



THE "LAND" OF BASTO

Nestled between the Marão and Alvão mountains (to the east) and the Cabreira and Lameira mountains (to the north and west), the "terra" [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Basto has all the characteristics of a mountainous area, with thick forests and countless valleys that frame an extensive network of water courses, an aspect that was very favourable to the practice of the traditional subsistence agriculture. The Farinha hill, known in the region as Senhora da Graça, reaches an altitude of 1000 meters and, on its summit, stands the chapel of Senhora da Graça. Located in the municipality of Mondim de Basto, the conical Monte Farinha is nothing more than the prow of an interesting granitic mountain range (Cordilheira do Alvão) that, from east to west, stretches along a straight line from its neighbour campo de Seixo (with an approximate length of five kilometres).

the period of the taking of Coimbra by the troops of Ferdinand the Great (1016-1065) in the mid-11th century, the truth is that the Castle of Arnoia was built in a much later period.

There are four elements that contribute to the classification of this Castle within the military architecture of the Romanesque period: the keep (brought by the Order

of the Temple to our territory in the mid-12th century); the square tower (built at the angle created by the north and east wall faces); the existence of a single door (the multiplication of openings made the castle more vulnerable); and, finally, the underground cistern located in the walled courtyard (preserving rainwater was crucial in the event of a siege).





The wide chemin-de-ronde, defining a triangular plan, completes the ensemble. There has been an archaeological identification of traces of its occupation corresponding to the period between the 14th and the 16th centuries, a time when there would have been a residential building and a foundry inside the Castle. But it was after this period that the Castle witnessed a period of abandonment that lasted until the mid-20th century, although there were plenty of appeals to protect and safeguard this legacy of medieval military architecture. So, in the mid-1960's, the keep's top

floor was completely rebuilt and received a crowning of merlons that emphasised its militarised nature and medieval origin, according to the intervention policies prevailing at the time. So, the Castle of Arnoia stands on a strategic area, not so much in terms of territorial defence (although, together with Guimarães and Vila Real, it could have been part of one of Porto's defence lines), but rather as a landmark of a geographic area under reorganization. Heading the "terra" of Basto, the Castle witnessed the development of a town at its feet; and history left this town as a legacy



THE "TERRAS"

Speaking of "terras" is speaking of a type of organization of the occupied territories that emerged approximately over second half of the 11th century. Structuring the defence according to limited areas, the government of the "terras" was quite personalised, since it was handed over to members of the lower nobility who, thus, became "milites". With a lieutenant at the head of these "terras", which were identified in the landscape by a castle (that also adopts the name of the "terra" it governs), these territorial units correspond to the growth and consolidation of a nobility with local roots, that of the "infanções", giving rise to an essentially manorial model.

During the Middle Ages the government of the Castle of Arnoia was in the hands of the Baiões and the Motas of Gundar, thus giving expression to the tradition that asserts as its founder, or "first" mayor, Arnaldo de Baião.

of ancient times, which was once called "Villa de Basto" and is currently known as Castelo, a village classified as "Aldeia de Portugal" [Village of Portugal].

Arnoia is included in the lands mentioned in the charter granted by King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521) to Celorico de Basto on March 29th 1520, and was also a municipal seat until 1717. The intersection between the roads from Lixa (Felgueiras), Amaranete and Arco de Baúlhe (Cabeceiras de

Basto) is at the origin of this settlement built at the foot of the Castle. This town, which once had a house of justice, a pillory and an apothecary, was arranged in a unilinear shape along the road. However, its isolation and space limitations, which prevented the town's expansion, may be the reasons behind the transfer of the municipal seat to the parish of Britelo, in 1717, which later came to be known as Celorico de Basto.

THE INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE OF THE CASTLE OF ARNOIA

The Interpretative Centre of the Castle of Arnoia, also the Tourist Information Centre of the Route of the Romanesque, settled in an old elementary school that was properly renovated for this purpose, on the village of Castelo, completes the visit.

