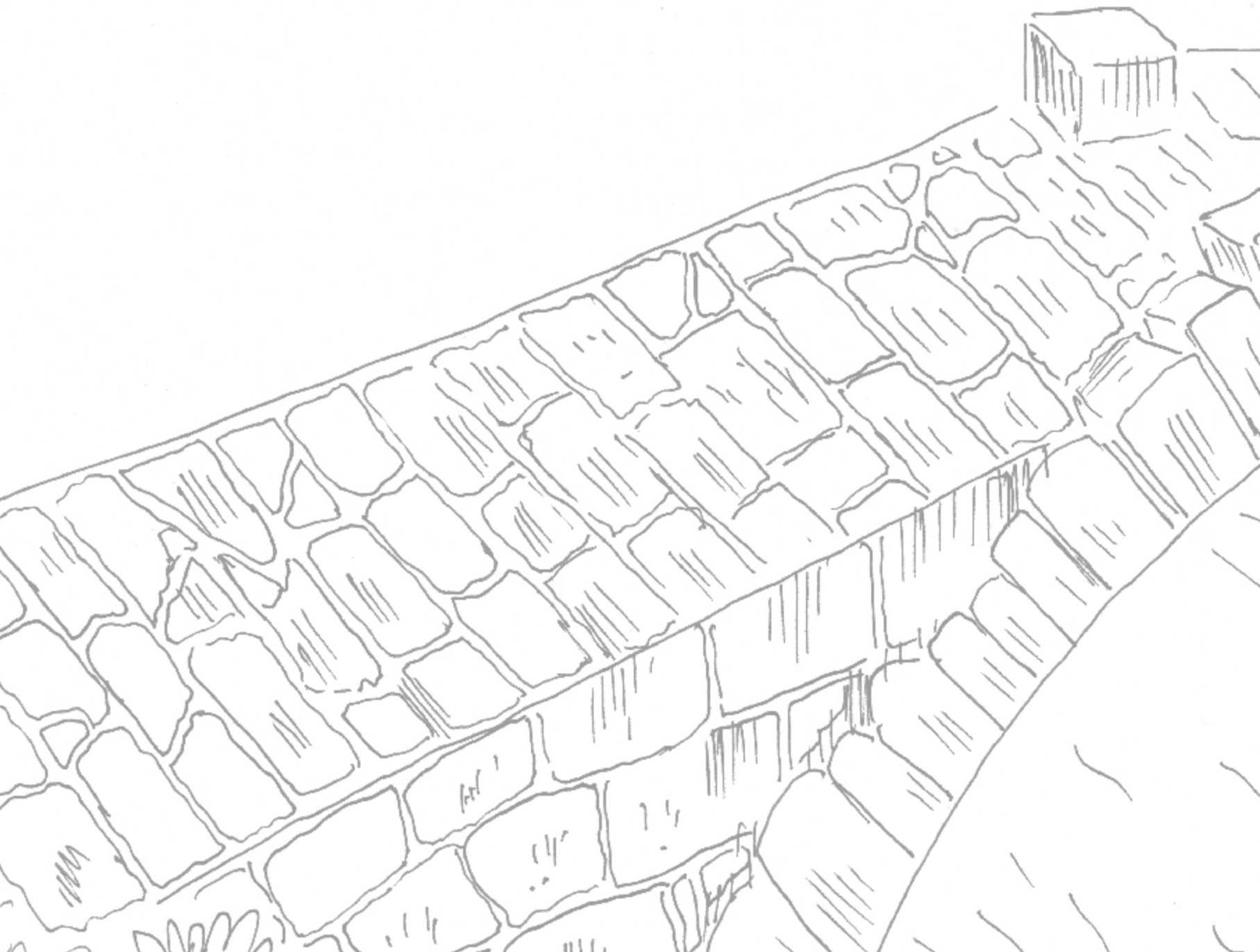
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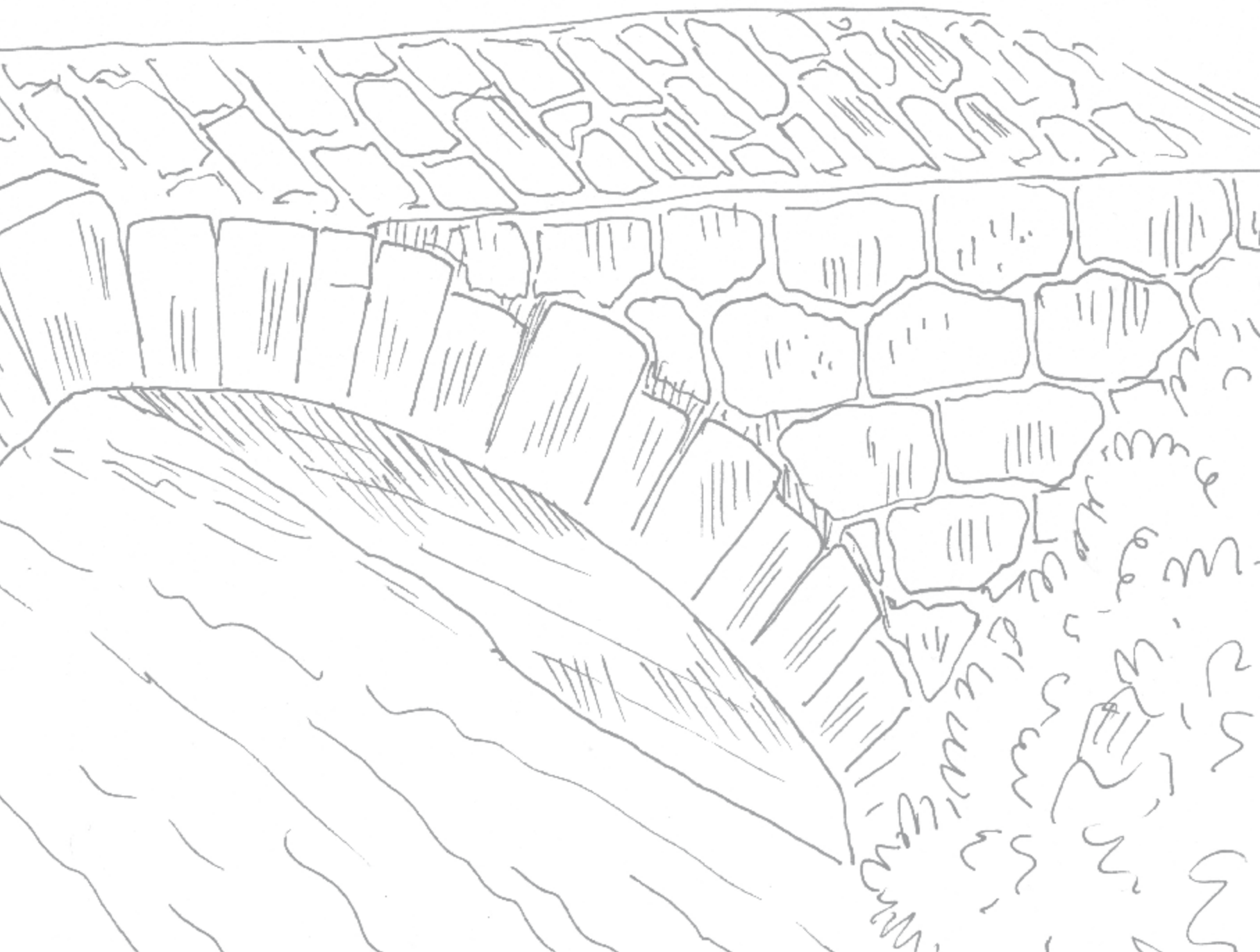
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# BRIDGE OF VEIGA

LOUSADA



**BRIDGE**  
**OF VEIGA**  
LOUSADA



The Bridge of Veiga is located in the parish of Torno, municipality of Lousada, and connects the banks of the river Sousa between the hamlets of Rio and Cachada. Until 1836, it belonged to the term of the municipality of Unhão, when the parish of São Fins de Torno was a vicarage of the Monastery of Pombeiro (Felgueiras) (Costa, 1706-1712: 127). We may suggest, right away, the possibility that the construction of the Bridge of Veiga occurred within the sphere of influence of this powerful institution, in whose domains we find other stone crossings, such as the Bridge of Fundo de Rua (Aboadela, Amarante) or the bridge of Cavez (Cabeceiras de Basto) (Costa, 1706-1712: 143, 151). Both towns were religiously and temporally subject to the Monastery of Pombeiro that, as we know, was an important economic and spiritual centre visited by tenants and devotees, among others.



Downstream view.

It is a Bridge with a single and slightly pointed arch, with narrow long voussoirs, which may have been built within a rather dilated time frame considering the persistence of models and techniques. Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida (1995)<sup>1</sup> considered that it was a construction from the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, but we believe that we can fit it into the final Medieval Period – the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century – as suggested by the type of ashlar with placement initials and its trestle shape. Being a minor work, a structure intended to allow the crossing of an area of “veigas” [tilled plains]<sup>2</sup>, as its toponym suggests, the trestle shape is smoothed due to the low and fertile banks on which the human presence is still abundant and diffuse nowadays. Close by, the toponyms Torre<sup>3</sup> and Quintã reveal the presence of small manorial units, whose



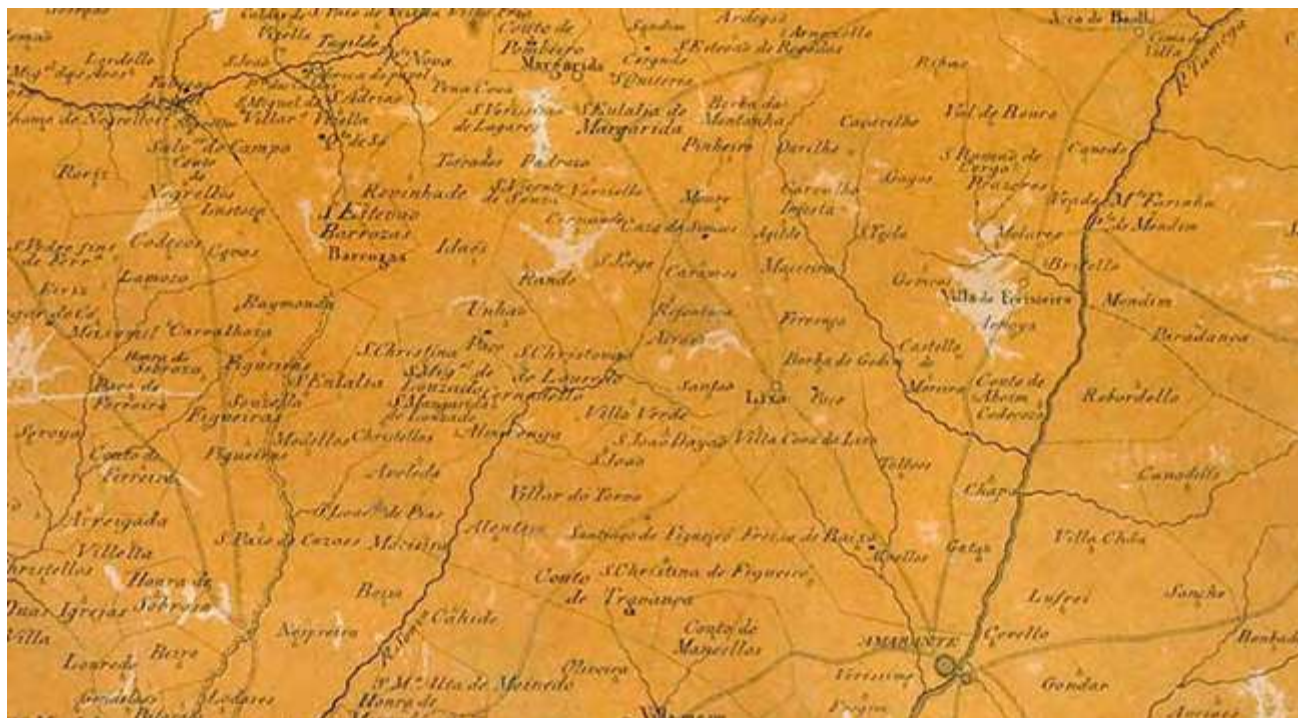
Downstream view (1962).  
Source: IHRU archive.

<sup>1</sup> Years before, the same author said: “without any exception, considering the dozens of known examples, it seems that we are always before a Medieval bridge when its arches are acute. And we may classify them as Gothic” (Almeida, 1968: 124-125).

<sup>2</sup> The chronicler Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 196) mentions the existence of four “veigas” [tilled plains] close to the Bridge, two on each bank of the river Sousa.

<sup>3</sup> On this site and its properties, please refer to the documents published in Lopes (2004: 365-366).

importance may have influenced the construction of the Bridge<sup>4</sup>. The doubt on whether it was commissioned either by the manorial power or by the ecclesiastical power of Pombeiro could only be clarified by documents<sup>5</sup>. However, we should highlight that this small crossing ensured the connection between minor settlement centres, considering that the main road was located further north, in Caramos (Felgueiras), heading to Lixa (Felgueiras) and Amarante<sup>6</sup>.



Map showing the main roads located close to the Bridge (adapted from Depósito dos Trabalhos Geodésicos, 1861). Source: National Digital Library.

So, we stand before a Bridge of local and regional scope, aimed at serving the traffic that flowed within the municipal<sup>7</sup> or parish circuit, whose construction may have been more influenced by the need for social and economic control than by the idea of public work, as most crossings from the Modern Period were.

4 INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO DO EXÉRCITO – *Carta militar de Portugal* [Material cartográfico/Cartographic collection]. [Escala/Scale 1:25.000] n.º 99 – Felgueiras. Lisboa: Instituto Geográfico do Exército, 1998.

5 Here, the presence of Pombeiro (Felgueiras) is strong and clear in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, as proven by the available documents published in Lopes (2004: 359-367). The power of that Monastery rivalled with that of another institution: Bustelo, which currently belongs to the municipality of Penafiel. In the village of Rio itself, close to the Bridge of Veiga, the monks from Pombeiro owned a farmhouse that paid “voz e coima” [a legal tax] to the monarch during the period of King Dinis and their annual lease was 1 lamb and 1 chicken; and on the other side of the river, the houses of Martim Anes were taxed except for “voz e coima”. The first commendatory abbot of Pombeiro, friar Amaro, the confessor of the Queen Filipa de Lencastre, took refuge in São Fins (around 1427). He was fleeing the plague and, despite giving up the church of Torno in 1446, we could actually be precise for the construction of this Bridge (Lopes, 2004: 361, 364-365).

6 TRANT, Nicolau – *[Mapa do distrito entre os rios Douro e Minho feito pela ordem do Ilm.º e Exm.º Snr Nicolau Trant, brigadeiro encarregado do governo das armas do partido do Porto, anno 1813]* [Material cartográfico/Cartographic collection]. Escala/Scale [1:193000]. 1861. Lisboa.

7 The authors of the archaeological inventory of Lousada (Nunes, Sousa & Gonçalves, 2008: 214) say that the Bridge of Veiga was located “on the old road that headed from Senhora da Aparecida to Unhão”.

If, regarding the purpose of its construction, the documents are, at the moment, incomplete or non-existent, regarding the construction process we may only outline the stages it went through by comparing it with other stone crossings. Let's name them:

- I. Site selection;
- II. Draft design;
- III. Cutting and transportation of stone and other materials;
- IV. Construction;
- V. Paving;
- VI. Additions, improvements, reconstructions.

I. The choice of the location to deploy a stone bridge could depend on a number of factors, namely a scenario of pre-existence in which a specific traffic channel featured the necessary proportions to be turned into a crossing, be it a ford, a boat or a wooden pontoon. The flow of the river or brook would also influence the choice of the location and the materials: in wider rivers with stronger currents, only stone could beat the flow (and now always in a successful way); in limited brooks with weaker flows, wood could work as the perfect material for ephemeral crossings that were renewed according to the needs of the neighbouring residents. So, stone or masonry bridges made it possible to cross rivers wherever the traffic so justified their construction or where it was necessary to take carts and beasts.

In any case, the men from the Middle Ages, the builders of roads or the makers of paths continued to avoid rivers, just like their Roman predecessors had. When it was absolutely necessary to cross them, people used crossing boats which were very common elements within the Portuguese Medieval territory and were usually associated with inns and sanctuaries<sup>8</sup>. The crossing was dangerous; it required special care and prayers to God, Christ, the Virgin, male and female saints, some of which had a special vocation to aid endangered travellers<sup>9</sup>. With large rivers such as the Douro, the Mondego or the Tagus, the monarchs of the Portuguese kingdom – formed from north to south – progressively tried to provide the territory with safe crossings that consolidated the national cohesion and allowed the circulation of men and the flow of goods. This was the origin of the figures of pious queens<sup>10</sup> and kings whose contribution for the construction of large bridges placed them side by side with saints and demons – the same who were often held responsible for the construction of such mundane and political works.

8 On the communication routes located to the north of the Douro and the first inventory of road heritage, please refer to Almeida (1968; 1973: 40-57).

9 Not all chapels or churches dedicated to Saint James, Saint Roch or Saint Gonçalo are necessarily associated with important crossing points. The territory is packed with these hagiotoponyms and such does imply they are marks of pilgrimage routes. It was very common for the occasional or usual traveller (merchants, pedlars, lepers, etc.) to commend themselves to Christ and the Virgin in their countless titles: of the Good Passage, of Help, of the Good Deliverance, etc. On the other hand, figures like Saint Mary Magdalene, who washed the Saviour's feet, gave her name to certain chapels that were associated with welfare complexes such as the paradigmatic example of Caldas de Aregos, in Resende. On this issue, please read Resende (2011).

10 One of the most popular from the national legendary *corpus* is Queen Mafalda, sometimes mistaken by her granddaughter, a Cistercian saint. On the matter, please refer to what we wrote in the Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas of Canaveses (Marco de Canaveses).



A paradigmatic case of this construction policy is the bridge over the Douro, to which King Afonso Henriques (k. 1143-1185) left an important legacy. The choice of the location for its construction may explain the reasons why there were certain men in the Middle Ages who funded such works.

The river Douro, in the section between the mouth of the Paiva and the mouth of the Varosa, was always considered as a place with many fatal currents. There were successive spots and trenches in which the boats succumbed when they were not steered with mastery. And the crossing was made by boat, in times when the flow allowed short, but not always peaceful, journeys. There were private, paid boats and for “God’s bless”, boats whose fare was free of charge<sup>11</sup>. From this series of free boats, the ones from Aregos (Resende), Moledo (Lamego) and Régua were rather important (Almeida, 1968)<sup>12</sup>. For the travellers who came from Lamego the last two boats served the ones who wanted, either to go to Vila Real and Trás-os-Montes, or quest for the lands of Entre-Douro-e-Minho, namely the cities of Porto, Guimarães and Braga. So, when King Afonso Henriques<sup>13</sup> or his counsellors had the idea of building a stone crossing over the Douro in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, they might have thought of Régua or Moledo, especially the latter since it managed to preserve, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the primacy of being the most important crossing location along the Douro: it narrowed the flow of men, beasts and carts that travelled from the centre of the Iberian Peninsula across the Portuguese inland searching for the important northwestern commercial centres. However, the location chosen for the construction of that which would be the first bridge over the Douro within Portuguese territory was defined between two points downstream of Moledo, thus joining the parishes of Barrô (Resende, to the south) and Barqueiros (Mesão Frio, to the north). In this place there was already a small paid boat, but the traffic flow did not seem to justify the construction of such important crossing<sup>14</sup>. So, how may we justify the choice of this site for such an important crossing? Its construction would force the road from Lamego to Amarante to be moved towards west, thus wasting the smooth ascents that favoured the royal road between Moledo and Rede (Mesão Frio) during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the foundations of this bridge were still visible on the river bed and the chronicler Rui Fernandes suggested it should be finished resorting to a tax of 10 “réis” [former Portuguese currency unit] per resident within a twenty league radius: “and it would be very noble if this Kingdom had a bridge over the Douro for it has many cliffs and is very difficult to cross (...)” (Fernandes & Barros, 2001: 95).

11 Please refer to Duarte & Barros (1997: 77-118).

12 Between 1531-1532, Fernandes & Barros (2001: 92-93) also mention a few that were part of the Lamego circuit: “Bagaúste, which belongs to Your Lordship [Bishop of Lamego], Régua, which belongs to the Bishop of Porto, and to His Excellence Fernando, the Carvalho, which belongs to a “quintã” [small manorial unit], Moledo, which was created by Queen Mafalda, Bernaldo, which belongs to a “quintã”, Porto de Rey, also created by Queen Mafalda, barges of Moledo and Porto de Rey, whose construction was ordered by the same Queen who left them to certain “quintãs” and “casais” [farmhouses] so they could support the boatmen who drive the barges without charging large amounts, no matter how full and unruly the Douro is (...)”. Downstream from Porto de Rei (Resende) we highlight the already mentioned boat of Aregos, associated with the welfare complex that included a leper hospital and thermal baths, and also the ones in Pala (Baião), Mourilhe (Cinfães) and Fontelas (Cinfães). On the boats of the inner Douro (which the author calls “Iberian” Douro) please read Abreu (2006: 45-75).

13 In 1179, he stipulated certain legacies, among which 300 “morabitanos” [former Portuguese currency unit] for the “bridge over the Douro”. The money should be handed over to the monks of Saint John of Tarouca (Reuter, 1938: 365).

14 It was Bernardo’s boat (as previous note).

Two centuries later, in his *Elucidario* . . . , Friar Joaquim de Santa Rosa Viterbo writes an extensive dissertation on the Bridge, warning those who were more sceptical about its existence: “it would be nice if this bridge, site of so many old-wives tales, novels, and other publications, would be reproduced in a more convenient location, thus bringing together the royal roads for the immortal glory of Queen Maria I, who commissioned them in our days!” In fact, both locally and regionally, the “story” of the bridge always sounded more like a legend rather than real facts. Perhaps because it was impossible for it to be true. However, as proven by Joaquim Viterbo, its existence, despite being unfinished, lasted for some time in the memory and will of certain individuals<sup>15</sup>.

Father Luiz Cardoso, based on the descriptions he had received from the parish priest of Barqueiros before 1751, wrote this precious memoir and description of the remains of the bridge that had been designed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century:

“At the extremities it features a large stone, close to the Douro, or on its banks, the famous Tower, or Pillar, commonly known as “Piar”; and, in the same river, we find the beginnings of two other pillars (completely destroyed by time and the water’s current), which worked as foundations for the arches of a bridge that Queen Mafalda, with her royal and generous will, tried to build in the Douro; if, by chance, it would have been finished, it would be the eighth wonder of the world; however, time destroyed much of it, helped by the floods of the Douro. Today it is still fifty palms high and two hundred palms wide; as it goes up, it gets narrower with each row, being shaped almost like a pyramid. Above this Pillar, or “Piar”, there is a large sandy area, where the river runs with great rush, which is commonly known as Galeira, where, with two or three yokes of oxen that belong to the owner of that Galeira (which are owned for that purpose), the boats are pulled up for most of the year, for a fixed stipend; and, without this help, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to cross the river in this and in other similar places. Close to this tower, or “Piar”, there is a plane and unfruitful sandy area and, surrounding this area, we can see large amounts of loose and broken stones that seem to have been moved for the works of the bridge they were trying to build” (Cardoso, 1747-1751: 54-55).

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The account allows us to conclude that one of the three pillars that the parish priest of Barqueiros, which memoirist Luiz Cardoso saw in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was built on an outcrop (“calhao”) close to the river. In 1970, there were still traces of another pillar on the opposite bank (Pinto, 1982: 224). Just like any other bridge, its construction began simultaneously on both banks, at a location where the current and the width of the Douro allowed building a platform supported by a line of five or six pillars (similar to the bridge of Canaveses, Marco de Canaveses) ensuring, at the same time, the solidity and durability of a structure that would be constantly subject to continuous hardships in flood periods.

<sup>15</sup> Viterbo (1865: 153) raises the possibility that the bridge had already been completed and, at some point, demolished; he rejects the authorship ascribed to Mafalda, “because, in 1179, her grandfather, King Afonso Henriques had already left it 3000 “maravedis” [former Portuguese currency unit]”. He also quotes the will of Sancha Vermudes that, in 1205, mentions certain properties located in Barrô (Resende) close to the bridge over the Douro.

So, when the choice of location would not be justified by a frequent use, it would be associated with the safety provided by a specific place: areas with outcrops on which it was possible to build one or more pillars or, more often, in areas where the river bed was narrower (like in the case of the Bridge of Arco, in Folhada, Marco de Canaveses), which avoided arches with large spans or the construction of more than one arch<sup>16</sup>.



Barge. Source: Vizetelly, 1947, p. 56.

In the case of the Bridge of Veiga, the choice of location was certainly due to the fact that it was a passage place resulting from the capillarity of roads that provided access to the fertile “veiga”. Despite demolished and reconstructed, it was surely built on rocky outcrops that allowed ensuring the structure’s sustainability in an alluvial flood area. However, it is important to underline its position within a territory characterised by agricultural productions, which were in constant need of manual and animal strength and also of vehicles that would transport the crops after the harvest.

<sup>16</sup> Valerio Martins de Oliveira wrote the following words about the place on which the foundations of any building should be based (1748: 28): “that the foundations that we build must penetrate all the unstable and loose soil; if the site is not robust or does not inspire much trust, we can use a oak or olive wood palisade, because when this wood is placed underground it normally lasts for many years, with its sturdy bar on top, with the largest and thickest slabs there are and we are able to find; and if it is built in the water, this palisade should be made of stone pine wood (...)”.



**II.** After the location was properly defined, measures were taken and the following step would be producing a draft of the structure that was going to be built. Regarding the Modern Period we have construction deeds that allow us to know a little bit more, not about the constructive process, but on its previous stage<sup>17</sup>.

A contract was drawn up between both parties, the commissioner and the artist. The former provided information on the building site and, sometimes, specifications about the bridge's shape and size; the latter defined the materials and the execution deadline, often mentioning that he committed himself to finishing the work according to specific sketches. These would certainly be structural drawings with technical and formal specifications. They did not survive enough to reach us. And even in terms of construction writings recorded in notebooks there are already few examples we can present – although a systematic and accurate survey of this kind of documents is still to be done. On the other hand, many works may have been carried out based on verbal contracts or documents that were not ratified by a notary, such as the “assinados”<sup>18</sup>.

After the work had been, either formally or informally, commissioned, the master stonemason and his men, artists and apprentices, looked for the quarry or quarries that could supply the building works.

**III.** The stone used in the construction of the Bridge of Veiga was certainly transported with the help of machines, carts or drays. We do not know where they came from. There is still no systematic study of the petrous materials used in the construction of buildings and structures, relating them with the dissemination of certain types of stone, like granite in the Bridge of Veiga, a material that was widely used for all kinds of constructions in this region.

Along the landscape we find plenty of toponyms like “pedregal” or “pedreira”, which recall the sites where the blocks were quarried and prepared for their transportation and subsequent cutting or trimming. Part of the work related to the preparation of the ashlar, which included cutting them to measure and trimming them, was surely performed close to the quarry. However, the preparation was made on site, a true construction site where sometimes there were several master stonemasons working at the same time, together with their teams<sup>19</sup>.

At the quarry, the first cuts on the rocky outcrops were vertical, followed by the definition of horizontal lines that would contour the horizontal cut. After the natural block was cut out from the outcrop, smaller blocks were cut according to the appropriate sizes, considering both the size and capacity of the means of transportation and the place they would take within the structure they were intended for.

<sup>17</sup> Regarding the Douro and Montemuro region, we have some construction deeds that even allow us to follow the path of a particular stonemason who is specialized in the construction of bridges. This is Timóteo de Calheiros, born in the region of Vila Nova de Cerveira, who signed the deed for the construction of the new bridge of Lagariça (Resende) in 1734 and committed himself to build a crossing in Loivos do Monte (Baião) in 1767.

<sup>18</sup> The “assinados” were individual pieces of paper in which an educated person would write a text intended to document a specific act (purchase, sale, building construction, service, etc.), which was then signed by the parties, witnessed and then considered valid. We do not know what their legal relevance actually was because, given that they were not recorded in the notarial notes, they became documents easy to manipulate. This way, their authors were exempt from the payment of fees and from the bureaucratic process. On this type of documents, please read Resende (2005).

<sup>19</sup> In which there were, naturally, other trades and craftsmen, such as carpenters and blacksmiths.

The building sites were not always close to quarries, causing the transportation to be lengthier and, of course, more expensive. That was the reason why we find ashlar from older constructions in buildings that were subsequently refurbished, a fact that has given rise to misreadings by the so-called “architectural archaeology”. In fact, even stones from ruined buildings could be reused in other buildings constructed in later periods. Researchers are not always aware of the ability to transport large stone blocks during the Middle Ages, thus reducing the constructions to works that were the result of the circumstances of their environment, something which was not entirely true; otherwise, the constructive ability of the Medieval man would fall very short of legacies that are well known to us, from cathedrals to complex bridges.

With the aid of other stones, logs, metallic bars and hoists, the blocks were taken to the vehicles that would transport them. Carts and drays were pulled by oxen or cows and perhaps (less frequently) by mules or horses. Once they arrived at their destination, the ashlar that were supposed to be placed according to the project were prepared by being cut and trimmed.



Downstream view. Arch top.

**IV.** The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century memoirists were careful enough to make a distinction between stone and masonry when they mentioned petreous bridges. While the former had irregular ashlar and included badly-squared blocks or the use of loose stones, the latter showed square cuts and a deep knowledge of building techniques. The Bridge of Veiga fits into the category of masonry bridges, as referred by the parish priest of São Fins do Torno in 1758<sup>20</sup>. However, we might think that it was designed and built by a master who had the necessary know-how

20 “At the fifteenth, that the Souza features a Stone Bridge with a single arch in this parish” (Borges, 1758).





Upstream view. Arch and platform.

to combine beauty and durability. As we shall see, it was not, and both time and men were inclement to this small Bridge that endured irregular flows and imposed additions that corrupted the original Gothic structure.

In order to build the arch, the stonemasons began by placing the foundations and first stones on both banks. In the case of Veiga, which has only one span, the arch begins at ground level giving little expression to the trestle-shaped deck. Sometimes, these first stones called “saiméis” had holes to insert the wooden centring, structure or falsework that was used to support the voussoirs and ashlar of the intrados as they were put in place. The voussoirs used in the Bridge of Veiga were cut with narrow and long shapes, but right on the arch we see the first building mistake that may have accelerated the fast decay of the Bridge: instead of closing it with a single one-piece keystone, the master and his artists closed it with two pieces. The stones were put in place with the help of scaffolds and hoists moved by lifting wheels, pulled by resorting to human strength<sup>21</sup>.

Once the intrados was finished, they would build the abutments and walls from each of the faces that connect the banks and the route over the Bridge through an inclined plan. The pseudo-isodome ashlar stand out. Between each face, they used uncarved and loose stones as filling and base for the construction of the pavement and the walkway.

<sup>21</sup> On hoisting devices, please read Gómez Canales (2005: 85).





Stone path leading to the Bridge.

Considering that it had a single arch and that the river's current did not justify so, they chose not to provide the Bridge of Veiga with cut-waters or buttresses; the former would allow cutting the current and preventing the structure from being continually under pressure or struck by debris; the latter were used to sustain the current's thrust and pressure.

Finally they build the parapets: two rows of ashlar that on both sides of the walkway protected the pedestrians or cars against fall, defining the Bridge's circulation space. Although in 1726 Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 196) mentioned the Bridge of Veiga "with its parapets surrounding it", these elements no longer exist and the original pavement underwent major changes.

V. We do not know if the walkway was built at the same time as the Bridge. In the section found on the right bank there are some slabs with marks but, as we shall see, the Bridge is not in its original place because it was replaced by a concrete crossing a few meters upstream. We may assume that the Bridge was the extension of a cart route<sup>22</sup> paved with larger or smaller stone slabs, sometimes taking advantage of outcrops and installing stones with irregular or jagged shapes to create an overlap that was able to withstand traffic. But this is only a possibility because, in the Middle Ages, most of the routes were dirt tracks (Marques, 1997: 91-121).

As in the case of the information we have about masonry ashlar, which were divided according to the stone's cut, size and shape, there are no studies about the type of pavements

<sup>22</sup> The current walkway, which is partially preserved, shows traces of the groove left by the wheels of the oxcarts.



that were used in rural roads. The truth is that we only find a standardization policy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to techniques that were internationally developed resorting to different materials. However, different paving methods were applied according to the stone that was locally or regionally available, the purpose of the route and the orographic vicissitudes, which allows us to formulate a categorization. A systematic study of pavements could shed some light about many walkways that are considered as being Roman and (or) Medieval, proving or refuting their persistence.

It is likely that the route that served the old Bridge of Veiga was part of the municipal and parish network that we've already mentioned in the case of the Bridge of Arco. In the Middle Ages these circulation channels were used by agents from manorial and ecclesiastical institutions. And in the Modern Period, when the administrative division and the forces from which local power emanated were consolidated, some of these works of art were restored and extended; they were needed for the flow of temporal and religious activities, such as the journeys of the muleteers and the processions or the distribution of the viaticum, which required clean paths and fast itineraries, as befitted the transportation of the Blessed Sacrament<sup>23</sup>. The construction of new bridges, the repair of the old ones and the cleaning of the paths (which included their paving) were promoted after the 16<sup>th</sup> century; despite being necessary, these works were not always welcome by the population because it implies the payment of extraordinary taxes, like the “fintas”<sup>24</sup>.

So, the Bridge of Veiga may be considered as a paradigmatic example of a crossing that was part of a minor network plan, giving expression to the local and regional circulation system; they were the result of more pressing needs than the ones of providing the pilgrims who went to Santiago de Compostela (Spain) with safe crossings, as if they were the only reason behind the road construction campaign carried out in the Middle Ages.

**VI.** Throughout the Modern Period the Bridge of Veiga was probably subject to the necessary restoration works, revealed by stones with different cuts and textures. The damages caused by the traffic (especially motor vehicles) and by the currents during flood periods must have weakened the small structure leading to its reinforcement.

Unfortunately, it was during the Contemporary Period that it was subject to the most violent acts. Its pavement subsided due to car traffic. After being replaced with a new concrete crossing, the Medieval Bridge was demolished and left dormant; this was the state in which the historian Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida found it in the 1990's, stating that “the bridge of Veiga is a pitifully ruined monument” (Almeida, 1995).

In 2010, it became part of the Route of the Romanesque and hopefully the Medieval elegance and dignity it showed for so many years will be restored. [NR]



View of the platform and the stone path (1962). Source: IHRU archive.



View of the platform and the stone path (1962). Source: IHRU archive.

<sup>23</sup> We should note that, in 1726, the church of Torno did not feature a tabernacle, meaning it was necessary to get the communion wafer from the nearest church (perhaps Unhão, Felgueiras) (Craesbeeck, 1992:196).

<sup>24</sup> This was the origin of several abuses, as we may infer from the royal provision of 1605 on taxes intended for the reconstruction and repair of bridges (Silva, 1854: 1605-1606).

## CHRONOLOGY

1427: fleeing the plague, Friar Amaro – the commander of the Monastery of Pombeiro – takes refuge in São Fins de Torno, which was the abbey's church;

15<sup>th</sup> century (1<sup>st</sup> half): construction of the Bridge of Veiga;

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: conduction of conservation and reinforcement works;

1726: Francisco Craesbeeck mentions the existence of parapets on the Bridge;

1758: the vicar of Torno, Félix Borges, points out that within the limits of his parish there was only one masonry bridge, which had a single arch;

20<sup>th</sup> century: subject to motor-vehicle traffic, the Bridge of Veiga decays and is replaced by a concrete pontoon;

2010: the Bridge of Veiga becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque.

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## GLOSSARY

**ALTAR:** table for religious sacrifices, which is built outdoors or inside houses and temples. In Christianity, is the consecrated table where the mass is celebrated, and includes a sealed cavity – the sepulchre – with a stone lid, inside which the relics are placed. The base of the altar evolved in different ways: the early Christians celebrated mass over the tombs of martyrs. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards we find artistic ornaments covering the frontal or the entire base. Until the Romanesque Period, the altar was only intended for the Book of the Gospels and the chalice, but, from that period onwards, a large number of crosses and candlesticks were also placed on it. The main altar is the most significant altar of a temple, placed on the axis of the main nave, usually at the end of the chancel. The others are called collateral or lateral altars.

**ALTARPIECE:** a structure placed on the altar or addorsed to the back wall above it. They can be made of various materials (stone, carved wood, etc.) and are composed of a variable number of paintings or sculptures, usually framed by architectural or sculptural decorations, according to the style of each period. While, initially, it consisted of a simple step located behind the altar table to place liturgical objects (such as the cross and the candlesticks), it should remain low so as to not conceal the priest during the celebration of mass. However, it grew quickly when, according to a change in the ritual of the liturgy, the priest began to officiate with his back to the devotees. Since then, the height of the altar's upper limit was no longer subject to constraints. The main altarpiece is the most important one in a church, and is usually located in the chancel.

**ARCOSOLIUM:** arc-shaped niche carved on an internal or external wall of a church, containing a tomb. It is from the Romanesque Period onwards that this becomes a usual element in Western art.

**BAS-RELIEF:** a sculpture that is generally used in architectural decoration, in which the figures merge with the surface on which they are applied, only protruding part of their volume.

**CANTILEVER:** synonym for corbel.

**CHEMIN DE RONDE:** in a castle, keep or fortress, the narrow path inside the wall vestment.

**CREVICE:** narrow opening on a wall or roof for ventilation and lighting. Slender, narrow and high window.

**DIHEDRAL TORUS:** frame with a convex semicircular section that usually appears applied at the lower part of a column. It becomes dihedral when embedded in a sharp edge.



**EAVE:** the protruding part of the cornice or a small protruding frame on a wall that is intended to prevent water from running down the building's façade.

**ECHINUS:** cushion of a capital, decorated with foliage. The term is especially associated with the Corinthian capital, which resembles a basket of acanthus leaves. However, by extension, it is also associated with the Romanesque style, since the capitals from this artistic period are the result, in formal terms, of the adaptation of the echinus of the Corinthian capital, thus adjusting its rules to the new aesthetics.

**ELEVATION:** wall, vertical plane of a building. It may also refer to the architectural drawing that represents that vertical plane, or part of it, to the scale of its horizontal and vertical dimensions.

**HIGH CHOIR:** on a mezzanine built above the main door into the church's nave. The place where clergymen meet to sing the divine offices.

**KEEP:** a stone building, taller than wide, built primarily for defense purposes. The main tower of a castle, the last stronghold of the military garrison. The known specimens have variable plans and different locations in relation to the fortified ensemble.

**MOLDING:** an ornament found in carpentry or architectural works which consists of a composition of protrusions and indentations, whose continuity along straight or winding lines ensures an accurate transition between architectural shapes through the effect of lights and shadows.

**OCULUS:** a small circular or oval window opened on a gable, a pediment, etc., for lighting and ventilation of the interior space.

**PATRON SAINT:** the protective entity that presides over the church, hermitage or chapel, which the community takes as its protector, thus paying it religious homage.

**PATRONAGE:** a right acquired by the founders of a specific church and its legacy to their descendants which consisted in appointing or providing the benefit to the same individual under his trust. The holder of this right, who was called patron, was responsible for raising some of the church's revenues and oversee the construction of the chancel.

**PEARLS:** ornament consisting of small beads or spherical grains applied on a frame or molding.

**PELMET:** a structure used in Johannine [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)] carved woodworks, which imitated fabrics. Board or short curtain that supports curtains on the upper section.

**PSEUDO-SOLOMONIC COLUMN:** column with a spiral-shaped frustum, featuring a helix on the lower third that is different from the one on top it; they are separated by rings. The name comes from Saint Peter's canopy in the Vatican, by Bernini, who used this type of column inspired by the model of the twisted columns preserved in Saint Peter's basilica, in Rome, Italy (first chapel on the right), which, according to tradition, had come from the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, Israel.

**PULPIT:** in ecclesiastical furniture, it refers to the preacher's tribune or to the lecturer's chair found in the monastery's refectory. Addorsed to a wall or pillar, usually in the church's central nave, which provides access to a stairway, it is closed as a balcony and often crowned with a pulpit cover. It is a tribune made of marble, stone or wood. It is associated with a concept of broad preaching, directly aimed at influencing the devotees.

**SCOTIA:** a frame with a concave profile.

**TABERNACLE:** a small piece shaped like a cabinet, church, tower, etc., with a door to store hosts and relics on the altars.

**UPHOLSTERY:** the lining of a sculptural image, usually made of wood, with painted and gilded robes. Bleaching (e.g., with sulphate or calcium carbonate) a carved or engraved figure carved in order to gild it and apply golden leaves on it. It also refers to the ornaments on the images' clothes which are made to look like fabrics.





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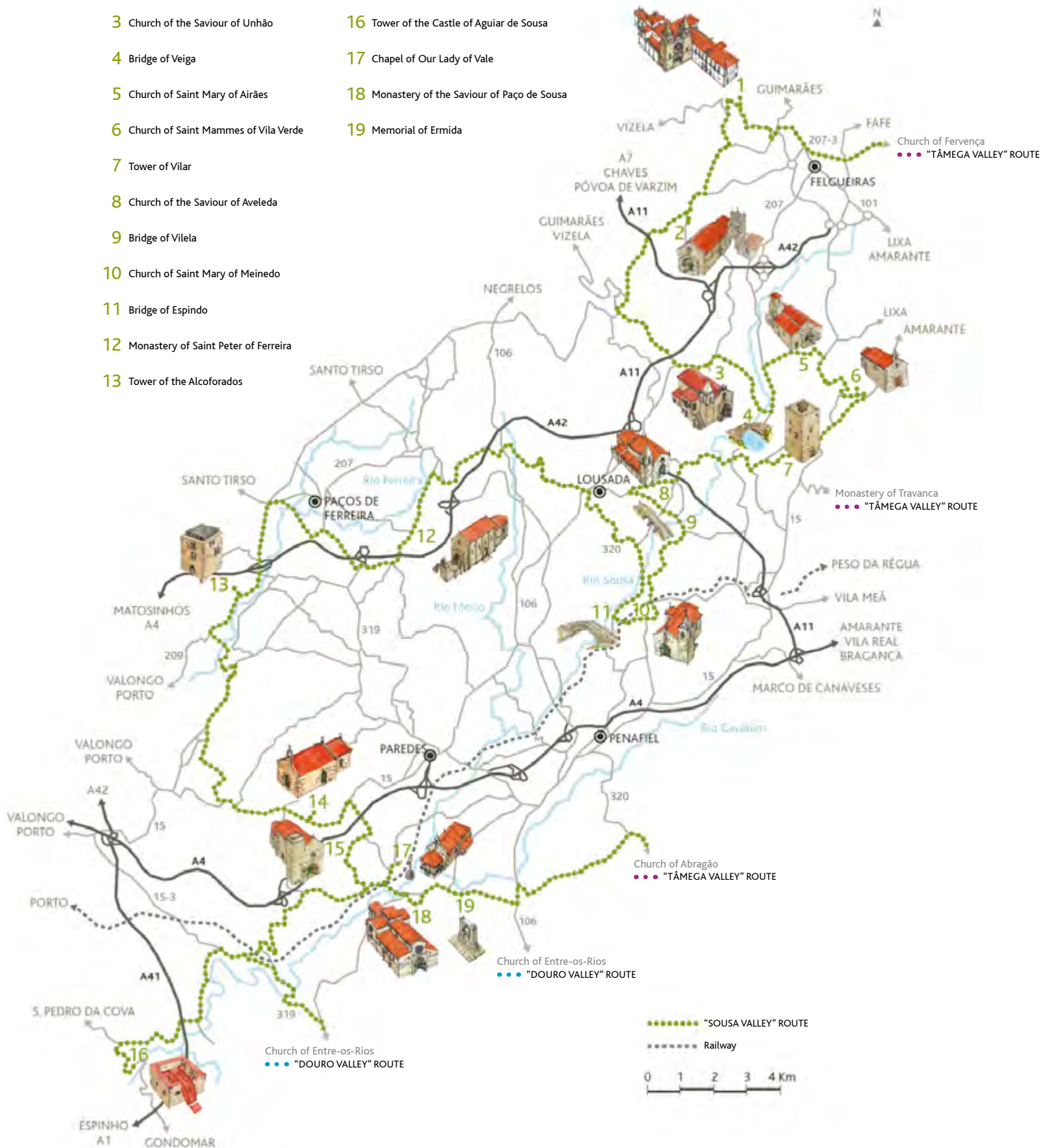
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## SOUSA VALLEY

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Monastery of Saint Mary of Pombeiro   | 14 Chapel of Our Lady of Piety of Quintã     |
| 2 Church of Saint Vincent of Sousa      | 15 Monastery of Saint Peter of Cête          |
| 3 Church of the Saviour of Unhão        | 16 Tower of the Castle of Aguiar de Sousa    |
| 4 Bridge of Veiga                       | 17 Chapel of Our Lady of Vale                |
| 5 Church of Saint Mary of Airães        | 18 Monastery of the Saviour of Paço de Sousa |
| 6 Church of Saint Mammes of Vila Verde  | 19 Memorial of Ermida                        |
| 7 Tower of Vilar                        |  |
| 8 Church of the Saviour of Aveleda      |  |
| 9 Bridge of Vilela                      |  |
| 10 Church of Saint Mary of Meinedo      |  |
| 11 Bridge of Espindo                    |  |
| 12 Monastery of Saint Peter of Ferreira |  |
| 13 Tower of the Alcoforados             |  |

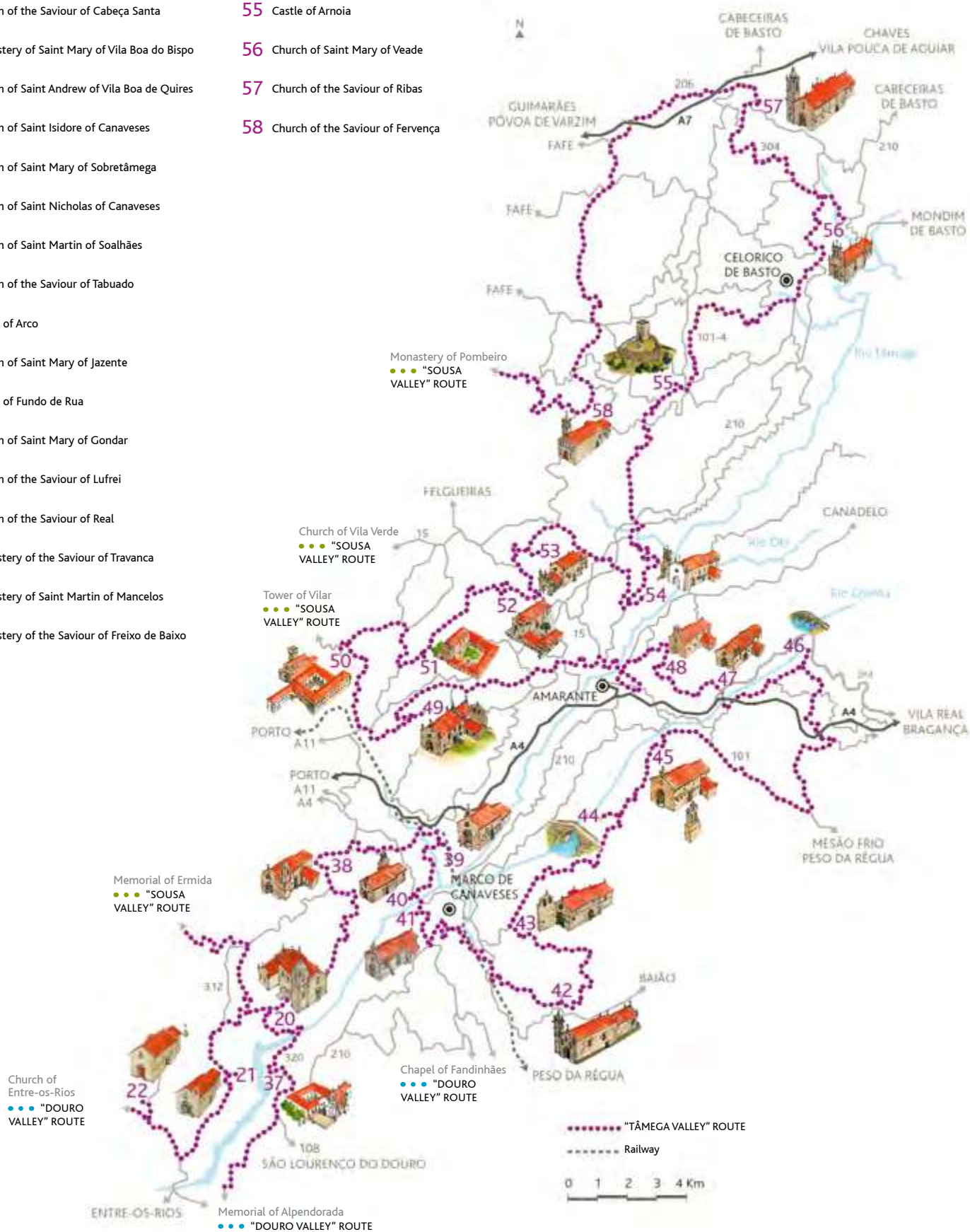






## TÂMEGA VALLEY

- 20 Church of Saint Peter of Abragão
- 21 Church of Saint Genesius of Boelhe
- 22 Church of the Saviour of Cabeça Santa
- 37 Monastery of Saint Mary of Vila Boa do Bispo
- 38 Church of Saint Andrew of Vila Boa de Quires
- 39 Church of Saint Isidore of Canaveses
- 40 Church of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega
- 41 Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses
- 42 Church of Saint Martin of Soalhães
- 43 Church of the Saviour of Tabuado
- 44 Bridge of Arco
- 45 Church of Saint Mary of Jazente
- 46 Bridge of Fundo de Rua
- 47 Church of Saint Mary of Gondar
- 48 Church of the Saviour of Lufrei
- 49 Church of the Saviour of Real
- 50 Monastery of the Saviour of Travanca
- 51 Monastery of Saint Martin of Mancelos
- 52 Monastery of the Saviour of Freixo de Baixo
- 53 Church of Saint Andrew of Telões
- 54 Church of Saint John the Baptist of Gatão
- 55 Castle of Arnoia
- 56 Church of Saint Mary of Veade
- 57 Church of the Saviour of Ribas
- 58 Church of the Saviour of Fervença





Route of the Romanesque App

