



13.

## TOWER OF THE ALCOFORADOS



Rua da Torre Alta  
Lordelo  
Paredes



41° 14' 55.95" N  
8° 24' 30.17" W



+351 918 116 488



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×



Public Interest Building  
1993



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Yes

The Tower of the Alcoforados, also popularly known as the “Moorish Tower” or the “High Tower”, eventually adopted the name of the family that tradition has been associated with its foundation. Despite the inconsistencies, doubts and gaps that the history of those connected to this building may raise, the origin of this Tower is associated with the family circle of the Urrô, which was later merged with the Brandões and, finally, with the Alcoforados. The dispersion of its lords among families from Porto and the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region may justify the fact that this Tower was soon left uninhabited, although it remained as a symbol of prestige.





## MANORIAL TOWERS

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Together with the numerous remaining traces, the presence of the toponym "torre" [tower] across the entire Entre-Douro-e-Minho region is a good example of the popularity that these structures achieved when they were already detached from an exclusively military context of territorial defence and of territorial reorganization, associated with a manorial society in full assertion and ascension. So, it was mainly second-line lineages, the "milites" aspiring to become "ricos homens" [a title of nobility], who adopted this architectural solution of the *domus fortis* in the first place, as a way to lead their domains.

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The Tower of the Alcoforados was surely built after 1258 on a granite outcrop, which emphasises its verticality (currently the Tower is about 8.60 meters high). Therefore, it stands out from an agricultural valley nestled between the Agrela and the São Tiago mountains, irrigated by the river Ferreira (to the southeast) and by the brook of Feteira (to the north-east); it is also punctuated by several wells

and devices typical of intense agricultural activities. The idea of domain is well defined by traces that show us that there was a balcony - probably with machicolations and a small roof - in the building's "piano nobile", facing northeast, thus opening the manorial Tower onto the surrounding agricultural property it controlled. The model of the Romanesque manorial tower derives from the imported model





## THE *DOMUS FORTIS*

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According to Mário Barroca, the *domus fortis*, as an architectural typology of the Romanesque period is one of the most extraordinary examples of harmony between an architectural model [derived from the keep], a function [residential] and a symbolic power [nobility and antiquity]. And it was due to their strong symbolic weight that manorial towers have been preserved, even when they were no longer useful.

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of the castle keeps of the time, overlapping the civil component to the military one. That is why the entrance door of the Tower of the Alcoforados is located on the ground floor, an obvious sign that its function is already residential or, in other words, manorial. Delimited by a round arch, the door has an arched lintel composed of four voussoirs, which was probably sheltered by a porch-like structure with a shed roof, as the negative carved on the wall seems to suggest. Although there are some rows of ashlar missing on top of the Tower, we believe it once had merlons.

In the tower's structure there is an element that allows us to consider that it was built around the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. We are talking about the Gothic windows that feature a mullion with chamfered edges on the outside and a horizontal stone with a locking system on the inside. Opened on a thick wall - about 1.10 meters thick - these windows are internally framed by a subtle three-centred arch, which also shelters the masonry benches that are located just below the windowsill, flanking the openings on the wall. The pavements on the upper floors, as well as the stairs that allowed accessing them, were made of wood, as evidenced by the fittings of the beams that supported the wooden floor. The Tower was subject to requalification works between 2014 and 2015, within the scope of the Route of the Romanesque.



Interior before the requalification works (2014)

