

CHURCH
OF SAINT
CRISTOPHER
OF NOGUEIRA
CINFÃES

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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 Christophori 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 Ages¹. 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 12th century and the second half of the 13th 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 Tendais². The memory of the union of the two parishes in one single land still remained in the 18th 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”

¹ 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 Sarmento and José Leite de Vasconcelos’ attention (1903: 66-68).

² 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 12th 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-10th 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 11th 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 13th 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 12th century and the mid-13th 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 11th century, the Braga cathedral played a crucial role as a “radiating” centre³ 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

³ 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.

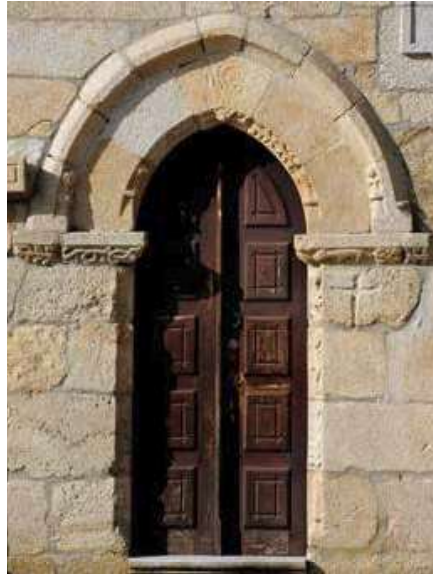
Besides, on the nave's south elevation, the irregularity of the masonry work is quite obvious, both in terms of the ashlar's size and alignment, and of the variation of grains that allow us to identify different types of granite. So, we believe that this section of the south elevation, at least until 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 13th 1784⁴. 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

4 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 impostes 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 impostes. 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 impost, 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 (*Iesus 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 11th 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 13th 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

During the Modern Period, i.e., between the 16th and 18th 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 Council⁵ 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 16th 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 16th 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.

⁵ "The Ecumenical Council was a practice introduced in the 4th 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 13th 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”⁶.

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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 Christ⁷.

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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 19th 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 18th 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 18th century, by the Virgin of Sorrows, a processional image whose realism matches the pious and scenographic atmosphere that cherished the devotion to

⁷ The other brotherhood was the one of the Lord of the Steps or the Souls; on May 26th, 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 boundaries⁸.

The refurbishment carried out in the second half of the 18th 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]

⁸ 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 18th 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 20th 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 *Descripçam corografica 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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