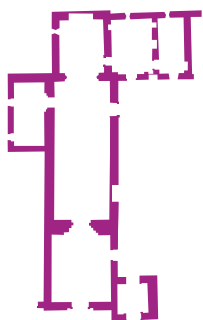


51.

## MONASTERY OF SAINT MARTIN OF MANCELOS



Lugar do Mosteiro  
Mancelos  
Amarante



41° 16' 29.61" N  
8° 9' 26.08" W



+351 918 116 488



Sunday  
6.45 and 9.45 am



Saint Martin  
11<sup>th</sup> November



Public Interest Building  
1934



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The Monastery of Mancelos stands in a place where agriculture still prevails as the main activity. The monasteries were always very attracted by fertile agricultural lands - which provided their main livelihood -, particularly during the Middle Ages.

According to the data provided by the *Bull* of Callixtus II, this Monastery already existed in 1120, so it was certainly founded prior to that date, in a period that coincided with the lifetime of Garcia Afonso and Elvira Mendes, the first members of the Portocarreiros lineage. Mancelos was passed on as a patronage and family ecclesiastical space to their descendants, particularly to the Fonseca family, and is, therefore, considered a true paradigm of private churches. In fact, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the number of familiar who claimed rights and revenues associated with this Monastery was indeed impressive. Mancelos is a good example of the strategies of private foundation of monastic structure, which were more concerned with territorial domain than with the creation of evangelizing centres; that is why the chronicles of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine show an almost complete lack of knowledge about the history of the foundation of this monastic house.



## FRANCISCO DA GUERRA

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In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the archbishop of Braga, Francisco da Guerra (?-1467), and his entourage stayed in the Monastery several times. The archbishop, who was simultaneously the commander of the monastic institute, dealt with the issue of the regency following the death of King Duarte (k. 1433-1438) from Mancelos. There are records of his presence in this Monastery in 1433, 1439, 1449 and 1460, so it was a privileged place in the itineraries and inspections of the active prelate and, perhaps, of the following ones.

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In 1540, King João III (k. 1521-1557) donated Mancelos to the monks of Saint Gonçalo (p. 278), a donation that was confirmed two years later by Pope Paul III (p. 1534-1549). Thereafter, Mancelos became a centre of administrative and evangelising action for the Preachers from Amarante, thus growing into one of the most important monastic complexes of that order in Portugal.

Today, the Monastery of Mancelos stands out for the variety of structures that shape it. The Church is preceded by a galilee

flanked by a free-standing tower and we are still able to find a memory of the old cloister on the sacristy's wall. Although it underwent several transformations over the centuries, this Church still maintains significant sections from the Romanesque period. The existence of an inscription engraved on a loose ashlar, which may still be found today on the site where once stood the cloister, next to the sacristy, takes us back to the year 1166 (Era 1204). Despite the fact that this inscription does not provide any information on the nature of the



## THE MAIN PORTAL

The main portal of Mancelos is surely one of the elements that allow us to define a most accurate chronology for the construction of this building. Its four slightly broken archivolts rest on elegant capitals whose exquisitely designed sculpture is already very attached to the frustum, a feature that reveals the upcoming Gothic style. There are bas-relief botanic motifs based on the model of the Corinthian volutes that provide the ensemble with a certain homogeneity, despite the compositional differences between the several capitals.

Here we identify several types of stylised and open leaves similar to fleurs-de-lys; they are combined with phytomorphic motifs that form windings and recall a few specimens from the collegiate of Guimarães. The elaborate impostos composed of overlapped rounded elements confirm the late nature of the ensemble, whose monumentality is emphasised by the dihedral tori of the archivolts, an element whose origin surely lies in Porto and that may also be found in other monuments like the Monasteries of Travanca (p. 212) or Freixo de Baixo (p. 224), both in Amarante. The surrounding arch shows us a decorated modénature with chained geometric motifs. The tympanum is supported by two corbels where two figures, of Atlantic-style, one female, one male, were carved.



event that was celebrated, in addition to being out of context, the truth is that its epigraphical quality suggests an important moment in the history of the Monastery of Mancelos, perhaps the consecration or dedication of the Romanesque building. We should bear in mind that there were already references to this Monastery in 1120. However, the remaining architec-

tural traces lead us to the following century, so it is possible that, at some point, the Monastery of Mancelos underwent a deep restoration work or, alternatively, that its construction dragged on for a long period of time. It is in the main portal that the late nature of this building becomes clearer. It is still sheltered by the galilee, a fact that explains its good state of repair.



The galilee provides the main façade of the Church of Mancelos with a very peculiar atmosphere. Together with the different volumes and the rhythm created by the merlons that look more like Gothic frontal modillions, we highlight the monumentalisation of the space that precedes the entrance to the House of God. Next to it, the tower stands out from the surrounding landscape due to its verticality. Facing the churchyard, the double belfry that surmounts it reveals, through its composition, a modern intervention carried out in the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century. On the other elevations, we still find a series of merlons with a pyramidal profile.

The Church's side elevations reveal the transformations it underwent over time: scars and different types of masonry works tell us of extensions and demolitions; large rectangular windows take us back to a period when there was an intention to provide the sacred space with a different light. However, it is still possible to see several initials along the ashlar.

On the south side, where once stood the cloister, we find an arcosolium carved on the nave, at ground floor level, sheltering a sepulchral chest. On the tomb's front we see a decorative medallion, a cross and two jennets carved in relief. Nearby, we

find the curious façade of the sacristy: in the Modern Period, the three walled-up broken arches accommodated straight-lintel doors surmounted by oculi and a four-lobed porthole. It is thought that this space was the former chapter house which was later turned into a sacristy in the Modern Period.

Inside, the triumphal arch is the only remaining element from the Romanesque period, although its capitals are currently pierced as a result of the carved elements attached to them in the Modern Period and removed during the restoration interventions carried out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The archivolts have no décor and the impost is identical to the one in the main portal.

Of the Baroque campaign, only the Johannine [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)] main altarpiece that takes up the entire back wall of the apse remains. Here, a modest four-stepped plinth with a throne, which is surmounted by a pelmet and flanked by four twisted columns, marks the central point of the structure to which the devotee's attention is drawn, both when the priest removes the holy host from inside the tabernacle and during the display of the Blessed Sacrament on the throne. Between the columns there

## INTERVENTIONS FROM THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

During the Modern Period, in addition to the architectural transformations, the aesthetic language and the liturgical furnishings of the monastic Church of Mancelos were updated. However, the major contemporary changes had a decisive influence in the organisation of the ecclesiastical space, thus determining the removal of decorative elements and even of movable and integrated assets.

Within this context, the events of 1834 (extinction of the Religious Orders) and 1911 (Law of the Separation between State and Church) were particularly relevant. We should also add the predominantly puristic restoration interventions carried out by the *Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais* [Directorate-General for National Buildings and Monuments] throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century that, to a great extent, sought to retrieve what was believed to be the monument's primitive shape.

The images themselves, as movable assets, were subject to constant changes as a result of collective preferences and transfers of devotional affections. Faced with the absence of inventories or, where these exist, faced with the lack of detail on the objects themselves, the researcher may feel tempted to integrate in the historic path of the building elements that do not fit into the chronological continuum of the structure (or fit into later periods of its existence). As such, we should be particularly careful while considering the heritage that is currently part of the monument.

are four corbels with images of the patron saint (Saint Martin of Tours), Saint Francis of Assisi and the Dominican saints: Saint Dominic of Guzmán and Saint Gonçalo of Amarante. These are sculptures whose chronological arc spans from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the nave, two collateral altars and a lateral one house contemporary devo-

tions represented by modern images: the Virgin of the Rosary of Fátima, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Virgin of Sorrows. We should also highlight the image of the Virgin of the Rosary, placed next to the pulpit, for its heritage value (16<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture).

Painting takes on an important role in the Monastery of Mancelos due to the large collection scattered across the eccle-





siastical space. From the five paintings on chestnut wood, we highlight: the martyr *Saint Sebastian*, naked and pierced with arrows; the *Virgin of the Rosary* surrounded by an almond-shaped border made of roses and holding the Child on her lap; *Saint Martin* in the cathedra and the representation of *friar Bartholomeus dos Mártires*; his biography tells us that he was closely connected to the construction of the convent of Saint Gonçalo to which the revenues from the Monastery of Mancelos contributed. There is also a linen canvas that seems to depict the mir-

acle, commonly known as *Saint Dominic being served by angels*; it adopts the scene of the Last Supper as a model for the composition, thus emphasising the role of imitator of Christ that Dominic tried to play during his life.

We would also highlight Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso (1887-1918) (p. 277), a major figure of the Portuguese Modernist movement, who was born in Manhufe (hamlet of Mancelos) and is buried in the cemetery next to the Monastery of Mancelos.