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ARCHITECTURES OF THE SOUL

Diachronic and Multidisciplinary Readings

Rolando Volzone
João Luís Fontes, eds.



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OF THE SOUL.
DIACHRONIC AND
MULTIDISCIPLINARY
READINGS

Editors

ROLANDO VOLZONE
JOÃO LUÍS FONTES

Lisbon 2022

Selected papers presented to the 3rd International Seminar “Architectures of the Soul”, promoted by IEM (NOVA FCSH), DINÂMIA’CET – Iscte (ISCTE-IUL), CHAIA-UÉ and UCP-CEHR; coordinated by Rolando Volzone and João Luís Fontes (e-Seminar, 24-25 September 2020).

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The Instituto de Estudos Medievais of the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas – Universidade Nova de Lisboa (NOVA FCSH) is financed by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

E-book financed by national funds through the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, under the Projects UID/HIS/00749/2013 and UIDB/00749/2020.

Title	Architectures of the Soul. Diachronic and multidisciplinary readings
Editors	Rolando Volzone João Luís Fontes
Edition	IEM – Instituto de Estudos Medievais (NOVA FCSH); DINÂMIA’CET – Iscte (ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa) Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa (UCP-CEHR); Centro de História da Arte e Investigação Artística (CHAIA-UÉvora)
Cover	The convent and fortress of Santa Maria da Ínsua. Aerial picture by drone, ©Pietro Becherini, 2021
Collection	Estudos 29
ISBN	IEM – NOVA FCSH: 978-989-53585-2-6 DINÂMIA’CET – Iscte ISCTE-IUL: 978-989-781-622-2 UCP-CEHR: 978-989-53287-7-2 CHAIA-UÉvora: 978-972-778-265-9
Layout and execution	Ana Pacheco
Format	Digital

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Between seclusion and business: the abbot's lodgings in the Monastery of Alcobaça in medieval times¹

Paulo Catarino Lopes²

Mário Farelo³

Abstract

Many doubts remain about the functionalities of the medieval spaces of the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries, especially about the personal areas assigned to the abbots. The study of the abbot's lodging in Alcobaça, in the late medieval period, will be the guiding to a paper seeking to clarify, not only the location and features of that specific space, but also to contribute to the wider question of spaces opened to the outside in that same abbey. Special attention will be paid to the government of Abbot Estêvão de Aguiar, reformer and eminent prelate of the 15th century, with close links to the royal power, whose “new” private chamber raises important questions at the identity level, in terms of temporal administration and also in what regards the very orientation of this Cistercian community as *Domus Spiritualis*. In this context, preference will be given to the analysis of the notarial and accounting documentation produced in Alcobaça.

Keywords

Medieval History; Cistercian History; Cistercian Architecture; Monastery of Alcobaça; Cistercian abbots lodgings.

¹This work is funded by the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia through the research project *Cistercian Horizons. Studying and Characterising a Medieval Scriptorium and its Production: Alcobaça, dialogues between local identities and liturgical uniformity* (PTDC/ART-HIS/29522/2017) and also by national funds through the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Norma Transitória – DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0015 and the Strategic Project of the Institute of Medieval Studies – financing UIDB/00749/2020.

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With a greater or lesser approximation over time between the ideal and the real, between uniformity and diversity, it is certain that the Cistercian Order organized itself, since early times, according to precepts based on elements of homogenization at liturgical, normative and architectural level⁴. In the latter case, this “degree of commonality”⁵ was mirrored in the existence of a «Cistercian model plan» for the construction of the Order’s abbey, deduced by modern researchers on the basis of the material evidence and written sources left, since the building guidelines, at the time, would be limited to a set of precepts known in general terms as a *forma ordinis*⁶.

Currently, archaeological investigations carried out in several Cistercian abbeys across Europe show that the existence of an architectural canon was modified according to local specificities in terms of orography, geography, and previous occupation of space. Even so, it is a fact that the Cistercian abbey complex proposes a stable model in terms of the location of the church (directed east-west), the cloister (back to the south of the latter) and the equipment established in each of the cloister galleries or aisles (the wing of the monks to the east with sacristy, book cupboard, chapter house, parlour, monks’ room / scriptorium and dormitory in the first floor; the south wing with the warming room, the kitchen, the refectory and the fountain and the west wing or lay – brothers’s wing with specific storeroom, refectory and dormitory for them)⁷.

These equipments located around the cloister were the only one that benefited from the stability of such model, so the others structures necessary to the daily life of the community such as the infirmary, guesthouses, ancillary buildings, storehouses and stables were placed in each abbey a much loosely way⁸.

Such is the case of the abbot’s lodgings⁹. The fact that originally the abbots should share the dormitory with the monks, led to a customary organization of Cistercian monasteries, which did not provide for the creation of specific habitat spaces for them. As a result, its location has turned out to be variable and, without

⁴ For a discussion on this topic, see among others *Unanimité et diversité cisterciennes, filiations, réseaux, relectures du XII^e siècle au XVII^e siècle*. Saint-Étienne: Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2000; BARREIRA, Catarina Fernandes – “Questões em torno da unanimidade litúrgica no mosteiro de Alcobaça – séculos XIII a XV”. *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura*, 16 (2016), pp. 33-35.

⁵ COPPACK, Glyn – “According to the Form of the Order”: The Earliest Cistercian Buildings in England and their Context”. In KINDER, Terryl Nancy (coord.) – *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude. Essays on Cistercian, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004, p. 36.

⁶ UNTERMANN, Matthias – *Forma Ordinis: Die mittelalterliche Baukunst der Zisterzienser*, Munich-Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2001; BELL, David – “Chambers, Cells, and Cubicles: The Cistercian General Chapter and the Development of the Private Room”. In KINDER, Terryl Nancy (coord.) – *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude*, p. 189.

⁷ COOMANS, Thomas – “Cistercian architecture or architecture of the Cistercians?”. In BRUUN, Mette Birkedal (ed.) – *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 p. 163. For the changes of these structures across time, see JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Spaces of Lay-Religious Interaction in Cistercian Houses of Northern Europe”. *Parergon*, 27/2 (2010), pp. 38-39.

⁸ COOMANS, Thomas – “Cistercian architecture”, p. 163.

⁹ In fact, the abbot’s quarters in not arrolled in the 1134 *statuta* detailing the structures needed to the establishment of a new house (CANIVEZ, Josephus Maria – *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis: ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*. vol. I. Louvain: Bibliothèque de la Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique, 1933, p. 15, n.º XII).

archaeological excavations, documentation or historical memory, it is particularly difficult to identify it from the few preserved monumental remains – specially when such spaces were subject to many architectural interventions across time as occurred in many Portuguese monasteries. Also, as we know, archeologists often prefer surveying in spaces with liturgical functions in detriment of extra-natural spaces, in which the abbot's lodgings were often erected¹⁰. So, the lack of documentary, archaeological and even monumental information prevents the general study of the phenomenon, limiting it to studies of specific examples or specific regions¹¹, despite the efforts made by scholars to identify the location, the chronology of constructions, the modifications and the architectural aspects of the abbatial quarters when studying a Cistercian monastic complex¹². In all, we are far from a global understanding of this phenomenon, so the study of the abbatial quarters remains a thorn in the shoe for all those involved in studying spatial organization and evolution of a Cistercian medieval monastery¹³.

This paper intends to contribute to a well needed historical synthesis of such quarters across Europe by presenting the Portuguese case, *maxime* the case of the Alcobaça abbey. But before that, one must address the importance of such study and must ascertain how this structure was or was not the object of the Order's normative interest in the medieval period.

1. Why such study

The inquiry into the abbot's lodgings allows for a better understanding of the distribution of the spaces in the monastic precinct, especially when analyzed with the help of other dimensions such as orography or the topography of the terrain. The work of identification of such spaces may have utility beyond science, since they may be the object of museological and tourism application.

Besides its «monumental» potencial, the study of the abbot's lodgings is of some importance for the study of daily life and representations associated to the monastic milieu. One must not forget that the development of such spaces

¹⁰ JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbots in Late Medieval Central Europe: Between the Cloister and the World”. In HEALE, Martin (ed.) – *The Prelate in England and Europe, 1300-1560*. York: York Medieval Presse, 2014, pp. 242-243.

¹¹ JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbot”, p. 242. The same lack of information is pointed out for the Irish and Castilian monasteries (LYNCH, Bridget M. – *A monastic landscape: The Cistercians in medieval Leinster*. Maynooth: National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2008, vol. I, p. 137. PhD thesis and SANZ, Maria Teresa López de Guereño – “Las dependencias extraclaustrales en los monasterios cistercienses y premonastratenses”. In CORTÁZAR, José Ángel García de (coord.) – *Vida y muerte en el monasterio románico*. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa Maria la Real – Centro de estudios del Románico, 2004, p. 93).

¹² JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbot”, pp. 242-243.

¹³ As Emilia Jamrozak pointed out, we still lack a systematic overview of the medieval Cistercian abbatial accommodation, since «very brief studies for specific regions exist». JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbot”, pp. 242-243.

is generally associated with the abbot's hospitality, while the existence of private chambers mattered in the process leading to regulate the consumption of meat within the Order¹⁴.

Moreover, the study of such *camerae* can present a wider significance. Through a comparative methodology, it could be possible to perceive, at least partially, how this issue was resolved locally and to verify its regional and even general impacts. This one was, after all, an issue that would concern, sooner or later, all Cistercian monasteries. So, the way in which the Order of Cîteaux responded (or not) to this challenge turns out to be significant and, knowing of its centralizing organization, this study can provide information about how the Order tackled a widespread problem.

2. The abbot's lodgings in the orders' normative and in a few examples

From the onset, the poor knowledge of historical contexts influencing the development of these specific quarters can rely greatly in the almost total absence of information concerning the normative of the Order on the matter.

The point of departure of this question is known. Perhaps in reaction to the Benedictine Order, in which the abbots had specific lodgings, in the Order of Cîteaux the abbots slept originally with their brothers. This obligation was supported by a primitive regulation which, apart from not being very precise, opened the door to future exceptions. The Rule of St. Benedict prescribed the joint use of the dormitory, while ordering the abbot's and the guests' kitchen to be set aside, in order not to disturb the monks¹⁵. The same distinction between the abbots sleeping place and the visitors handling can be found in other normative setting, the *Ecclesiastica Officia*¹⁶. There, it was ordered that the abbot should sleep together with their brothers but was obliged to eat with the guests far from the refectory¹⁷.

¹⁴ One chapter of the 1335 *Statuta* establishes that meat consumption to be allowed at the abbot's chambre upon invitation and in the infirmary on specific days and nowhere else in the monastery. One century later, a *statuta* in 1439 insists that no regular of the Order could eat meat more than once or twice a week in any chambre of the abbey, besides the abbot's and abbess' chamber, although these could authorize such consumption by those in a weak state (see respectively CANIVEZ, Josephus Maria – *Statuta Capitulorum*, vol. III, pp. 423-425, n.º 22; 1936, vol. IV, p. 486, f). For further details, see BURTON, Janet E.; KERR, Julie – *The Cistercian in the Middle Ages*. Woodbridge-Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2011, p. 113.

¹⁵ KINDER, Terryl – *Cistercian Europe: Architecture of Contemplation*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2002, pp. 355-356; JAMROZIAK, Emilia – "Cistercian Abbot", p. 242; MARTINS, Ana Maria – *As Arquiteturas de Cister em Portugal. A atualidade das suas reabilitações e a sua inserção no território*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2011, vol. I, p. 393. PhD thesis.

¹⁶ A collection-like customary with a set of rules detailing the daily life of the members of the community, edited in CHOISSELET, Danièle; VERNET, Placide (eds.) – *Les Ecclesiastica Officia Cisterciens du XII^{ème} Siècle*. Reiningue: La Documentation Cistercienne, 1989.

¹⁷ CHOISSELET, Danièle; VERNET, Placide (eds.) – *Les Ecclesiastica Officia*, p. 312; KINDER, Terryl – *Cistercian Europe*, pp. 355-356; JAMROZIAK, Emilia – "Cistercian Abbot", p. 242 and HALL, Jackie – "East of the

In time, the satisfaction of the abbatial «public» responsibilities, mainly with visitors¹⁸ and a closer alignment with the *praxis* in Benedictine monasteries¹⁹ contributed to gradually individualize spaces for the head of the Cistercian communities. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, many of the Cistercian monasteries would still be deprived of such chambers, although in the previous century there had been abbots with their own chambers, such as Bernard of Clairvaux himself²⁰. Sectoral works carried out, namely in England or Castile, shows that the construction of private chambers for use by Cistercian abbots found expression precisely during that same thirteenth century²¹.

The development of this practice is well silenced by the Cistercian normative at the time, proving that the development of abbot's quarters – a practice seemly contrary to the rule of the Order – was done outside the latter's own regulatory instruments. One could scarcely expect anything other than a tacit agreement of a kind, especially when the abbots who were ordering such private lodgings were precisely those who should condemn their edification. In fact, the establishment of private chambers was never specifically sanctioned by the General Chapter of the Order, so information on this topic is virtually absent from the *Statuta*, where the subject enjoys a somewhat stealthy appearance. By 1268, the prohibition of abbots and all persons of the Order to have cups with silver base concerns especially its presence in the cafeteria, infirmary, and, significantly, in the chambers, a reference which can be rightly assumed to be concerning also the chamber of abbots²².

Such scarcity of information has at least two repercussions. For starters, at the historiographical level, the case of the abbots lodging gathers less visibility in the study of private spaces in Cistercian monasteries, as shown by the exemplary work of David Bell, significantly restricted to the case of dormitory spaces²³. Also, the absence of references at a normative level does not allow us to understand the exact countours how this separation²⁴ was made and, therefore, to perceive exactly how twelfth century abbots living mostly in common, as a kind of *primus inter pares*, were increasingly living,

Cloister: Infirmarys, Abbots' Lodgings and Other Chambres". In KINDER, Terryl Nancy (coord) – *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude*, p. 211.

¹⁸ AAVITSLAND, Kristen A. – *Imagining the Human Condition in Medieval Rome: The Cistercian Fresco Cycle at Abbazia delle Tre Fontane*. Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2012, p. 334.

¹⁹ HEALE, Martin – *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 155.

²⁰ KINDER, Terryl – *Cistercian Europe*, p. 357. The sanctions imposed to abbots who received visitors in the infirmary in the beginning of the Thirteenth Century suggests the inexistence of private quarters where the abbots could receive them at the time (HALL, Jackie – "East of the Cloister", p. 211).

²¹ CARTER, Michael – "Cistercian Abbots as Patrons of Art and Architecture: Northern England in the Late Middle Ages". In HEALE, Martin (ed.) – *The Prelate in England and Europe, 1300-1560*. York: York Medieval Presse, 2014, p. 288.

²² CANIVEZ, Josephus Maria – *Statuta Capitulum*, vol. III, p. 61, n° 11.

²³ BELL, David – "Chambers, Cells, and Cubicles", p. 88, note 9.

²⁴ LYNCH, Bridget M. – *A monastic landscape*, vol. I, p. 137.

just one century latter, in individual spaces. The same can be said from the frequency of the various rebuildings and relocations of the abbots quarters, which, in the English case, means to mark, as Barrie Dobson put it, «a constant theme in the architectural history of the late medieval English monastery»²⁵.

Fortunately, the situation at the normative level evolved in the fourteenth century, following probably the widespread construction of abacial *camerae* in Cistercian monasteries. One probing systematically the *Statuta* produced at the time will be a hard time to find any chapter authorizing specifically such construction. But, the fact that those structures were, by then, a well established fact is one of the possible explanations to the references to these private rooms in a few *statuta* that acknowledge the existence the abbess' quarters: in 1320 the Order's visitors are asked not to authorize nuns to live in those rooms, while three years latter is clearly condemned that private chambers should be maintained by abbesses who took lightly theirs functions²⁶. In the following decade, the famous constitution promulgated by Benedictine in 1335, also known as *Benedictina*, recognized their existence also in male monasteries, since it allowed the ingestion of meat exclusively in the abbot's chamber and the ward. The same permissiveness is detected in another of its provisions, when enabling monks to sleep outside the dormitory, if such was to be required by their office. In this sense, it is authorized that the priors and the subpriors could have private chambers, under autorisation of their abbot²⁷.

Such ruling embedded the dissemination of a practice recognized by the researchers who dwelled in this question, many of them pointing out such century as a moment for the expansion for many of the abbot's primitive lodgings. As various authors have pointed out, the development of the private room was not disconnected from the growing awareness of individualism and privacy²⁸. The enlargement in size undergone by these rooms at the time is, in fact, somewhat linked also to elements such as status. In fact, the idea of self-projection is not absent from modifications undergone by these rooms in the late medieval period, generally in terms of the apposition, in their façades, of identity elements such as heraldic coat of arms, mottos and so on²⁹.

²⁵ DOBSON, Richard Barrie – *Durham priory, 1400-1450*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 100 quoted by HEALE, Martin – *The Abbots and Priors*, p. 156. According to Terryl Kinder, is hard to ascertain the sequence of the change of the Cistercian abbots' lodgings from the dormitory to the chamber and from the chamber to the house or palace (KINDER, Terryl – *Cistercian Europe*, p. 359).

²⁶ CANIVEZ, Josephus Maria – *Statuta Capitulorum*, vol. III, pp. 328-329, n° 6 and p. 323, n° 12.

²⁷ CANIVEZ, Josephus Maria – *Statuta Capitulorum*, vol. III, pp. 423-425, n° 22; p. 425, n° 23; pp. 425-426, n° 24; McNULTY, Joseph (ed.) – *The Chartulary of the Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of Sallay in Craven*. Vol. I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 188.

²⁸ BELL, David – "Chambers, Cells, and Cubicles", pp. 188, 190; COOMANS, Thomas – "Cistercian architecture", p. 164.

²⁹ JAMROZIAK, Emilia – "Cistercian Abbot", p. 243; HEALE, Martin – *The Abbots and Priors*, p. 164.

3. Presenting the Portuguese and Alcobaça cases

The abbot's quarters did not become a specific historical topic of Portuguese research. This is not just a problem in present day historiography, since it did not benefit either from the attention of the various Portuguese Cistercian authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries³⁰. In fact, the information that can be collected does not compare with the number of Cistercian houses in medieval Portugal. To realize the real dimension of this informational gap, it is important to show, albeit briefly, the medieval network of Portuguese Cistercian monasteries.

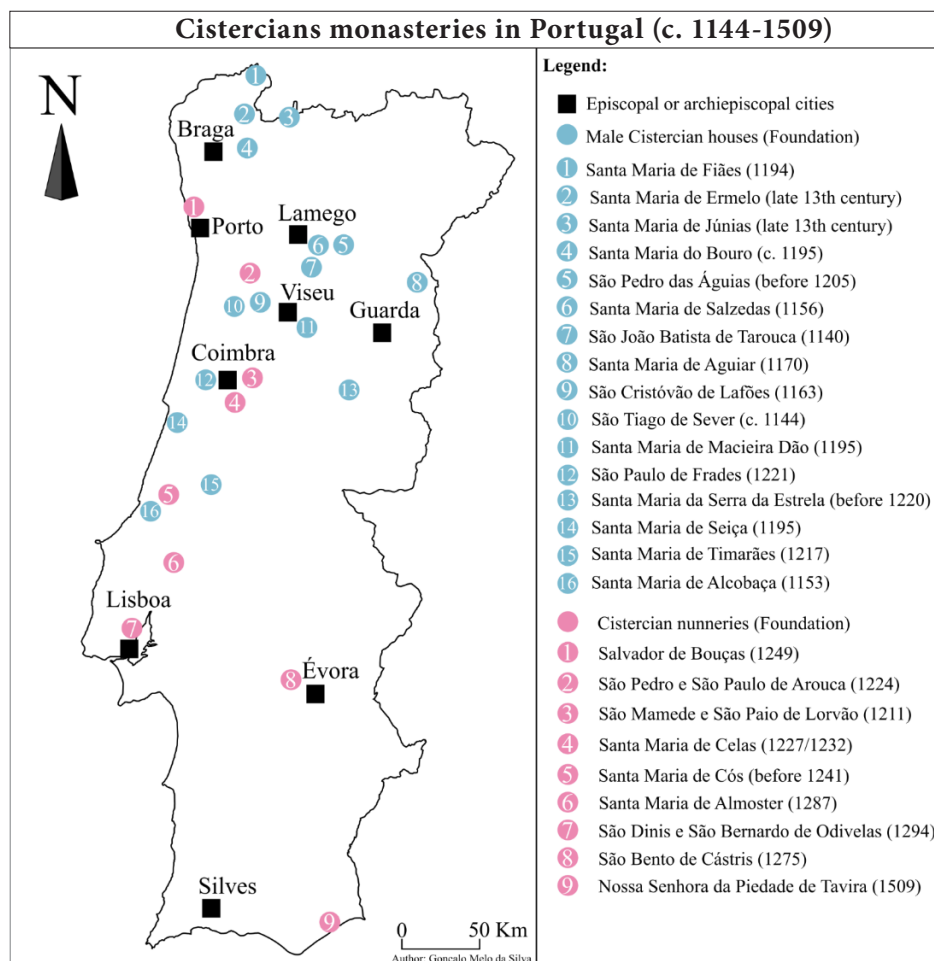


Fig. 1 – Cistercian monasteries in medieval Portugal. Designed by Gonçalo Melo da Silva.

³⁰ Concerning such historiography, see GOMES, Saul António – “Entre Memória e História. Os primeiros tempos do Mosteiro de Alcobaça”. *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura* 2 (2002), pp. 187-256.

The network of Cistercian monasteries developed in Portugal from the mid-twelfth century. For the next 50 years the foundation were exclusively male monasteries, some of them resulted from creations *ex nihilo* such as the case of Alcobaça, while others were conversions of previous Benedictine monasteries or eremitic foundations. In the thirteenth century, the male foundations continued, now with the addition of nunneries, to a large extent promoted by members of the royal family. The last foundations took place already in the Fourteenth Century, so in 1509 existed 25 cistercians monasteries in Portugal, between 16 for men and 9 for women³¹.

Because many monasteries were created in pre-existing buildings, fidelity to what could be called the Cistercian model was not a constant in the Portuguese Cistercian monasteries, especially those belonging to the female branch. This, as one would expect, brings further difficulties to the identification of the abbatial quarters. Widely claimed for several decades by Portuguese scholars, the comparative study of the Cistercian architecture in Portugal was carried out by Ana Maria Martins through a PhD thesis, defended in 2011 at the University of Seville³². With the contribution of ancient plants, archaeological data and monumental evidence, the author carried out the planimetric study of all the male and female foundations in the kingdom. To give an idea of the lack of information on the subject, of the 27 planimetric reconstitutions produced her thesys (the difference in number from the previous map is the result that Ana Maria Martins considered foundations after 1509), only one, the nunnery of Celas, presents an explicit reference to the rooms of the head of the community, in this case the abbess' lodgings³³.

A further difficulty of such research concerns, not only a significant loss of medieval documentation for some of the Portuguese monasteries, but also the typology of the remaining documents matters. In fact, the major part of the documents conserved related to patrimonial management, while inventories, iconography or regulatory documentation are very scarcely to allow to characterize such spaces in historical and architectural terms. In accordance, the identification of these quarters lies most of the time in the fact that the abbatial quarters was the place of document writing.

The existence of such exceptional documents represent a unique opportunity to catch a glimpse of such lodgings, as occurs with the visitation report made in 1408 to the monasteries of Bouro and Seiça, during which the contents of the abbatial chambers of the two monasteries were recorded. Being a unique document, it is not known if the objects described there were the norm or the exception in the

³¹ For the development of the Portuguese Cistercian monastery networks, see SOUSA, Bernardo de Vasconcelos e, et al. (dir.) – *Ordens Religiosas em Portugal: das origens a Trento. Guia histórico*. 3rd edition. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2016.

³² MARTINS, Ana Maria – *As Arquiteturas de Cister*.

³³ MARTINS, Ana Maria – *As Arquiteturas de Cister*, vol. I, p. 444.

Portuguese Cistercian panorama. Even so, the description of its content, however brief, allows for some evidence.

Abbot's chamber in Bouro	Abbot's chamber in Seiça (<i>abbot's cell</i>)	
Bed	Bed	Trowels (<i>gamelas</i>)
2 feather mattresses (<i>cócedra</i>)	2 feather mattresses (<i>cócedra</i>)	Bowls (<i>escudelas</i>)
2 straw mattresses	2 straw mattresses (<i>almadraque</i>)	2 large potties
(<i>almadraque</i>)	3 pillows (two feathers and one wool)	2 large tin pips
3 pillows	2 covers	1 tin potty
1 half-blanket	1 fox fur blanket	3 pots
1 rabbit fur blanket (shabby)	1 brown bedspread with figures	4 <i>salsinhas</i> (<i>little cups</i>)
3 tablecloth	1 <i>guadamazil</i>	1 salt shaker
2 embroidered towels and others simple	20 pillows (wool, feather)	1 jug
1 cauldron	6 covers	8 cases (<i>arcas</i>), 3 for fish
2 boilers	5 blankets	4 cribs (<i>uchas</i>), 1 for the documents
1 broken jug	2 cloths to cover seats	Various skins
1 potty	1 leather skin	3 nets
	Ash and alder choppers (<i>talhadores</i>)	6 tablecloth
		1 embroidered towel for fruit
		1 embroidered towel to wipe hands
		17 <i>argãs</i>
		1 silver goblet (c. 230 gr.)

Table 1 – Inventories of the abbot's lodgings at the monasteries of Bouro and Seiça (1408). Source: MARQUES, Maria Alegria - "Bens de dois mosteiros cistercienses no século XV – Santa Maria de Seiça e Santa Maria do Bouro". In *Estudos sobre a Ordem de Cister em Portugal*, pp. 244, 249-250.

From this enrolment is possible to deduce that both chambers conserved materials associated with sleeping and eating, so it is possible to infer that these rooms would have spaces for both functions. The existence of large quantities of cushions in Seiça shows that the abbot's chamber also served as a storage place, including agricultural tools. Such a listing suggests the existence of poorly equipped, multifunctional chambers, which allowed the respective abbots to develop their activities and escape possible complaints of opulent and unruly life, certainly much different of theirs Alcobaça counterpart.

Unfortunately, the scanty medieval visitation reports to this abbey silences any information dealing with the abbot's lodging, so one has no option as to revert to the scanning the large part of its medieval documentation, in order to attempt at verifying if this abbey's example is aligned with the data provided by international historiography on the subject.

Let us briefly frame this foundation, which is traditionally considered the last carried out in life of Bernard of Clairvaux. Founded around 1152 or 1153, depending

on the authors, the primitive community settled itself in a temporary wooden building, as it happened frequently in Cistercian foundations³⁴, which would come to be known as the old church of Saint Mary. In time, this first accommodation was no longer suitable to a growing community. So, in 1178, started the construction of the new monastery and on August 6, 1223, the monks moved from the old building to the new house. Due to the topography and the flow of the creeks passing nearby the church, which run from south to north, the monastery was constructed, as an inverted copy of Clairvaux's. Construction works are recorded in the cellar in the 1220s or 1230s, as well as in the ward in 1247, a few years before the consecration of the church in 1252³⁵. The cloister, under construction in the beginning of the Fourteenth century – and for which king Denis I bequests money in his last will³⁶ –, seems to be finished only in the following century, according to the unpublished data on the constructive apparatus of its west wing³⁷.

The information concerning the medieval quarters of the abbot of Alcobaça is two-fold. There are firstly the documents written in the chamber itself, although such references only emerge from the fourteenth century. It should be emphasized that this chronology does not indicate the creation of the abbot's chamber in this period, but rather indicates a specificity of documentation: until the late thirteenth century, the topical date registered in monastic and notarial documentation refers only to generic locations³⁸. Thenceforth, while the documents produced by the monastic chancellery keeps this practice, the documentation produced by royal notaries tends to specify the locus of their writing. The development of this real and concrete topography can be understood as another element of validation, in addition to the witnesses recorded in the final protocol of documents or the notary public sign (see table 1, below)³⁹. In addition, information can be picked up in accounting or chronological sources recording unusual events, like the fire affecting the abbot's lodgings in 1437 or an earthquake in 1356⁴⁰.

³⁴ For a few English examples, see COPPACK, Glyn – "According to the Form of the Order", pp. 35-45.

³⁵ GOMES, Saul António – "Uma paisagem para a oração: o Mosteiro de Alcobaça em Quatrocentos". In GONÇALVES, Iria (ed.) – *Paisagens rurais e urbanas. Fontes, metodologias, problemáticas. Actas das Terceiras Jornadas*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos, 2007, p. 27. In addition, important informations concerning the abbey's medieval history area carried out in GONÇALVES, Iria – *O património do Mosteiro de Alcobaça nos séculos XIV e XV*. Lisbon: UNL, 1989.

³⁶ The cloister of Alcobaça was chosen by the monarch to be his final resting place, according to his first will in 1299. He finally opted for a cistercian monastery closer to Lisbon, while bequesting 3000 pounds to the construction of the Alcobaça's cloister. See Gomes, 2018a, p. 26» GOMES, Saul António – "As capelas do rei D. Dinis". *Fragmenta Historica. Revista do Centro de Estudos Históricos da Universidade Nova de Lisboa*, 6 (2018), p. 26.

³⁷ We owe to Catarina Barreira, to whom we thank the information concerning the chronology of the construction of the cloister.

³⁸ GOMES, Saul António – "Uma paisagem para a oração", p. 24. The author justifies such changes with the growing use of the topical date by the great chanceries and the importance of the redaction *locus* of the documents as one element of authenticity like the witnesses and registering the time.

³⁹ GOMES, Saul António – "Uma paisagem para a oração", p. 24.

⁴⁰ See the next footnote.

4. The medieval history of the quarters of the abbot of Alcobaça

As it can be perceived, the evolution of the medieval abbot's lodgings at Alcobaça can be divided in three periods.

The first one stand out for the total lack of documentary and archaeological information concerning the existence of such quarters until the beginning of the fourteenth century⁴¹. In view of this, is not possible so far to ascertain if the monastery of Alcobaça followed the trend established for most of the monasteries of the Order, in which, specific spaces were created in Cistercian monasteries for their respective abbots before the Fourteenth century.

For the latter, its existence Alcobaça abbot's chamber is well established from documentary evidence (table 2).

Abbot's chamber (câmara)		Prior's chamber (câmara)	
1327.6.17	Chamber	1334.3.16	Next to the prior's chamber
1327.6.30	Chamber	1335.8.10	Prior's chamber
1329.8.1	On the porch of the orchard of the abbot's chamber	1338.9.16	Next to the prior's chamber
1329.12.31	Abbot's chamber	1345.2.3	Under the porch, about the chamber of Fr. Domingos, prior
1331.8.27	Abbot's chamber	1348.2.4 (after)	About the chamber of Fr. Domingos Fernandes, prior
1333.6.15	Under the abbot's chamber	1348.2.26	Under the porch, about the chamber of Fr. Domingos, prior
1356.8.24	[because of the earthquake] The tower where the abbot's chamber was situated was terribly shaken (horribiliter fuit concussa)	1348.2.27	Under the porch, about the chamber of Fr. Domingos, prior
1385.12.28	Abbot's chamber		
1393.4.8	Abbot's chamber		
1395.8.3	Chamber		
1397.1.25	Chamber		
1399.2.22	Abbot's chamber		

Table 2 – References to the Alcobaça abbot's chamber in the fourteenth century.

Sources: Lisboa, TT, *Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça*, 2.ª incorporação, mç. 3, n.º 89 (6) and mç. 75, s. n. (copy of 1771.3.26); mç. 11, n.º 251 (1); mç. 29, n.º 7, 25, 41; mç. 30, n.º 22; mç. 31, n.º 9; mç. 32, n.º 16; mç. 40, n.º 985 (13); mç. 47, n.º 1234 (9); mç. 50, n.º 1353 (3); mç. 55, n.º 7; mç. 77, n.º 590 (copy of 1720.9.27); *Livro 2.º dos Dourados*, fl. 67; mç. 89, s.n.; mç. 91, n.º 1, 7, 17 and 19; mç. 91, n.º 17.

⁴¹ GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, pp. 53-56, where the author publishes a table with the references to places and spaces mentioned in the documents of the monastery, up to 1536.

In all of these, but one⁴², the abbot's chamber is identified as the place where the document was written. Although quantitatively unimportant, the data recorded only proves the existence of the abbot's chamber in 1327, eight years before the reference to the prior's chamber⁴³, in a date preceding the *Benedictina* authorization. At that time, the abbot's chamber was situated in a tower, located most probably in an elevated place – since a porch is recorded – and most probably outside the cloister – given the proximity of an orchard⁴⁴. This spatial and tower-like individualization is important and seems to correspond to a desire of distinction, as can be seen latter in English monasteries, in terms of the placement of the abbot's residences in tower-houses⁴⁵.

For the next century, besides the continuity of references in document escathocols evidence can be drawn from individual sources, as a testimony of abbot João de Ornelas in the beginning of the Fifteenth Century⁴⁶ and, above all, from an account book of the monastery dating 1437-1440⁴⁷, which records expenses done with the reconstruction of the abbot's quarters, following its burning in later 1437⁴⁸ (table 3).

⁴² “[because of the earthquake] The tower where the abbot's chamber was situated was terribly shaken”. The reference of 1356 is provided by a Fourteenth century text (Biblioteca Nacional of Portugal, alc. 240) focusing mainly on the biographies of the Portuguese kings with a few elements the histoy of the monastery (*Chronicon Alcobacense II*). Thus, a very different source of the others gathered to produce this table. The reference in the *Chronicon* is wrongly dated by its modern editor as from 1321 (BONAVENTURA, Fr. Fortunato de São – *Historia Chronologica e Crítica da Real Abbadia de Alcobaca...* Lisboa: Na Impressão Regia, 1827, *Addenda*, p. 44). For the editions of this reference, see BARREIRA, Catarina Fernandes and FARELO, Mário – “Relatos prodigiosos nos códices do Mosteiro de Alcobaca”. In ORRIOLS, Anna; CERDÀ, Jordi and DURAN-PORTA, Joan (eds.) – *Imago & mirabilia: Les formes del prodigi a la Mediterrània medieval. The ways of wonder in the Medieval Mediterranean. Las formas del prodigio en el Mediterráneo medieval*. Barcelona/Bellaterra: Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2020, p. 198.

⁴³ GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, pp. 37-38, 53. The prior's chambre is again mentioned in a document of 1338, revealing that was in front of that chamber that took place judgment of the conflicts relating to the monastery (GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, pp. 38, 53).

⁴⁴ GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, p. 37.

⁴⁵ HEALE, Martin – *The Abbots and Priors*, p. 157.

⁴⁶ The abbot testified to the fact that his will and the most important acts of abbatial management were kept in the safe (jaca) located behind his bed, documents that were robbed by someone who opened his chamber with a falsified key. GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, pp. 38-39 and GOMES, Saul António – “Abbés et vie régulière dans l'abbaye d'Alcobaca (Portugal) au Moyen Âge: un bilan”. In COTTIER, Jean-François; HUREL, Daniel-Odon and TOCK, Benoît-Michel – *Les personnes d'autorité en milieu régulier. Des origines de la vie régulière au XVIII^e siècle*. Saint-Etienne: CERCOR, 2013, pp. 144-145.

⁴⁷ This data was already summarized by GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁸ This event is intuited from one of the records of the same account book. The payment made to Diogo Afonso, on the June 24, 1438, relates to his buying of “some things for the use of the abbot replacing others that burned in the house...” (TT, *Ordem de Cister. Mosteiro de Sta. Maria de Alcobaca*, liv. 14, fl. 258, quoted in GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, p. 39, note 60).

Expense (summary)	
1438.1.6	To Fernão Dias for wooden poles to be bought in Lisbon for the lining of the new chamber of the abbot built between the towers
1438.1.15	To Álvaro Peres, mason, for 45 days spent in the work of the chamber
1438.1.26	To V. Eanes, carpenter, for 28 days spent in the work of the chamber
1438.1.31	To the same Álvaro Peres, mason, for 5 days spent in the work of the chamber
1438.2.1	To Master Luís, glazier of Batalha, for the glass put in the chamber (4 days work)
1438.2.1	To João de Elvas, carpenter, for 13 days spent in the work [of the chamber]
1438.2.5	To the same Álvaro Peres, mason, for 3 days spent in the work of the chamber
1438.2.15	To André Rodrigues, carpenter, for the work he done in chamber
1438.3.25	To André Rodrigues, carpenter, living in Lisbon, for the 79 days that he worked in the new chamber ordered by the abbot between the towers
1438.6.24	To Diogo Afonso, [abbot's] bookkeeper to buy in Lisbon some things for the wardrobe (mantearia) of the abbot to replace those burned in the chamber
1439.6.26	To Master João, tiler, living in Santarém, for 31 days work in tiling the chamber and chapel of the abbot

Table 3 – References to the abbot's chamber in an account book of the monastery (1437-1340).
Source: Lisboa, TT, *Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça*, lv. 14, fols. 227v, 229v, 261, 392.

According to the data provided, in the refurbished abbot's lodgings were applied stained glass⁴⁹, tiles, glass and wood (which probably lined every room), so one can assume that the work done was intended to promote the comfort and to distinguished the quarters of the abbot, at the time when he was one of the king's courtiers and one of the most important prelates of the kingdom⁵⁰. Moreover,

⁴⁹ By Luís, a Franconia-born who then worked the construction site of the monastery of Batalha, according to a document dated 1450. HESS, Daniel – "In Search of Luís Alemão. Stained glass in Germany from 1400 till 1460 and the fragments in Batalha". In *O Vitral: história, conservação e restauro*. Lisbon: IPPAR, 2000, pp. 44-53 and, for further reading, REDOL, Pedro – *Os Vitrais dos séculos XV e XVI do Mosteiro de Santa Maria da Vitória*. Batalha: Câmara Municipal, 2003.

⁵⁰ Estêvão de Aguiar. Concerning this prelate, see BARREIRA, Catarina Fernandes, *et al.* – "Normatividade e reforma nos códices medievais de Alcobaça: dos tempos primitivos ao abaciado de Frei Estêvão de Aguiar". *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura* 19 (2019), pp. 357-370.

the reference to the chapel, and in latter documents to a great hall⁵¹, suggests the existence of multi-purpose spaces within the so-called abbot's chamber. Therefore, these changes are in tune with the aggrandizement of abbatial private spaces in the fifteenth century seen in other cases⁵², as to the refurbishing to a more luxurious spaces, more suited to receive distinguished guests⁵³. Being close to the Crown, is it possible that, in the mind of the abbot, resonated the determinations of King D. Duarte, elaborated at the same time, on what should be the private quarters of a palace. According to him, those quarters should be divided into a reception hall, an antechamber to receive the notables of the realm, a sleeping chamber, a dressing chamber to receive special persons and the chapel, where, alone, one could pray, read and dwell in virtuous thoughts⁵⁴.

In the specific case of Estêvão de Aguiar, we cannot forget that, on the one hand, he was brought up in the house of the *infanta* Isabel (1397-1471), daughter of the king João I and future duchess of Bourgogne, where he was her attendant. In fact, it was in the royal Court that Estêvão de Aguiar established his first contacts with humanist thinking, courtesan culture, reformist ideals and sophisticated cultural ambience⁵⁵. On the other hand, Estêvão de Aguiar lived six years in the turbulent Italian peninsula, five of which were spent as a monk in Santa Maria of Florence under the direction of the Benedictine Gomes Eanes (c.1383-1459), the famous and dynamic *Abbot of Florence*⁵⁶.

During his 15-year incumbency at the helm of Portugal's principal Cistercian house (1431-1446) he followed the model adopted by Gomes Eanes in Florence: reform through centralization, obedience and loyalty to the figure of the abbot, who, at the

⁵¹ GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, p. 41.

⁵² JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbot”, p. 243

⁵³ KINDER, Terryl – *Cistercian Europe*, p. 44.

⁵⁴ D. DUARTE – *Leal Conselheiro*. Ed. of João Morais Barbosa. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1982, chap. 81; SILVA, José Custódio Vieira da – *Paços Medievais Portugueses*. Lisboa: IPPAR, 1995, p. 27.

⁵⁵ MONTEIRO, João Gouveia – “Orientações da cultura da corte na primeira metade do século XV (a literatura dos Príncipes de Avis)”. *Vértice*, 2ª série, 5 (1988), pp. 89-103.

⁵⁶ The 15th century in Portugal was rich in terms of religious reform, whether promoted by the Church or by lay initiatives, particularly the crown. Connecting both spheres was an important figure: Gomes Eanes. His voice resounded in hundreds of records exemplifying Portugal's openness to the currents of reform and observance that ran through Christianity. Between 1419 and 1439 Gomes Eanes lived in Italy at the service of the Benedictine monastery of Sta. Maria of Florence, traditionally known as *Badia*. His contribution was decisive for the establishment of religious dialogue of a reformist nature between Portugal and Italy in the first half of the 15th century. The extensive *carteggio* of Gomes Eanes reveals how Estêvão de Aguiar actively circulated around the Italian Peninsula, especially between Florence and Rome, performing reformist functions assigned to him by his abbot and mentor. This experience certainly influenced the latter's way of thinking and acting, namely during his leadership of the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria of Alcobaça. For more information see GOMES, Rita Costa – *A Portuguese Abbot in Renaissance Florence. The letter collection of Gomes Eanes (1415-1463)*. Florence: S. Olschki, 2018 and LOPES, Paulo Catarino – “A relevância do livro na circulação cultural e reformista promovida pelo abade D. Gomes Eanes no século XV”. In ALESSANDRINI, Nunziatella; SABATINI, Gaetano; RUSSO, Mariagrazia (eds.) – *Homo est minor mundus: Construção de Saberes e Relações Diplomáticas luso-italianas (sécs. XV-XVIII)*. Lisboa: Fábrica da Igreja Italiana Nossa Senhora do Loreto, 2018, pp. 31-57.

time, in Italy, appears at various levels as a true courtier. One must not forget that, during this period in Italy, the already mentioned awareness of individualism and privacy flourishes to the point of predominance. Aspects that certainly determined Estêvão de Aguiar's stance, namely at the level of his own awareness of his *statu quo* as head of the most powerful Cistercian Portuguese community and of what this implied in material terms and self-projected power.

Unequivocal evidence can be seen, for example, on Estêvão's personal course closely linked to Italian circles; in his connections to the Crown and in the way in which he politically and militarily supported the Infant Pedro in the troubled process of the regency of the kingdom following king's Duarte death⁵⁷; in the very fact of Estêvão's participation in the royal council (which forced him to stay long periods in Lisbon and certainly to make many travels between the monastery and the place where the Court was); in his pragmatic spirit which did not separate contemplation from pro-activeness in daily-life of this Cistercian community that had to be managed to be preserved, and ideally, to grow; in the extreme mobility and circulation that he led or authorized as abbot, which implied the cenobium to reveal itself as a space in some way permeable to the outside and with a radiance and influence beyond the walls that separate it from the world⁵⁸; and also in the wide clientele and solidarity network he developed in Alcobaça, expressed in particular in the prolific number of servants and protégés, including squires and knights⁵⁹.

Now, being a paradigm of the 15th century courtier prelate, cultured and certainly well prepared from the point of view of intellectual and artistic training, much like the Italian humanism he lived in, it is perfectly plausible that Estêvão's profile would manifest itself in architectural and construction works promoted under his direction in the cenobium he led. In essence, he is a man/prelate of his time and the spaces where he was formed. It is therefore not surprising that its new private chamber constitutes a built complex that involves several spaces, such as the chapel. Just as it is not surprising that his mother, Leonor Afonso, lives next to the powerful son, that is, in the monastery (even if in his own room), for more "with the right to the annual fee paid for the monastery's rent"⁶⁰. With the abbot, also in the monastery, stayed his brother, the knight João Afonso Gorizo, who on

⁵⁷ After the death of King Duarte (1433-1438) and the Torres Novas courts of 1438, Estêvão de Aguiar gives his full support to the infant Pedro against his sister-in-law, Leonor of Aragon (1433-1445), to the point of travelling on his side to Lisbon ahead a host of 500 men on horseback and on foot, fully financed by the Alcobaça monastery. For a broader understanding of this context see RAU, Virgínia – "O infante Dom Pedro e a regência do reino em 1439". *Revista da Faculdade de Letras*, III série, 8 (1964), pp. 143-150.

⁵⁸ But for valid reasons, such as the administration and management of the monastery assets, the resolution of judicial conflicts or the purchase of products or services that cannot be supplied or found in the monastery lands.

⁵⁹ GOMES, Saul António – "Uma paisagem para a oração", pp. 19-56 and GOMES, Saul António – "Abbés et vie régulière", pp. 137-150.

⁶⁰ GOMES, Saul António – "Uma paisagem para a oração", p. 40.

several occasions acted as procurator of the cenobium, namely in Lisbon. Nepotism, another courtly and Italian feature, is evident here.

Another side data that corroborates this situation / social positioning, as well as the clear awareness of its wide possibilities at the time, is that the abbot had a private stable, where his horses stayed.

In all of this, but especially in relation to his new private chamber, we see an identity construction by the abbot. After all, enjoying such (rich) multifunctional spaces exclusively – because they are intrinsically associated with the nature of his position –, Estêvão de Aguiar is projecting, without the slightest reservation, his image of courtier strongly linked to the Crown. In other words, he is projecting the image of a prelate with great power in the kingdom. We are thus faced with a clear language of power; a symbolic language that emanates the absolute abbatial authority of the leader of the main Portuguese Cistercian house. The result is an image of the Cistercian abbot that is increasingly different both from that which prevailed until near the end of the 14th century and very in particular from the primitive Cistercian spirit itself⁶¹.

It should be noted, however, one aspect that we consider fundamental: Estêvão de Aguiar did all this without, nevertheless, calling into question the monastic retreat and the institution's existence as *Domus Spiritualis*. In effect, he balanced in an almost model way the ideal dimension of the Cistercian spiritual proposal with the reality guided by a considerable dynamism, expressed both in the temporal administration, in the high production of the *scriptorium*, and also in the legal mechanism of the visitations that aimed so much the spiritual as the temporal dimension of the communities subordinate to it. Always with the reform and continuous improvement of the community as a horizon, after all, its great purpose. The key he used to achieve this vital balance between the ideal and what was experienced in pursuing his reformist program was the abbot's own status quo, as expressed in the Rule of St. Benedict.

The second and last idea worth exploring is the abbot's chamber location, since the structure is detailed in the account record as being built between «two towers»⁶². Not knowing if one of these was the tower mentioned in the previous century, this expression suggests unique elements in the landscape, known to all and different from the steeple that certainly ornamented the church.

⁶¹ GOMES, Saul António – “D. João Eanes de Dornelas, abade de Alcobaça (1381-1414)”. In BARATA, Maria do Rosário Themudo; KRUS, Luís (dirs.) – *Olhares sobre a História. Estudos oferecidos a Iria Gonçalves*. Lisboa: Caleidoscopio, 2009, pp. 253-277.

⁶² Such idea was already advanced (GOMES, Saul António – *Visitações a Mosteiros Cistercienses em Portugal. Séculos XV e XVI*. Lisboa: Ministério da Cultura – IPPAR, 1998, p. 24 and BERNARDO, Alex Sousa – *Um Palácio para um Abade*. Coimbra: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 2009, p. 12. Master's dissertation), although without any attempt to localized it.

The precise location of the medieval abbot's lodgings at Alcobaça is unknown⁶³. Following the reconstitution of the medieval plant of the monastery by a researcher named Ernest Korrodi, at the beginning of the twentieth century and taken as the most accurate done until now, the abbot's quarters are placed in the western aisle of the cloister (fig. 2 – Blue line).

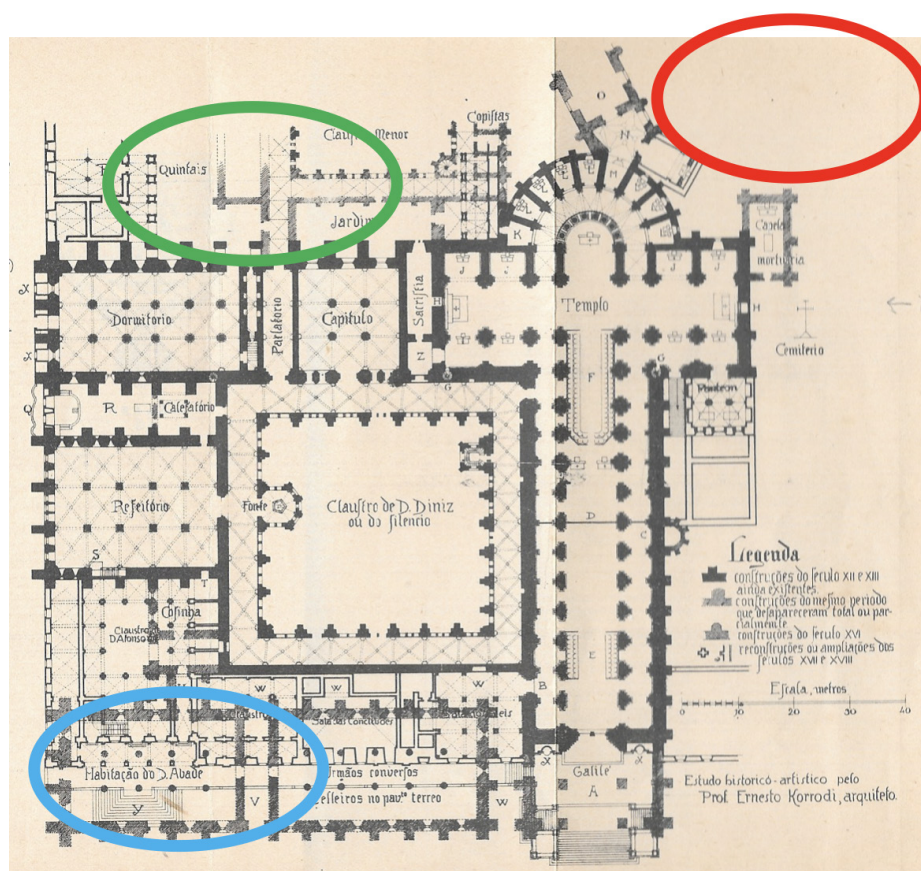


Fig. 2 – Plant of the medieval monastery of Alcobaça. Source: KORRODI, Ernesto – *Alcobaça. Estudo Histórico-arqueológico e artístico da real Abadia de Santa Maria de Alcobaça*. Porto: Litografia Nacional, 1929.

⁶³ A source of information that could clarify this issue could possibly be the reports of archaeological excavations carried out in the space around the monastery across time. However, despite the heuristic efforts undertaken (consultation of the Endovélico database/ Portal do Arqueólogo (<https://arqueologia.patrimoniocultural.pt/>)), it was not possible to locate any of these reports.

Since the author didn't present any justification for it, one can assume his decision was based in the fact that such location was near of the abbatial palace established in the monastery from the 16th century onwards and with a somewhat traditional placement of such structure. This location is foreseen by English and Spanish historiography as an «usual» location for it from the fifteenth century onwards⁶⁴, which is basically justified by the refurbishing of the living spaces previously occupied by converts, following the reduction of their presence in the Cistercian monasteries from the middle of the thirteenth century. Such placement of the abbot private compound would give him an easier access to the entrance of the monastery and the conviviality with the guests⁶⁵.

If such location could be accurate for the case of Alcobaça from the Sixteenth Century onwards – see below – the references to the two towers in the account register can point out to a different direction. In fact, around that same first half of the Fifteenth Century, two towers can be traced in the documentation available. A “great tower”, of an unknown location, is identified in charters of 1437 and 1449⁶⁶, while an exchequer-tower (*torre dos contos*) is registered in a document of 1454⁶⁷. Now, just ten years before, such accounting activities were conducted in a house next to the door of the *auditorium*, allowing for the hypothesis of this house being, in fact, the abovementioned tower (fig. 2 – Green line). If so, the abbot's lodgings were, by then, situated in the eastern part of the complex, more or less adjacent to the oriental wing of the cloister, in close connection to the monk's dormitory and the infirmary⁶⁸. This location is in tune with the evidence presented by specialists for others Cistercian monasteries, who frequently associate the abbot's quarters with the infirmary⁶⁹ and the monks' sleeping quarters or with adjacent spaces as the ward, thus benefiting from a possible sharing of equipment such as latrines⁷⁰. The position of the abbot's lodgings to the east of the cloister closer to the dormitory, would be in tune with some French Cistercian case or even, with a few Castilian houses⁷¹. In fact, that location would be quite obvious, since the abbot of Alcobaça would

⁶⁴ HALL, Jackie – “East of the Cloister”, p. 199; PALENZUELA, Vicente Ángel Álvarez – *Monasterios Cistercienses en Castilla (Siglos XII-XIII)*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1978, pp. 61-63, among others.

⁶⁵ HEALE, Martin – *The Abbots and Priors*, p. 155.

⁶⁶ Lisboa, TT, *Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça*, 2.^a incorporação, mç. 51, n.º 1412 (15).

⁶⁷ Lisboa, TT, *Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça*, 2.^a incorporação, mç. 89, s.n. [paper doc.]

⁶⁸ As one can see from the reconstruction of the monastery precinct made in GOMES, Saul António – “Uma paisagem para a oração”, p. 52.

⁶⁹ HALL, Jackie – “East of the Cloister”, p. 200; JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbot”, p. 243; HEALE, Martin – *The Abbots and Priors*, p. 155.

⁷⁰ JAMROZIAK, Emilia – “Cistercian Abbot”, p. 242; HALL, Jackie – “East of the Cloister”, pp. 199-200; BURTON, Janet E.; KERR, Julie – *The Cistercian*, p. 73; SANTAMARÍA, Eduardo Carrero – “Epigrafía y liturgia estacional entre el locutório y el passaje a la enfermería de la abadia de Santa Maria la Real de las Huelgas, en Burgos”, *Território, Sociedad y Poder*, 9 (2014), p. 117.

⁷¹ KINDER, Terryl – *Cistercian Europe*, p. 357; SANZ, Maria Teresa López de Guereño – “Las dependencias extraclaustrales”, p. 93. The possibility of the location of abbot's quarters in the eastern wing of the cloister, above the sacristy and close to the treasury is foreseen by JORGE, Virgolino – *Organização espaço-funcional da Abadia*



Fig. 3 – A medieval representation of the monastery of Alcobaça. Source: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Alc. 44 (Regra de S. Bento, c. 1430), fl. 12. [https://purl.pt/24121/3/#/27] ©Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.

have a facilitated entrance into the cloister zone and to the neighboring common dormitory⁷², not forgetting the proximity of water streams, which ran from south to the north on the eastern side of the complex.

This setting is not completely incompatible with the idea of a more southeast location, near the church transept, as testified by the modern chroniclers of the orders, which they dated quite inaccurately before the Sixteenth century⁷³ (see fig. 2, the red circle). According to at least one specialist, such was the emplacement of the two towers, according to his interpretation of a representation of the medieval monastery⁷⁴ (fig. 3).

Cisterciense Medieval. Alcobaça como modelo de análise. In JORGE, Virgolino – *Ratio fecit diversum: ensaios sobre a Abadia de Alcobaça*. Lisboa: DGPC – Mosteiro de Alcobaça, 2017, p. 135.

⁷² Despite Alcobaça's exception, since the seemingly inexistence until the Sixteenth century of a direct passage between the monks's dormitory and the cloister. Further information on this in the forthcoming article of Catarina Fernandes Barreira in the next number of *Cîteaux*.

⁷³ SANTOS, Fr. Manuel dos – *Descrição do Real Mosteiro de Alcobaça: B.N. L. ALC. 307, FOLS. I-35*. Ed. of Aires A. do Nascimento. Alcobaça: Associação para a Defesa e Valorização do Património Cultural da Região de Alcobaça, 1979, p. 22.

⁷⁴ BERNARDO, Alex Sousa – *Um Palácio*, p. 15.

No definitive conclusions that can be drawn from so little material apart from the very plausible medieval establishment of the abbot's quarters in the east-southeast part of the monastic complex. Even for the case of Alcobaça, the richest ecclesiastical house in medieval Portugal, the evidence tends to support a clear evolution of the abbot's lodgings in line with foreign examples in terms of its embellishment and refurbishing in the late medieval period. But maybe the immediate interest of such research is more than scientific.

In a time when touristic interest is fueling investments in the conservation and remodeling of many Portuguese ecclesiastical houses, such inquiry could furnish new data to correctly identify spaces still with undetermined functions within monasteries precincts. Research on the abbot's lodgings can contribute, not only to a better understanding of the functional organization of a given cistercian monastery, but also to establish more informed museological projects, thus allowing to a more complete fruition of such complexes and their one multisecular history.

“The search for the wilderness as a space and possibility of a more radical religious experience accompanies and marks the development of Western culture, with multiple declinations, from voluntary seclusion or eremitical life to solitary life in more communitarian forms. The search for solitude and eremitism remained and marked the main moments of crisis and renewal in the Western world throughout the Middle Ages and the Early Modernity. All these experiences influenced and accompanied both the development of the city and the peri-urban landscape, with a particular importance in the transformation of territorially more isolated or peripheral areas. At the same time, the seek for solitude and seclusion, either through monastic or hermitic experiences, also flourished in other cultures and religious traditions, from Buddhism to Islam, giving interesting perspectives on the understanding of such religious phenomena in larger terms”.

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