

THE CLOISTER OF SANTA CLARA-A-NOVA MONASTERY, ANALYSIS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY USED AT THE TIME OF THE PORTUGUESE RESTORATION

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ABSTRACT

This article intends to focus on the first phase of construction of the cloister of Mosteiro de Santa Clara-a-Nova in Coimbra (Portugal), characterized by the architectural and military tratadistics of the Restoration period. From the documentary research and the projectual representation, it is proposed to contextualize its original typology.

The cloister of Mosteiro de Santa Clara-a-Nova, although it is a major work of the Restoration and the Cycle of Aqueduto das Águas Livres of Lisboa, is poorly studied. At a time when the work of the kingdom was conditioned by the expenses of the war, those of greater relevance were of military character and erected in the geographical areas of territorial defence. It is perhaps necessary to prove the legitimacy of Portuguese independence, which led to the reinforcement of the use of mental processes and scholastic theses, which will cultivate the propagandist of Culto Isabelino in Casa de Bragança. [1] The progressive silting of the old convent, together with the political need, meant that in 1649 D. João IV ordered that the first stone be laid for the construction of the new Monastery of Santa Clara de Coimbra, in which he determines that in Latin it refers to the Queen Santa Isabel as his Grandmother and Lady.

The documents related to the construction of Mosteiro de Santa Clara-a-Nova show that the original plants and infrastructures are responsibility of Friar Turriano. [2] Regardless the regime of observance, following the long tradition of inheriting public offices, Friar Torriano receives from D. João IV the position of Chief Engineer (Engenheiro-mor) of the Kingdom. For thirteen years he traces several religious houses and even succeeds Mateus do Couto (uncle) in the work of Forte de São Lourenço da Cabeça Seca, in Barra do Tejo. [3] The architectural knowledge of Friar Turriano can be verified in the study of his library's catalog, which he inherits of his father Leonardo Turriano (Engineer-mor of Portugal), and where stand out several architectural treatises, such as those of Sebastiano Serlio, which he studied and wrote down in detail. In fact there is a correlation between these and the solution adopted in the first compositional scheme of the cloister. [4]

The first reference to the cloister (1700) appears in the register of the letters of Superintendent Marquês do Alegrete, where he describes how he conferred with Manuel do Couto, the copies of Friar Turriano's plans, and decided to start the work of the cistern. Manuel do Couto succeeded his protector, Mateus do Couto (Nephew), with whom he learned the office of architect under the patronage of the Marquis.

In fact this military architectural culture, whose origin leads to Mateus do Couto (Uncle), will fit the project outlined by Frei Torriano, whose appearance despite Serliana, is structurally military.

In 1731 Custodio Vieira measures the works that had been executed in all the gallery of the first floor of the cloister. The measurement suggests that at least two galleries were already erected; despite the advance, in 1737 is demanded the demolition of the dome, as it was threatening ruin on the side of the olive grove. On its direction the structural reform begins, definitively altering the original typology. Custódio Viera and his successor, Carlos Mardel, besides changing the structure, introduce a Baroque model based on the politics of happiness of the peoples, linked to the currents of the Enlightenment.

CONCLUSIONS

The cloister we can visit nowadays, in Mosteiro de Santa Clara-a-Nova is a hybrid, whose skeleton is inspired by the reading of Serlio's works. This work by Frei Turriano still presents features of military architecture, which are translated not only in the decorative bareness of the façade but also in the large dimensions of the galleries of its arches and domes. It could have been the proportions of these structural elements that gave rise to the fall of the domes, changing forever its original typology.

Regardless of whether any of the plants mentioned in this article have never been found, it is possible through the documentation studied to present a 3d model of the typology that Torriano would have planned (Figure 1).



Figure 1: 3D Model, Turriano's original typology, Pedro Tavares, 2017

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