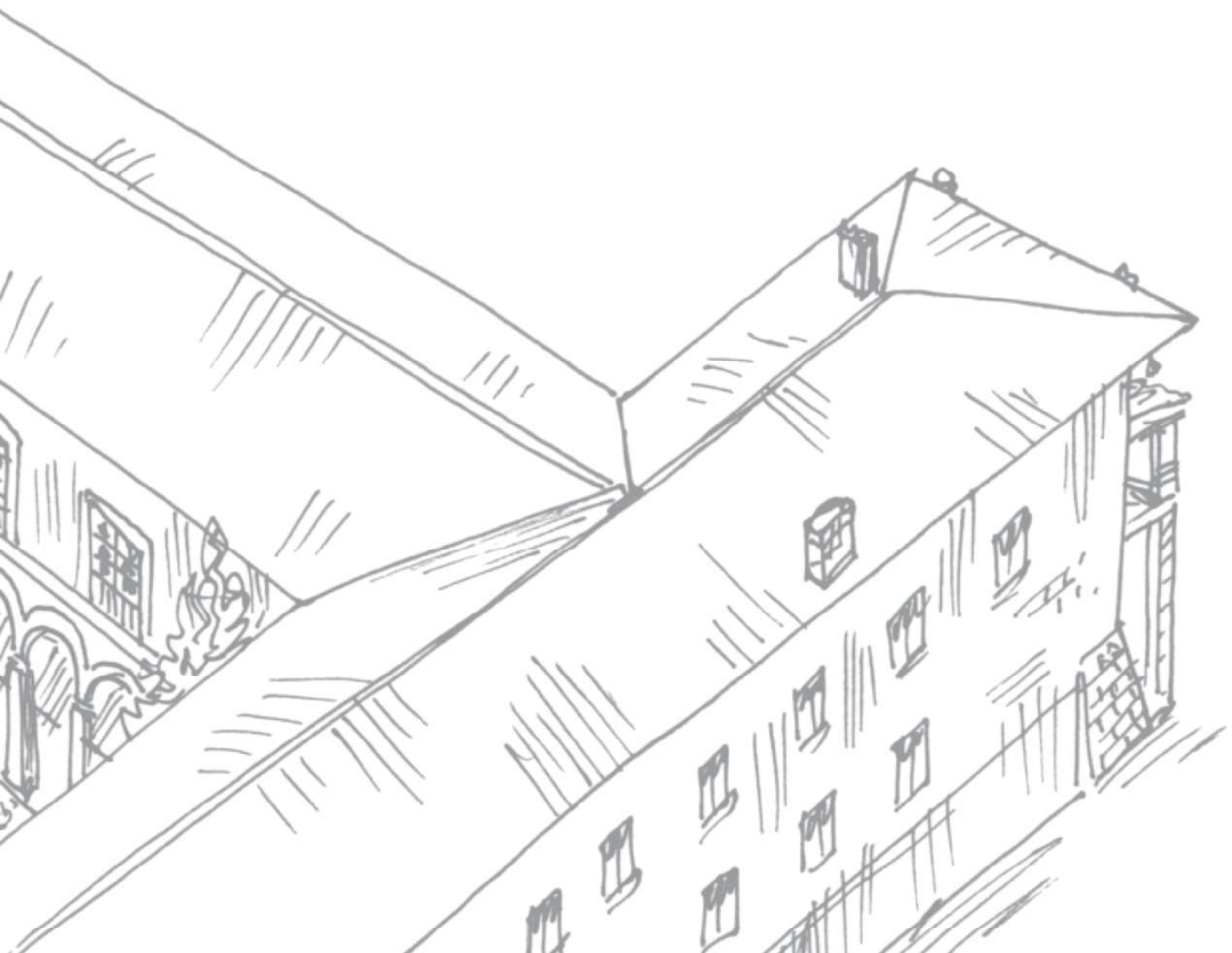




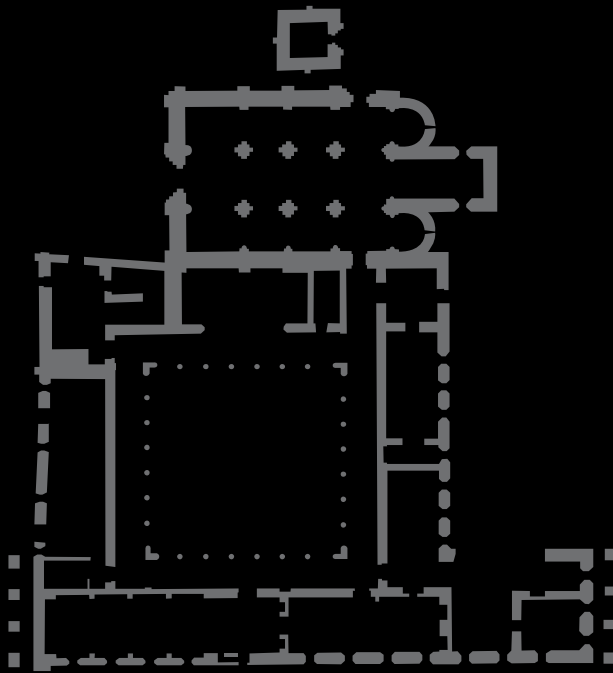
# MONASTERY OF THE SAVIOUR OF TRAVANCA

AMARANTE



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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-

1 We consider as crypto-documents the ones whose whereabouts are unknown, the ones that do not exist or were simply fully or partially transcribed.

2 On the beginning of this *História metódica*, please read Torgal, Mendes & Catroga (1998).

3 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

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.



Reproduction of the frontispiece of the work *Benedictina lusitana*, by friar Leão de São Tomás.

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 Ribatãmega 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 Tãmega. 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 abbeys, 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

<sup>14</sup> In his study, José Marques (1981) mentions some of the abbots from the final period.

<sup>15</sup> The list of the perpetual, commendatory and triennial abbots was published by José Coelho dos Santos (1969: 65) and Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 295).

<sup>16</sup> 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).

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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 archivolts, 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 foliage 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 impostos – 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 imposts 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).

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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 imposts. 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.

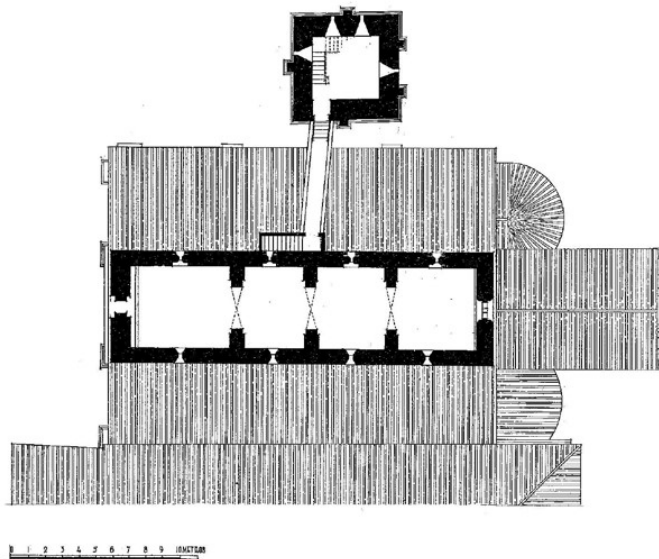
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Church. North apse chapel. Mural painting (missing). Source: IHRU archive.



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).

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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 intradosum 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.



266 Church. Sacristy. Chapel, arch and mural painting.

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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