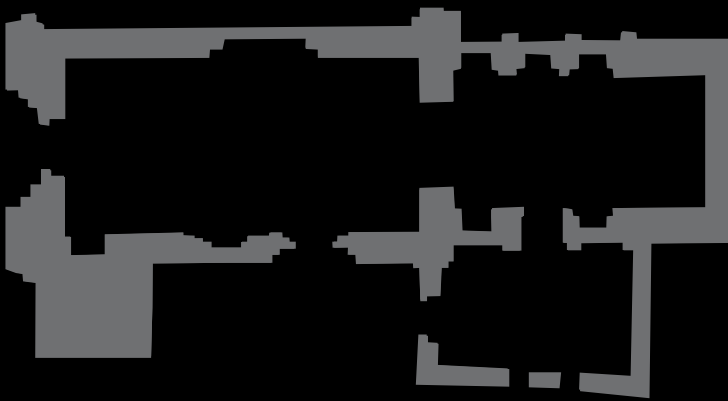


CHURCH
OF SAINT
MARY MAJOR
OF TAROUQUELA
CINFÃES

CHURCH
OF SAINT
MARY MAJOR
OF TAROUQUELA
CINFÃES



Plan.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

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

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

189



Aerial view.

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

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

190

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

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

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

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

The above mentioned reforms and the first arrangements with the episcopal power (e.g. 1171) occurred during Urraca’s abbacy. The bishops of Lamego settled several disputes between Tarouquela and other powers, such as the one that took place in 1255 between Tarouquela and Alpendorada⁸ or the one that broke out during the ruling of Aldonça Martins de Resende, in 1300, over the ownership of a few shacks in the hamlet of Covelas, municipality of Ferreiros de Tendais (Saraiva, 2003: 815-817). In fact, this was one of the most active abbesses with a long ruling period that allowed her to take advantage of the monastery’s assets within her family circle. With her the leading role of the Resendes in Tarouquela seems to have come to an end almost at the same time as in “Cárquere”, where her nephew Vasco Martins de Resende is buried.

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

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

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

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

5 ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maços 26 e 27 (vários documentos).

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

7 He died in 1580.

8 The conflict was solved by the bishop Egas Pais (García y García, 1982).

However, if we are to believe the available documents, which lack information and are subject to faulty readings and misdatings (with no study on the existing original collection, kept at the Arquivo Distrital do Porto and at Torre do Tombo, to back up this essay), Urraca was also present when the land charter was granted by King Sancho I in 1224. This information is stated in the *Notícia da fundação do mosteiro de Tarouquela* [News of the foundation of the monastery of Tarouquela], which was diligently drawn up in the 18th century by the registrar of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary⁹. Together with the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] formed by the union of the existing parishes of Tarouquela and Espadanedo came the privileges of confirming a judge who was annually elected by the parishioners, presenting the churches’ patronage and collecting rents from the tithes and rights that were known to be paid to the monastery.

In 1312, still during the abbacy of Aldonça Martins de Resende, it was concluded that the archbishop of Santiago (Spain) should not receive the collections owed to that church and three years later, in 1315, Rodrigo settled the dispute he had started with Tarouquela for a similar reason but regarding the cathedral of Lamego. The bishop of Lamego acknowledged the mistake (the monastery was exempt) and stood corrected before the abbess¹⁰. She was followed by Maria Martins Moreira, the daughter of Martim Anes Moreira, a lord who had many assets in the “couto”. Although we are not entirely sure about this abbess’ descent (Lara & Fernandes, 1999:79-106) it is natural that, after the influence of the Resendes came to an end, the abbacy ended up (even if temporarily) in the hands of another line of the founders’ descendants, that is, relatives or patrons of the monastery.

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

Many relatives accompanied the abbesses in their solemn acts by taking part in monastic real estate deals or acting as witnesses in these processes. Such was the case, for example, of the ratification of a lease on March 21st 1787, which Álvaro Ribeiro, the nephew of the abbess Catarina Pinto who lived in Sobrado, attended¹¹. Its close relationship with the city of Porto, even before the nuns moved to this city in 1535 seems to be emphasized in this period, given the connections between the Pintos and the urban elites.

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

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

11 ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maço 25.



General view.

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

The acts of lease renovation or ratification and other worldly deals were done in the Church, to the sound of chiming bells. According to the documents, that was where the abbess, the professed nuns and other owners of the convent usually held their meetings. Relatives, servants and other employees, such as proxies, majordomos, magistrates, the private registrar of the clerics who worked for the monastery (usually chaplains or whoever the nuns defined in their patronages, such as the one of Espadanedo) witnessed the act. The study we carried out on the monastic life's final period in Tarouquela (1473-1536) allowed us to understand a little bit better the relationship between the abbesses and the management of the space (monastery and Church) and the territory ("couto" and dispersed properties). There were several agents who depended on Tarouquela and its owners, from guild representatives¹² to noble tenants including, obviously, relatives such as Fernão Ribeiro, the nephew of Catarina Pinto who, in 1494, acted as a witness and was then appointed as manager of the chapel "of Tarouquela, of course"¹³.

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

¹³ ANTT – OSB, Tarouquela, maço 26 (doc. 1494, fev., 22).

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

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

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

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

In 1535, one year before the transfer, a chairwoman settled in the monastery to calm the turmoil and prepare the change¹⁵. The Cistercian nun from Arouca, called Maria de Melo, accompanied the professed nuns on their trip to Porto, heading the procession that brought together nuns from the other monasteries along the streets of the city on January 6th 1536. She was the first abbess of Saint Benedict of Hail Mary and died in 1580¹⁶.

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

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

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

THE MONUMENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

196



North façade.



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist (current sacristy).

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

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

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



Chancel.



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist. Crevice.



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist. Crevice. Capital.

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

It is a well-known fact that Romanesque sculpture conveys an intentional message, especially the one represented on the temples’ outside. The interpretation of the symbolism of narrative topics is quite recent in among us¹⁷. But, in general, we should not forget that in the Romanesque Period was usual to connote the church, the sacred space par excellence, with the House of God. Hence, the care taken in its ornamentation, which usually appears on the access openings, not only ennobles them, but also gives them a pedagogical purpose when there are representations of narrative ensembles. The specific case of this crevice reminds us of the importance that the mindset of the time gave to the buildings’ openings, which allowed light and other “influences” to enter (Almeida, 1986: 48).

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

¹⁷ On the matter, please read Botelho (2010: 252).

an entire range of motifs with a geometric nature – were quite easily absorbed and represented by local artists. Hence the somewhat regional flavour we find in terms of sculptural technique in the Church of Tarouquela. A careful analysis of Tarouquela's decorative motifs allows us to identify, besides the already mentioned topic of the man being devoured by animals on the external capital of the apse's window, the presence of other motifs whose origin in Portugal may be found in what has been called as the Romanesque style from the Braga-Rates axis¹⁸.

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

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

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



Triumphal arch.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



West façade. Portal.

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

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

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



West façade. Portal. Capitals.



West façade. Portal. "Dog of Tarouquela".

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



South façade. Nave. Portal.

The Gothic chapel of Saint John the Baptist

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

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

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

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

We can almost surely accept the succession that Felgueiras Gaio presents for the management of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist of Tarouquela from João Coelho da Cunha, the son of Aleixo Coelho Peixoto and Catarina da Cunha Soares onwards (Gaio, 1938-1941). He was succeeded by his son Manuel Coelho da Cunha who, in turn, was succeeded by Manuel Coelho Peixoto and, in 1726, Carlos da Cunha, the majorat of São Vicente do Pinheiro, is mentioned as its manager²¹. Finally, in 1758 and according to the rector of Tarouquela, the manager was Patrício Manuel Coelho Peixoto (Sarmiento, 1758).

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

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

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



Chapel of Saint John the Baptist.



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

There have already been attempts to suggest dates and heraldic interpretation both for the flat grave and for the tomb chests. The first attempt was made by Pedro Vitorino who, in 1932, based on the information provided by the canon Correia Pinto, saw in the chapel of Saint John of Tarouquela “a sepulchral stone carved in relief with a Portuguese quartered shield with fleurs-de-lys and goats placed on a sword and surmounted by a 15th century processional cross”. In 1943, Armando de Mattos refuted that reading and suggested that the fleurs-de-lys were corn stalks instead, thus being a representation that referred to the Milhaços, while the goats on the second and third quarters of the shields were associated with the Geraldês (Mattos, 1943: 62). However, the available documents on Tarouquela fail to mention these surnames that Armando de Mattos associates with Vila Boa do Bispo (Marco de Canaveses) and Paço de Sousa (Penafiel), where there are similar heraldic representations. The author justifies himself saying that the figurative evidence was enough to establish a connection between the space and the Milhaços lineage²². However, if this connection existed or had the importance that is ascribed to it, it seems to have vanished from the family’s onomastics, because the descendants of the chapel’s founder and of the people who were buried there had various surnames.

206



East façade. Sarcophagus.

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

THE MONUMENT IN THE MODERN PERIOD



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

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

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

Considering its date, with which we agree, the image of this Virgin of the Milk was probably directly integrated in the assets of the monastery or of one of the abbesses, who could have been one of the three “Pintas”: Catarina, Leonor and Beatriz, all from the same family of the lords of Paramos and patrons of Real. We may find an explanation for the presence of such an “uncommon” sculpture in this family and in its connection to the urban patriciate²³ of Porto. The contacts with the city and, of course, with its import market were frequent; unfortunately, we can only speculate about the connections through which these contacts took place. However, we leave a some information that can help understanding the presence of the sculpture of Saint Mary, the Major.

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

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

[Pinto], a royal knight”²⁴. So, the connections of the abbesses, both through their tenants and their relatives, are far from being restricted to the Douro valley, namely to the “couto” of Tarouquela and to other domains from the Montemuro region. The Pintos and the Ribeiros, to whom they were related, were an important clan of citizens from the city of Porto with administrative and official interests and connections to several families associated with the municipal administration and even within the commercial sphere. They surely had contacts with the Brandões (who were responsible for commercial interests in Flanders and, later, in India) and they probably joined the Rebelos and the Madureiras; these two families had thriving wine businesses in the Douro region, where the Pintos owned and managed major rights and properties. So, within this family (and “taste”) context, it is not hard to imagine the purchase of the sculpture of the Virgin of the Milk, like so many other works that were properly recorded at the time²⁵.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



General interior view from the nave.

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

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



Nave. North wall. Altarpiece.



Nave. South wall. Altarpiece.

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



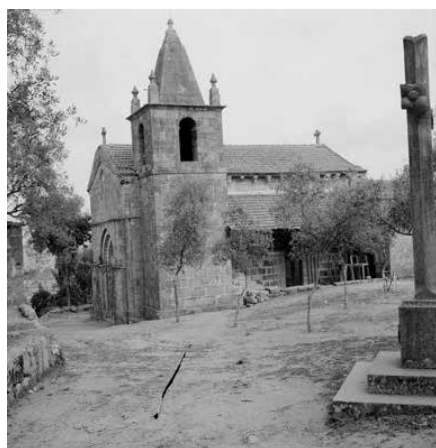
General interior view from the chancel.

CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

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

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

211



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



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

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

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

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

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

212



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



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



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



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

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

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

CHRONOLOGY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1291-1349: the office of Aldonça Martins de Resende was one of the most active in Tarouquela;

1312: it was confirmed that the archbishop of Santiago had no rights over the crops due to the Church of Tarouquela;

1315: Rodrigo, bishop of Lamego, ended the dispute he had begun with Tarouquela;

Second half of the 16th century: the monastery of Tarouquela falls under the sphere of influence of the Pintos;

From the 15th century onwards: there is an actual permanence (nepotism) of certain families at the head of the monastery of Tarouquela;

1481-1495: construction of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist, during the reign of King João II and due to a bond established by Vasco Lourenço;

Around 1500: design of the image of the Virgin of the Milk;

1514: King Manuel I orders the foundation of a monastery in Porto to incorporate the female institutes of Tarouquela, Tuías, Vairão, Vila Cova and Rio Tinto;

1535: an alderwoman moves to Tarouquela, to calm the turmoil resulting from the royal will to extinguish the monastery and prepare the transition to Saint Benedict of Hail-Mary, in Porto;

1536: the nuns of Tarouquela are transferred to the convent in Porto; the external administration of Tarouquela from this monastery begins;

17th and 18th centuries: extension works in the chancel of Tarouquela;

1713: of the former monastic complex of Tarouquela, only the parish lands and residence are documented;

1758: there were almost no traces of the monastic space;

1945: listing of the Church of Tarouquela as a National Monument;

1970s: conduction of major restoration works in the Church of Tarouquela, under the DGEMN's responsibility.

2010: integration of the Church of Tarouquela in the Route of the Romanesque;

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

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