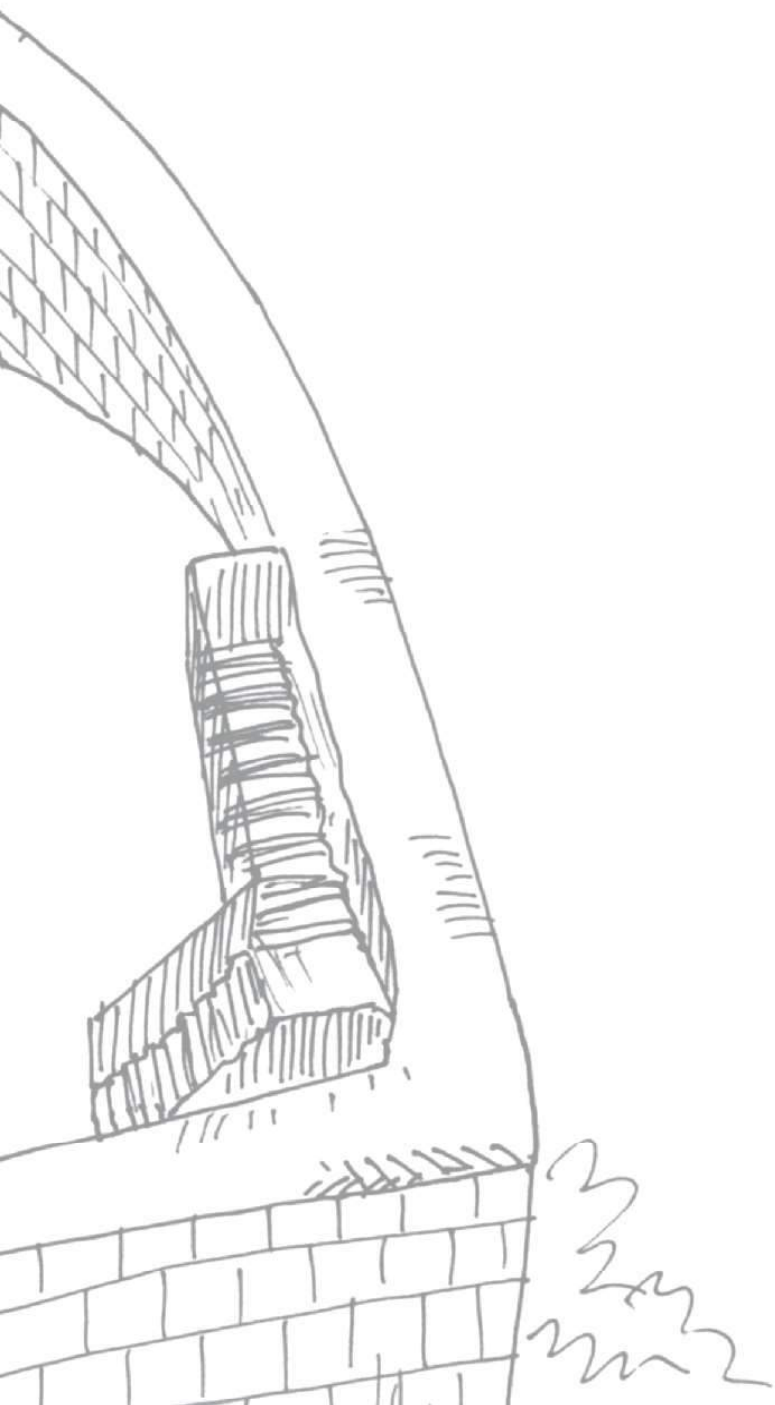


CASTLE
OF ARNOIA
CELORICO DE BASTO



CASTLE
OF ARNOIA
CELORICO DE BASTO



Plan.

THE CASTLE OF ARNOIA AND THE TERRITORY

The emergence of the Romanesque castle is closely related to the process of administrative and military reorganization of the territory, which was divided in “terras” [a type of Portuguese administrative division], together with the evolution of war tactics and weaponry at different levels¹. It is within this context that we should understand the construction of the Castle of Arnoia, perched on a hilltop that dominates the so-called “terra de Basto”. In 1726, Francisco Craesbeeck explains that “in the old days all this terra de Basto was united, while today [therefore, in 1726] it is divided into two municipalities”, the one of Cabeceiras de Basto and the one of Celorico (Craesbeeck, 1992: 324). Nowadays we would add the ones of Mondim de Basto and Ribeira de Pena, all dominated by the noble and unique Senhora da Graça mountain², trademark of this territory that is part of a transition zone between the northwest Atlantic coast and the northwest area of Trás-os-Montes, which was still guarded in a not too distant past by the watchful Castle built in the parish of Arnoia that gave it its name.



Aerial view.

¹ About the evolution of Portuguese Medieval weaponry, please read Barroca (2000: 37-110).

² It is regionally called “Monte Farinha” and has the chapel of Our Lady of Grace on the summit, at 1000 meters above sea level. Located in the municipality of Mondim de Basto, the conical “Monte Farinha” is nothing more than the prow of an interesting granitic mountain range (mountain range of Alvão) that, from east to west, stretches along a straight line from its neighbour Campo de Seixo (Mondim de Basto) (with an approximate length of 5 km) (Casal Pelayo, 1988).

As explained in the *Carta do património arquitectónico do concelho de Celorico de Basto* [Charter of the architectural heritage of the Municipality of Celorico de Basto], this “terra de Basto” is located over the middle valley of the river Tâmega (CMCB, 2011), fitted between the Marão and the Alvão mountains (to the east) and the Cabreira and the Lameira mountains (to the north and west); it shows features of a mountainous area with thick forests and numerous valleys that frame an extensive network of waterways that is very favourable to the practice of traditional subsistence agriculture.

Speaking about “terras” is talking about the administrative restructuring of the pre-County of Portugal Reconquest period and of the organization of occupied territories, by structuring their defence in restricted areas, whose government was more personalized, since it was handed over to a count. Ferdinand the Great (king of Castile, 1035-1065, and king of Leon, 1037-1065) was responsible for important advances in the process of the Christian Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula³, which forced significant changes to be introduced in terms of administrative and local structures (Barroca, 1990-1991: 115), which were characterized by an increasingly shared power and a more feudalistic organization of the occupied territory, leading to the development of the so-called “castelánias” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] in the western part of the Peninsula. The most powerful noble families in the countryside, supported by castles and monasteries, begin their social rise and become “milites” (Almeida, 1987: 47-48). Linked to the tenancies of certain castles, the “terras” are defined by territorial boundaries that are considerably smaller than the “territoria” of the “civitates” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] that previously existed (Almeida & Lopes, 1981-1982: 133)⁴. The county organization (regional) is replaced by the manorial organization (local).

The “terras” were most certainly structured throughout the second half of the 11th century (Barroca, 1990-1991: 115), when Medieval documentation begins to mention their existence specifying the geographic location of properties and settlements. 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 “terras” it controls), these territorial units correspond to the growth and consolidation of a nobility with local roots, the “infanções”, asserting itself as an essentially manorial model.

So, this movement related to the constitution of “terras” is closely associated with the “encastelamento” [entrenchment] process of the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, which lead all of Western Europe to be covered with a dense network of castles. Feeling that their territory was being threatened by the enemy (most of the times, the Muslim enemy), people began organizing themselves in order to provide protection for themselves and their families and their property, building castles and defensive enclosures for that purpose (Almeida, 1992: 375). The Castle of Arnoia, together with the one of Guimarães and, perhaps, the one of Vila Real, possibly made up one of the defensive lines of Porto, since the city is located at a straight-line distance of about 56 kilometres away from this line (North, 2002: 37). Therefore, it worked as an active element within a comprehensive strategic regional defence plan.

³ As it is known, this monarch is responsible for great advances in terms of the Reconquest and territorial occupation process, of which the definitive conquest of Coimbra in 1064, after six months of siege, is a crucial example – 1064 is a key date in the Portuguese Medieval chronology at both the political and the artistic level.

⁴ The “civitates” were created for civil and military administration purposes within the territorial management strategy of the period of King Afonso III of Asturias (866-909).



It is in this context that we should understand the emergence of the legend of the conquest of the Castle of Arnoia that narrates the achievement of a few Christians who were tired of the Muslim domination which forced them to carry stones to the Castle. One day, they gathered the available cattle in the surrounding area and led goats and oxen with chimes on their necks and torches on their horns to the Castle during the night. The Moors, being deceived by the belief that they were in the presence of a great army, fled from the Castle to avoid the confrontation. Pedro Vitorino tells us that in the early 20th century the legend of the “Moorish” castle was still very present among local people because, “in his free time, the peasant goes up the hill towards the solitary ruins, thinking about some rich treasure that was hidden many years ago (...)” (Vitorino, 1909: 314-317). According to legend, before escaping, the “Moors” had left many buried treasures⁵.

Some of these castle structures managed to survive while others underwent an evident process of decay. Some castles preserved and expanded their importance by ascending to key-territories of the “terras”, thus creating, over this period, an important network that supported the military structure of the Country during the Reconquest process. So, it was during the reign of King Afonso Henriques (1143-1185) that there was a multiplication of the number of “terras”, covering new geographical areas (Barroca, 1990-1991: 120). And, during this period, the castles that ascended to key-territories began shaping the Romanesque castle model.

The oldest known documentary references to the Castle of Arnoia date back to the year of the final conquest of Coimbra, alluding to “Castellum Celorici et oppido ibi”⁶ (Coutinho, 1942: 40)⁷. This reference is extremely important, not only because it alludes to Celorico as a central place, likely to be mentioned in an itinerary, but also because it refers the existence of a settlement protected by a castle which overlooked it (Perennia Monumenta, 2002: 3). A document from a slightly later period, dated 1092, mentions the properties “sub urbis Cellorico et território Basto”⁸ (ACL, 1868: 450).

Located above the ancient village of “Villa [a type of Portuguese administrative division] de Basto” – being the seat of this territory and, subsequently, jurisdiction and municipality for a long time – the Castle of Arnoia was built on a hilltop, thus assuming a peculiar presence within the landscape and the territory it once controlled and defended. As we can see by the existence of visible rocky outcrops, its location fits perfectly into a category of castles that has been defined as “roqueira” [rocky].

In fact, in the turn of the 10th century to the following one, the network of castles in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region, which was quite dense by the way, was mostly a result of the efforts of local populations in response to Muslim raids and Norman incursions (Barroca, 1990-1991: 91). Although most of the castles resulting from this first “escastelamento” stage are currently reduced to faint traces, providing little information about their original physical structure, we know that, among many other issues, there was a concern of building these castles in high places, emphasising the field of view and taking advantage, whenever possible, of the



Wall. Granitic batholiths.

⁵ This narrative is common to many castles that praise the deeds of their defence ascribing them to certain figures and extraordinary events such as this one that, using the topics of goats and luminaries, reproduces several famous historical battles, such as the battle between Gideon and the Midianites, Samson and the Philistines or Hannibal and the Romans.

⁶ Reference to the fortified city of Celorico.

⁷ According to the author, this is an transcript or partial apograph of an unknown or missing chronicle about Portugal's administrative boundaries in 1604.

⁸ Territorial reference to the Castle of Celorico de Basto.



Monastery of Arnoia (Celorico de Basto).
Sacristy. Plaque. Saint Michael.

favourable features provided by the morphology of the terrain. Besides, the presence of granitic batholiths to support the walls and, of course, to supply raw materials became essential. Its space had to be small in order to make the defence of the stronghold easier.

Actually, tradition has been associating the chronology of the construction of the Castle of Arnoia with the period of Arnaldo Baião⁹ (c. 960-985) or Moninho Viegas (972-1002) who, according to certain chronicles, had connections with the monastery of Saint John of Ermo (Celorico de Basto)¹⁰. In fact, according to Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, the location and importance of the Castle of Arnoia should be understood considering its relationship with a very close Benedictine monastery, currently known as Saint John of Arnoia, of which there are very few Romanesque traces left. Although its church was built between the 17th and 18th centuries, it shows a plan that is still deeply attached to the old Romanesque building. There are still several elements from the original Romanesque structure: powerful buttresses and sections of chequered friezes still punctuate the outer walls, being particularly visible on the north side. We should also mention the carved Romanesque tympanum from the school of São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim) that shows an *Agnus Dei* [Lamb of God] and a plaque with the figure of Saint Michael armed with a shield, attacking snake, trampling it and nailing it with a spear. Besides these elements, this monastery keeps the epigraphed lid of the sarcophagus where Moninho Moniz was laid to rest. Placed in the monastery's cloister, this lid rests on a grave of which it was not an original part¹¹.

Perhaps Moninho or Múnio Muniz, who died in the "Era of 1290" (i.e., in 1252) and was surely an element linked to the patron family of the monastery of Arnoia, is the same Moninho "Dolo" [De Olo, that means from Olo]¹², to whose descendants the "alcaidaria" [mayor's residence] of the Castle of Celorico was transferred.



Monastery of Arnoia (Celorico de Basto).



Monastery of Arnoia (Celorico de Basto). Church. Nave.
Tympanum. *Agnus Dei*.

⁹ Arnaldo de Baião, named after the land where he was established, or Arnaldo Eris, is, according to A. de Almeida Fernandes (1946: 30), the founder of the lineage of the Baiões, of whom Egas Moniz, the governor and schoolmaster of King Afonso Henriques descends. The connection between Arnaldo and the land arose by the similarity between "Arnaldo" and "Arnoia", although it is possible that there was a connection related to the monastery of Saint John of Ermo (Celorico de Basto). According to the reference made by Felgueiras Gaio (1938-1941: 32), who states that he was a contemporary of Sancho, the Fat, and Ramiro - both kings of Leon -, we are guessing that he was alive in the period between 960 and 985, a chronology that the quoted A. de Almeida Fernandes extends it until the late 10th century.

¹⁰ We do not agree with C. Coutinho da Cunha's opinion (1942: 44) when he said, in 1940, that the remaining ruins of the Castle of Arnoia corresponded to the castle marked in the document from 1064.

¹¹ In its epigraph, Mário Barroca (2000: 862-867) read: D(omnus) MUNIUS MUNIS H(ic) · IN S(uo) · ASSISTER(io) · / FINI : IN : Era : M^o : CC^o : 2^o XXXX^o.

¹² According to A. de Almeida Fernandes, Teresa, the daughter of Múnio Dolo, called herself Moniz and, as we shall see, it is due to her descendants that, in the 14th century, we find the Castle turned into an "alcaidaria" [mayor's residence] (Correia et al., 1936-1960: 405).

THE MONUMENT DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Considering the remaining elements of this Medieval military architecture legacy in “terras de Basto”, we are surely standing before a more recent construction than the one that Arnaldo Baião or Moninho Viegas may have hypothetically built in the transition from the 10th century to the 11th century; nevertheless, the foundations of that rocky castle were reused, as proven by the ashlar found at the base of the tower and wall, which have a more irregular cut. Archaeological surveys¹³ have identified that the oldest occupation period of the walled precinct of Arnoia corresponds to a moment of transition between the early and the high Middle Ages before the keep was built, i.e., in a period earlier than the 12th century (Perennia Monumenta, 2002: 23, 27). The opening of survey areas inside the Castle allowed detecting structures which were not visible on the surface, especially wall foundations that document the existence of two different wall construction stages¹⁴ and the occupation of the interior space, as well as its floor levels. The existence of a few stratigraphic disturbances following the abandonment of the Castle was also discovered¹⁵.

In fact, as explained by Mário Barroca, “rocky castles did not know what a Keep was; this innovation would only be introduced in the Romanesque castle from the mid-12th century onwards; probably, they also ignore the “cubelos” [turrets]¹⁶, the result of a more developed and specialized military engineering knowledge” (Barroca, 1990-1991: 91).

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Ashlars from the tower's base and the adjacent wall. Detail.

¹³ Conducted by the IGESPAR – Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitetónico e Arqueológico [Portuguese Institute for Management of Architectural and Archaeological Heritage] in the winter of 2002. The team was led by Francisco Manuel Veleza Reimão Queiroga.

¹⁴ Based on a stratigraphic analysis, two major constructive moments have been identified; the first one corresponds to the east-west wall and the second one is related to the north turret (Perennia Monumenta, 2002: 16-17).

¹⁵ PORTUGAL. Secretaria de Estado da Cultura – IGESPAR – Castelo de Arnoia/Castelo dos Mouros/Castelo de Moreira [Online]. *Portal do Arqueólogo*. Lisboa: IGESPAR, [s.d.]. [Visited on May 19th, 2012]. Available at [www: <URL: http://arqueologia.igespar.pt>](http://arqueologia.igespar.pt).

¹⁶ A “cubelo” is a cube-shaped turret or a Medieval tower placed in the first ring of defensive walls (Silva & Calado, 2005: 119).





North view.

According to the data collected during the archaeological excavation conducted in 2002, the second occupation moment of the Castle of Arnoia dated back to the 12th-13th centuries. Therefore, there is a chronological match between the data collected in these archaeological excavations and remaining architectural elements.

At first glance, this military structure immediately shows us the existence of two elements – to which a few others may be added – that characterise it: the wall and the keep. Built at the top of the mountainous hill, the wall draws a plan shaped like a triangular shield. Its polygonal appearance, described by many authors, is associated with the construction of the turret at the angle created by the north and east wall faces. We should note the significant width of the *chemin de ronde*. We should not forget that the Romanesque castle is associated with the concept of passive defence and with a specific philosophy: to prevent the enemy from getting to the base of its walls. Not relying on that ability, it is supported both in its thickness and height, since the structure did not have many solutions that would allow an efficient attack in case of siege. Arnoia is a remarkable example of the importance that was consequently given to the defence conditions of the site, which should preferably present steep slopes that were often emphasized by artificial excavations made to prevent the enemy from placing devices in the Castle's surroundings. In 1758, the location of this Castle “on the summit of Hill which is as small as it is steep, was much appreciated. Everywhere, this building's foundations are in stone” (Ribeiro, 1758 *apud* Lopes, 2005).

Therefore, it is in the key-territory castles that the main efforts of the military architecture of the region will be concentrated. The presence of a keep and a turret in Arnoia are also a



Door.

clarifying example of that circumstance. As explained by Mário Barroca (2003: 109), the turrets allowed practising the flanked shot technique – i.e., a shot that ran parallel to the wall line and was essential for an effective defence of the wall base. Adjoining the walls on the outside, the turrets had the advantage of serving as buttresses in areas where wall sections were too extensive, thus contributing to its stability and, simultaneously, to break the continuous wall sections and allowing a better and easier surveillance. If the tendency was to increase the number of turrets over the 12th and 13th centuries, initially they appear in small numbers and, like in the case of Arnoia, could be limited to one.

The access to the inside is made through a door with a lintel built with voussoirs and opened on the south wall, close to the keep. Multiplying openings made the Romanesque castle more vulnerable. Francisco Craesbeeck refers it, despite adding that in 1726 it was also possible to enter the walled precinct by the north side, “using an already low and ruined barbican” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 324). We believe that there is a terminological confusion in the speech of this 18th-century who, instead of referring himself to a true barbican¹⁷, was surely mentioning the square turret disregarding the fact that this element was usually built up to the *chemin de ronde*'s height.

Opposite this turret, on the south side, we find the keep adjoining the wall face. As a last defence stronghold, it is more commonly found in the middle of the Castle's yard, but there are other examples like Arnoia where the keep was built close to the wall faces: Lindoso (Ponte da Barca), Montalegre, Lanhoso (Póvoa de Lanhoso), Vilar Maior (Sabugal), Sabugal or Amieira (Nisa) are some of them (Barroca, 2003: 119).

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Keep. Aerial view.

¹⁷ Please note the definition of “barbican” proposed by Jorge Henrique Pais da Silva and Margarida Calado (2005: 54): “1. An advanced defence core, established outside fortifications, on a lower plan, to protect an important point (e.g.: to cover a city gate, the head of a bridge). 2. A wall that was built outside the walls, on a lower plan”.

We owe the introduction of this defining element of the Romanesque castle in our territory to the Order of the Temple; the oldest example found in Portugal belongs to the castle of Tomar (edified in 1160). It is the great innovation that the Romanesque castle will introduce among us. Despite the existence of documents from the first quarter of the 12th century, it was actually during the second half of this century and throughout the following one that this military order, as well as the orders of the Hospitallers, Avis or Saint James of the Sword, were awarded large royal donations; this is an indirect proof that, at the time, these organizations had the most advanced military knowledge both in the art of war and in the art of building fortifications (Barroca, 1996-1997: 171). So, the most important and intense building period of the Knights Templar occurred during the 1260's and the 1270's.

Knowing that the oldest keeps are associated with the Templars and were built during the second half of the 12th century¹⁸, the construction of keeps in other fortifications that were simultaneously being refurbished would have only been possible, perhaps, at the end of that century. The assimilation of their *modus aedificandi* and the circulation of master stonemasons with skills for their construction took the construction technique of this military architecture element to places that were located far from the Templars' sphere of action that, as we know, had one of their main bulwarks in the Mondego line.

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So, currently, we see a towering and crenelated keep in Arnoia¹⁹, an appearance that resulted from the interventions carried out in the 20th century, as we'll see. Closed on itself, the keep is punctuated by narrow crevices that resemble embrasures. The entrance opens towards the north, in an elevated position, and its doorsill matches the height of the chemin de ronde. Keeps were always accessed through a wooden mobile ladder that, in the event of imminent danger, could be removed from inside the building leaving it isolated. Its presence tells us that, more than having as a main function to defend the local population, this Castle was designed to accommodate a small garrison. There were several mayors related to the Castle.

As far as we could ascertain, the Castle of Arnoia, as a key-territory, played a crucial role in the territory's life, as evidenced by the different inquiries. In 1220, there is reference to the charges of certain farmhouses in Caçarilhe and Carvalho (Celorico de Basto) that should contribute to the construction of the Castle with carpentry works and firewood supplies (Lopes, 2008). In 1258, there was an extra obligation imputed to two farmhouses held by the Church of Fervença (Celorico de Basto) in Agilde (Celorico de Basto): supplying the Castle of Arnoia with lime (Lopes, 2008: 126). Most of these obligations were still being fulfilled in the reign of King Afonso IV.

However, the direct references to the fortified structure and the village nestled at its foot are very scarce and related to taxes and obligations of farmhouses under the rule of Arnoia. The

¹⁸ Besides Tomar (1160), we should note the examples of Pombal (1171), Almourol (Vila Nova da Barquinha, 1171), Penas Róias (Mogadouro, 1172) or Longroiva (Meda, 1174), works that are documented by epigraphs.

¹⁹ As the archaeological report delivered in 2002 states, this tower is built by carved ashlar with a longitudinal cross-section, predominantly rectangular. The ashlar were assembled without the use of mortar and the north wall stands on a foundation made of large-sized and irregular granitic stones shaped as parallelepipeds. This foundation has two projections, each of them corresponding to a different row. The free spaces between the foundation stones are filled with earth, not showing any traces of binding mortars (Perennia Monumenta, 2002: 19).

inquiries of 1251 refer the existence of four royal properties in the Castle's village; the residents of some of the properties located in the hamlets of Carcavelos and Ferreirós went to the Castle (certainly to participate in its maintenance)²⁰; three properties in Cerqueda and one in Felorca, Pedro Chelo and Sequeiros had to guard inmates; the properties of Mendo Mendes and Mendo Nunes were forced to go to the Castle to pay the “introviscada” [a fish-related tax] and supply lime (Lopes, 2008: 116).

King Pedro's *Livro velho de linhagens* [Old book of lineages] tells us about the legendary accomplishment of Martim Vasques da Cunha, which is associated with the Castle of Arnoia (Herculano, 1861: 358). As far as we know, this mayor took sides with Brites (b. 1242-1303), who wanted to help her father, King Afonso X of Leon and Castile (k. 1252-1284), to whom her husband, King Afonso III (k. 1248-1279) had given, among other wedding tokens, the “terras de Basto” (Azeredo, 1978). In order to free himself of the “vassalage and homage he owed to the king”, he was advised to provide the Castle with all that was necessary for its defence: weapons, stones, supplies, animals, etc. Having sent out the entire garrison, he had been left alone inside the Castle and set fire to one of the houses so that it could be seen from distant locations. He left the Castle using a rope and rode on his horse across the neighbouring parishes pleading for help because otherwise the Castle would be lost. In the 20th century there were still people who believed that this fire was the reason behind the state of abandonment and decay of the Castle of Arnoia (Brito, 1931).

And once the Castle had been released, King Dinis would have leased it for 210 “morabitanos” [former Portuguese currency unit] to “Matino Iohanis” the lands of “Celorico de Basto and its Castle (...)” on September 9th, 1282 (Brito, 1931). Two years later, the same king awarded the royal benefits associated with the Castle to the inhabitants of Celorico.

While not intending to draw up an accurate list of the mayors, there are several names documented between the reigns of King Afonso III and King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521). We have already mentioned Martim Vasques da Cunha (13th century) known as “the one of the good deed”; Gonçalo Gomes da Mota and Vasco Mendes da Mota (14th century), Gil Vasques da Cunha (Coutinho, 1942: 48) and Pedro de Andrade Caminha (b. 1520) (Vitorino, 1909: 317). During the Middle Ages, the “alcaidaria” was in the hands of the Baiões and the Motas de Gundar, thus giving rise to the tradition that claims that the already mentioned Arnaldo Eris was the founder or the “first” mayor²¹.

We should also highlight the existence of a cistern in the walled courtyard, a fundamental element in siege warfare, since it was intended to preserve rainwater at an underground level. Within our territory, one of the oldest known examples is the castle of Saint Martin of Mouros (Resende), a structure that was reconquered in 1058.



Cistern.

²⁰ Other farmhouses of neighbouring parishes were required to perform this work and others according to their “last name” or “surname” (Lopes, 2008: 42).

²¹ Martim Vasques da Cunha descended, on his mother side, from the Portocarreiros, whose ancestor was Arnaldo de Baião.

THE MONUMENT DURING THE MODERN PERIOD

The third occupation stage of the Castle of Arnoia occurred during the Modern Period, despite the fact that its gradual abandonment began early on. We believed that the archaeological data which can be dated from the 14th to the 16th centuries and point to the existence of a residential building and a workshop within the walled precinct belong to this period²².

As far as we know, and even though in 1726 Francisco Craesbeeck alludes to the ruined state of the turret, the fact is that the author informs us that this Castle features “a high tower, crowned with merlons” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 324). Thirty two years later, the scene already seems to be somewhat different. When asked about the damage caused by the 1755 earthquake in the parish of Arnoia, the vicar João Alves Ribeiro paid a special attention to the Castle of Arnoia, thus proving its importance to the parish (Ribeiro, 1758 *apud* Lopes, 2005: 84-85). Considering it prior to “the foundation of Hispania”, the vicar gives us a detailed description of the Castle, telling us that “on the occasion of the 1755 Earthquake the tower could be moved as if it were a mimosa field stalk”. Not finding any “ruinous” effect caused by the “impertinent Earthquake” in the tower, João Alves Ribeiro points out a few signs of ruin: in addition to the lack of a few merlons, there is a “very subtle” opening above the door, which was caused “by a lightning bolt”. The cistern was filled up with stones and the wall, which only survived on the north and west sides, featured different levels of conservation at the time: in some sections, it was ruined down to the foundations, in others it was threatening to collapse and in others it was already showing a poor state of repair. From what we could infer, what the vicar found in Arnoia in 1758 is more the result of a gradual abandonment that took place over the Modern Period than an actual consequence of the Great Earthquake.

²² A significant amount of iron smelting slag was found here, something that may confirm the presence of the aforementioned smelting workshop. Furthermore, a series of coins dated from periods ranging between 1433 and 1557 was found in the same area, thus providing evidence of an intense human activity (Perennia Monumenta, 2002: 24).

The village of Castelo

The common municipal monographs, often written by local researchers, are partly the heirs of the ethnocentric and laudatory thinking that left its mark in memoirs by writers from the Humanist Period and the Age of Enlightenment. The former, as exemplified by João de Barros, sought industriously in Roman remains for a glorious Classical past, suggesting that small, and sometimes negligible, settlements were of Roman origin based on their toponyms. Despite the fact that they didn't always ascribe the origin of most toponyms and ruins to the Roman period, 17th and 18th-century memoirists did not fail to provide examples of folk narratives as evidence of a past marked by waves of “superior” peoples: the Moors, the Goths or, less frequently, the Greeks themselves, to whom the foundation of several towns was ascribed.

The monographer or memoirist often established direct connections and continuity links with the Romanization period, stepping over millennia of breakthroughs and setbacks in human development and, especially, over deep transformations carried out in the landscape as a result of changes in the needs and intervention abilities of its inhabitants. He often created a settlement *ex-nihilo* based on scarce archaeological remains or through spelling/phonetic hints that could suggest a Roman origin, as we have already mentioned, shaping the current territory in order to fit the administration model of the civilization from the Lazio region. What is more: he often associated pre- and proto-historic or Roman traces to spaces that are currently occupied by Christian temples, formulating theories on cult-related syncretism and forgetting that, in most cases, the permanence of sacred spaces has nothing to do with a potential survival and transmutation of the gods that were worshipped there, but rather with the need of ensuring proper protection to the communities that worship a given entity (regardless of the entity itself). On the other hand, if populations remained or returned to the proximity of sacralised spaces, it is only natural that these continued being used, regardless of the interceding ability of the deities that were worshipped before²³.

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Castle and village. Aerial view.

²³ Even the issue of reused materials, a situation that the theorists of continuity have considered a sign of syncretism, was actually an expression of the need to resort to that scattered archaeological collection, which often included ashlar, columns or altar stones that were perfectly reusable in the new construction. About these aspects, please read Resende (2011).

Regarding the origins of Celorico, its relationship with the Castle of Arnoia, the “terra de Basto” and the “classicization” of its origins, we should mention the discussion about the location of “Celiobriga” and the representation of Basto itself, which is similar to other catalytic mythological figures²⁴. On the one hand, we should emphasize that History has created axes of permanence and unity around fortifications and heroes (soldiers or saints) that, as in these cases, are extremely powerful symbols; on the other hand, we should note that this need of finding a glorious and ideal past has often distorted – through anachronisms and other fallacies – the true evolution of the space. This image or ideal past didn’t always correspond to reality.

At the foot of the Castle of Arnoia, a village whose origins lie in a connection branch to the roads between Lixa (Felgueiras) and Amarante to Arco de Baúlhe (Cabeceiras de Basto) began to emerge²⁵. This position, away from the main flow channels located either along the line of the Tâmega or skirting the Cabreira mountain, can confirm the purely strategic meaning of the fortification of Arnoia, overlooking an imaginary and ephemeral border. Once the territory was pacified, the Castle took on the role of landmark within a reorganizing geography.

So, at the foot of the fortified hill, a small town began to emerge along the path’s line. The urban fabric that complemented the humanization of the area between the fortified hill and crossing/settlement valley was built on both sides of this artery over the Middle Ages. However, it was a small town, as evidenced by the description in the inventory of 1527:

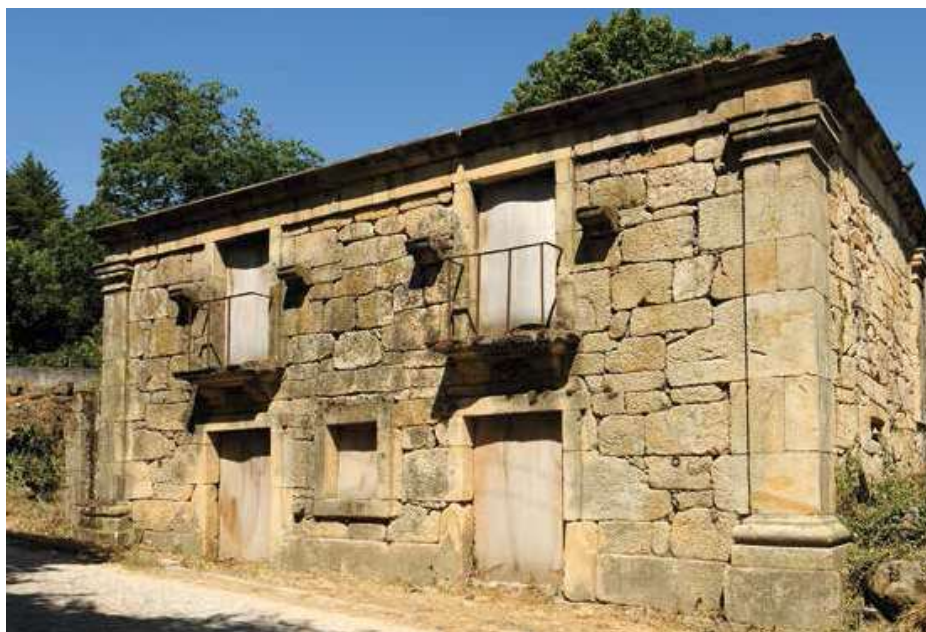
“This land of Celoryquo de Basto is quite rough and mountainous; the lord of the land is Pero da Cunha Coutinho and the hill features a castle that is called Çeloryquo which houses a minor mayor and two residents (...)” (Freire, 1905).

The two houses or housing units corresponded to about 10 residents divided between the hamlets of Corredoura and Feira. The municipality’s seat was based here until the transition from 1716 to 1717, as specified by Friar Manuel da Conceição, the vicar of Arnoia, who adds: “still today [1758] we are able to see the unique traces of an old prison, in severe decay and on the imminence of having its walls and woodwork in ruins”. The greatest symbol of municipal autonomy, the pillory, was virtually destroyed, “and its stones left broken on the ground”. However, it had been erected in the middle of the street, as befitted an instrument of punishment and mockery of its kind. Despite the fact that the place had been abandoned by the local powers, a tax-free fair was still held here on the 25th day of each month (Ribeiro, 1758 *apud* Lopes, 2005: 85).



Village of Castelo (Celorico de Basto). Pillory.

24 Jerónimo Contador de Argote (1732: 317-318) is one of the first memoirists to associate “Celiobriga” with Celorico.
25 This road is already mentioned in 1251, in the inquiries commissioned by King Afonso III (Lopes, 2005: 129).



Village of Castelo (Celorico de Basto). Ancient pharmacy house known as "Botica" house.

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Going back to the 16th century, we know that between 1571 and 1576 there were audiences here, held in a house that faced the Direita Street (the town's main axis). By analysing the records commissioned by the Crown²⁶, we learn about the size and features of some of the houses that existed along this road; most of them consisting of a residential building with agriculture-related annexes. Among these properties there were communal lands, farmyards and vegetable gardens that complemented the residents' livelihood. Let's use the property located at the foot of the Castle – which had belonged to Álvaro Anes – as an example. It was comprised of:

“a house that serves as a kitchen, half roofed and half covered with thatched at ground level, is seven “varas” [former Portuguese measurement] long and four wide, with a farmyard at the door. Above these houses, another with eight “varas” long and five wide and a farmyard and cattle house along the road and a threshing floor with a vegetable garden”.

Further ahead there is reference to:

“A house on Street Direita, opposite to the courthouse, consisting of a kitchen covered with thatch to ground level, being nine “varas” long and four wide, and three serving as a cattle house and a hovel nearby, serving as a cattle house with its farmyard and a vegetable garden next to these houses and respective barn”.

²⁶ ANTT – *Feitos da Coroa*. Núcleo Antigo, n.º 247, fls. 618-638.

Reading this type of source allows us to collect relevant pieces of information about individuals and activities, although they are sparse and brief. These references suggest the existence of a small settlement whose inhabitants engaged in the mechanical trade-related occupations: Cristovão Macedo, “salesman”; Francisco Gonçalves, “stallholder”; Pero Gonçalves, “shoe maker”; and, further ahead, the field of the “tanner” – which indicates a place related to the processing and, perhaps, to the sale of hides and leather. The reference to stables and stalls completes the description of the activities of the inhabitants of the village of Castelo that, being a place of passage, was favourable for travel breaks and sales. Besides that, the documents mention a public street that was probably Direita Street, which was certainly an extension of the roads that came from Amarante and Cabreira. This was a central and crossing point for human and commercial flows between the Minho and the Tâmega, especially when the fair was held²⁷.

However, the most elaborate description we have of the village of Castelo is the one written by Francisco Craesbeeck about 10 years after the transfer of local governances to the uncharacteristic hamlet of Freixieiro. In fact, this change was based on the same reasons that led to the growth of the Medieval village located at the foot of the Castle. The importance of the road, parallel to the river Tâmega (coming from Amarante), and the fact that Freixieiro stood almost at its junction with the road to Mondim sealed the fate of the old village and opened the way for a new village: the latter grew and is currently the seat of the municipality.

Francisco Craesbeeck, like any other 18th-century memoirist, was seeking the wealth and honours of the land: ancient ruins and illustrious men. He found them in the Castle’s hamlet, but with little glory: “this village doesn’t seem to have many inhabitants, because its residents are highly dispersed across the district” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 323). However, he emphasized the preservation of the pillory, the town hall and the prison “which had been built in 1586, when the district’s magistrate was João Gil de Abreu Castelo-Branco”²⁸. Then, the memoirist discourses on the origin and lordship of the land, returning to the political and administrative issues that had been centered on the village of Castelo until the 18th century.

According to the author, King Manuel I granted a foral charter to the village on March 29th, 1520. And at the time when Francisco Craesbeeck visited the municipality it had two judges, “one in the upper part of the castle and another in its lower part”. The figure of the foreign judge was only created later on (1713), perhaps to solve inconsistencies between the powers of the Castle and the ones of the municipality, as in other cases. The chamber consisted of three councillors and an attorney, all elected, and also a chamber clerk, a judge of the orphans with two clerks, a clerk for the “sizas” [type of tax], seven public and judicial notaries and clerks, an inquirer, counter and distributor and, finally, the mayor who served as warden. All trades belonged to the lord of the land, except the one of the “sizas” that was exercised by the Crown. Francisco Craesbeeck also provides another curious note about another unilinear village: “in the place of Lixa, which is the most populated, which has this villa; half belongs to it and the other half to the county of Felgueiras, for it is erected in a very long road, with 400 residents (...)” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 326-327).

27 *Idem*, *ibid.*

28 If we are to believe in the description made by the memoirist, the demolition of the pillory occurred between 1726 and 1758 (Craesbeeck, 1992: 323).

The chronicler (this time stripping the role of the historian since he witnessed this event) describes and analyses the reasons for the change of in the municipality seat. It says the chamber home entered in decay and that the foreign judges (figure that came to existence in 1713) were not offered a house with the necessary amenities to reside in the borough of Castelo. He adds: “and after several diligences and daily activities, which took place among the inhabitants of the upper part and the lower part of the castle, it was decided to settle, in the middle of the county, the place of Freixieiro, in the parish of São Pedro de Britello, for its also a mild and amiable location” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 328). Francisco Craesbeeck also describes the pace of the urbanization process, referring the construction of a new town hall and houses for foreign judges²⁹. This transfer is a chronologically extemporaneous case since it is prior to the deep administrative changes carried out by the 19th-century liberal governments who tried, by square and theodolite, to create municipalities, by gathering old county seats and creating new decision-making locations where once there were virtually no significant clusters³⁰.

Despite this change, which led to the slow death of the village of Castelo, the place has always remained as a symbol of ancient and important autonomic freedoms and local prerogatives, of which the fortress was a remarkable outline.



Partial view of the town of Celorico de Basto, from the hamlet of Freixieiro, Britelo.

²⁹ The list of judges until 1725 is made by Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 329).

³⁰ In the case of the “vila do Castelo” [Castle’s village], the fact that it did not include the parish church within its limits - as it was located on a remote site called Ermo - contributed to its extinction as an axial place.

CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

In 1909, the Castle of Arnoia showed obvious signs of a “recent demolition”, which were pointed out by Pedro Vitorino: the cistern was clogged and the roof’s voussoirs were scattered inside it. It was possible to see holes and multiple displacements in the ashlars. The keep was reduced to its walls. Of its merlons, “with a rounded and pierced outline”, there were only a couple left (Vitorino, 1909: 316).

As far as we know, in the following year, upon suggestion of the then civil governor of Braga, who had visited the Castle of Arnoia, the building was provided with a new door (Brito, 1931). Until the 1930s, this “was the only improvement it received”.

Precisely in the year when he died, Humberto Beça denounced the state of virtual abandonment in which the Castle of Arnoia was then found: the keep had a crack resulting from an electric discharge, the northern wall had a hole in which “a man would fit, [and if] one of the stones that is holding the upper ashlars falls down, the entire wall will collapse” (Beça, 1923: 21). In a speech that was still imbued with the romantic values of nationalism, he regrets the fact that there wasn’t any “gesture of determined goodwill, of authentic patriotism, of holy love for its land, its history, of pride in its past, that throws it the merciful anchor that will make it endure a little longer on top of its towering hill” (Beça, 1923: 21).

So, it was in the 1930s, “for the sake of the Nation’s artistic heritage”, that appropriate measures were taken in order to achieve the classification of this Portuguese Medieval military architecture monument³¹.

However, it was only in the decade when the Double Centennial (Portuguese Nationality and Restoration of Independence) were celebrated that this classification came true. In 1940, the Castle was a collection of ruins and its keep, besides the aforementioned scar caused by a lightning, presented a towering look and “featured only three merlons!” (Coutinho, 1942: 43).

Regarding its preservation, the information about the destruction of several boulders for producing gravel close to the Castle of Arnoia accelerated the process since³² it was deemed that it would “change the rough appearance of the hill and, consequently, the entire ensemble and atmosphere of the Castle”. Confirming that the classification of this monument was not yet enacted, it was found that its protection zone would only be protected after the process was completed, according to the provisions of Decree no. 20.985, of March 7th, 1932.

In 1944 we noticed that there was an actual concern in ascertaining the preservation conditions of the Castle and its surroundings, claiming that its classification as a National Monument was based on the same considerations that had led to the classification of the castles of Lindoso, Montalegre or Póvoa de Lanhoso. It is in this sense that we should understand why, somewhere along the line, it was questioned if the Castle should be classified autonomously, but as a Public Interest



Partial view of the wall before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.



Consolidation and restoration works of the tower (1963). Source: IHRU archive.

31 Ofício n.º 1942 de 4 de maio de 1933 [SIPA.TXT.01026974] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/075-0004. Idem.

32 Please see the documents related to the classification process of the Castle of Arnoia in PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/075-0002. Idem. In this case, with the purpose of saving space, we decided to reference the process and not every single document as we have been doing, given the extent of the process in question.

Building, or if it would make more sense to consider that it was covered “by the order issued by His Excellency the Under-Secretary of State for Education on December 22nd, 1943, stating that all unclassified Castles, Towers, Walls, Gates, Fortresses and corresponding Sections – the most impressive network of historical and heroic life Memorials along the borders and inland of the Country and the Islands – should be classified in a single process”. By valuing its masonry wall, its partly crenellated tower and its domain over extensive horizons, the inclusion of the Castle of Arnoia was considered in the order of 1943. As a reply to this decision, its classification was finally published in 1946³³.

Then, a new odyssey begins: the request for improvement works filed by local authorities and, in particular, by the Comissão Regional de Turismo da Serra do Marão [Regional Committee for Tourism of the Marão Mountain]³⁴. Its state of disrepair and neglect, the fact that the Castle (or what remained of it) was already serving as a quarry for private constructions, plus the eminent danger of collapse were extremely emphasised. Although in 1947 the relevant services had already deemed urgent the development of reintegration works according to the Castle’s primitive nature – for example, the intervention in the tower would include the “restoration of the chemin de ronde with its parapet and corresponding battlement” –, the truth is that their implementation only became possible in the early 1960’s, partly because it was only then that the necessary funds were obtained, despite successive inclusions in the annual Building Plans of the DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]. In the first half of this decade, the progress of the works in Arnoia only turned out to be possible because part of the money allocated to the monastery of Jerónimos (Lisbon) was diverted to the item “Castles and National Monuments”. In 1963 the works of consolidation and restoration of the tower continued.

Thus, following the aforementioned philosophy, focused on the retrieval of the Castle’s primitive state, we see that the upper floor of the keep of Arnoia was completely rebuilt, including the already mentioned battlement still partially existed at the time. However, the wall was not subject to a similar reintegration process. We should not forget that, by this time, the DGEMN’s services were implementing a new intervention philosophy, which was more associated with conservation than with actual restoration³⁵. Furthermore, the strong criticism initiated against this institution in the late 1940’s, which compared the placement of battlements in castle walls with “dentures” (Mendes, 1949)³⁶, was surely still very present. The vegetation that existed inside the Castle was removed, the cistern was unblocked and a wooden door was placed at its entrance³⁷.



Patio before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN. Source: IHRU archive.

33 DECREE no. 35532. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I*. 55 (46-03-15) 160.

34 Please see note 30.

35 About the subject, please read Botelho (2006: 183).

36 This comparison, made by a member of the central committee of the opposition candidacy’s services during a rally organized in Porto to support General Norton de Matos, was intended to be a reply to the propagandist intents of the regime that were embodied in the exhibitions of the *15 Years of Public Works*, which were held in Lisbon, in 1948, and in Porto, in the following year. The opposition replied to the criticism of the Minister of Public Works with an extensive article in the *República*, in which it accused the State of spending large sums of money on a project that was “improvised and, therefore, debatable”. About this issue of the “criticism to the precepts that were practised and to the situation of the national artistic heritage”, please see Neto (2001: 258-270).

37 A photograph from 1973 shows that a masonry stairway which allowed accessing the door of the keep had been built next to its wall, as well as a parapet around the cistern, which was also made of stone. We couldn’t ascertain when this intervention was made, nor when it was demolished. The descriptive specifications are not clear in this regard.

So, in the following decade, we see that this conservation philosophy was still being followed. By this time, it was deemed necessary to provide the keep with a lightning rod³⁸. In 1974, due to an electrical discharge, “a few elements, such as a merlon and the iron fittings of the door and of the access trapdoor to the upper floor of the keep” were actually displaced. However, the necessary work of consolidation of the tower (as well as the replacement of damaged parts) was only contracted three years later³⁹. It is also about this time that the Castle’s surroundings began receiving some attention. The accurate identification of the monument’s protection zone was deemed crucial by the Celorico de Basto Town Council⁴⁰ since there the intention of building a pedestrian access to the Castle⁴¹. Providing a proper technical support, the DGEMN suggested the reuse of “the access that had already been defined by the people who used the castle, despite the fact that it still lacked suitable repairs according with the local rustic features”⁴².

Besides the fact that the monument was allocated to the newly-created IPPC – Instituto Português do Património Cultural [Portuguese Institute of the Cultural Patrimony] that, after 1985⁴³, became responsible for its protection and valorisation⁴⁴, there is little more we can add. The monument was transferred to the jurisdiction of the IPPAR – Instituto Português do Património Arquitetónico [Portuguese Institute of the Architectonic Patrimony] in 1992, to the IGESPAR – Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitetónico e Arqueológico [Portuguese Institute for Management of Architectural and Archaeological Heritage] in 2005 and, more recently, it was integrated in the Route of the Romanesque (2010).

So, we see that from the turn of the millennium onwards, the interventions carried out in the Castle of Arnoia are a result of partnerships between the governmental entities named above and the Celorico de Basto Town Council. Besides conducting several conservation works – which included the implementation of the aforementioned archaeological surveys (2002) and the improvement of the pedestrian accesses –, the works for the creation of an information office and a cultural centre dedicated to local heritage began still during 2004⁴⁵. While initially it was intended to be installed in “casa da botica” [apothecary], it was decided to recover an old elementary school instead, which ended up accommodating the Interpretative Centre of the Castle of Arnoia. In order to better integrate the Castle in the Route of the Romanesque, a project which, in a first phase, in 2014, was aimed at the urban regeneration of the Castle’s surroundings (CMCB, 2010), was implemented so as to bring new life to that which had already been the “Villa de Basto”. [MLB / NR]

A project for the conservation, safeguarding and general enhancement of the property is also scheduled for a second phase. The works will focus primarily on the inside of the Castle, the walls and the tower, as well as on the treatment and paving of the access routes to the monument (Costa, 2014). [RR]



Village of Castelo (Celorico de Basto).
Interpretive Centre of the Castle of Arnoia
– Tourist Information Centre of the Route
of the Romanesque.

38 Ofício da Direção-Geral dos Assuntos Culturais, 21 de março de 1974 [SIPA.TXT.01026743]. PT DGEMN: DSARH-010/075-0003 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [N.º IPA PTO10305020003].

39 Memória, 9 de maio de 1977 [SIPA.TXT.01027020]. DGEMN:DSARH-010/075-0006. Idem.

40 Ofício n.º 359 da C.M.C.B., 5 de março de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.01026986]. Idem.

41 Ofício n.º 556 da DGEMN de 25 de agosto de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.01026992]. Idem.

42 Idem.

43 Ofício do Instituto Português do Património Cultural de 2 de setembro de 1986 [SIPA.TXT.01027036]. Idem.

44 The IPPC – Instituto Português do Património Cultural [Portuguese Institute of the Cultural Patrimony] was established by Decree-Law no. 59/80, of April 3rd, as “a service aimed at promoting the preservation and valorization of what, for its historical value, artistic, archaeological, bibliographical, documentary, ethnographic or landscape, integrates the cultural heritage of the Country”.

45 Documentation available in DGEMN:DREM N 2315. Castelo de Arnoia/dos Mouros/de Moreira. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM N.

CHRONOLOGY

10th century (2nd half): construction of the Castle of Arnoia, according to tradition;

1064: first documented reference regarding the fortification;

1092: a document mentions the properties of Celorico and "terra de Basto";

12th-13th centuries: second occupation period of the Castle and edification of the Castle of Arnoia's Romanesque structure;

1717: the parish seat is transferred from "Villa de Basto" to the parish of Britelo;

1726: "terra de Basto" was then divided into two municipalities, Celorico and Cabeceiras de Basto; the keep of the Castle of Arnoia was still crowned with battlements;

1758: the Castle of Arnoia was already presenting some traces of ruin;

1946: it is classified as a National Monument by Decree no. 35.532 (Governmental Gazette no. 55, from March 15th);

1960-1963: period of restoration works in the Castle of Arnoia, under the DGEMN's responsibility;

1985: the Castle of Arnoia is allocated to the IPPC;

1992: the Castle of Arnoia's jurisdiction is transferred to the IPPAR;

2002: conduction of archaeological surveys inside the fortification;

2004: installation of the Interpretative Centre of the Castle of Arnoia in an old elementary school;

2005: the Castle of Arnoia is reallocated to the IGESPAR;

2010: integration in the Route of the Romanesque;

2014: improvements to the surroundings of the Castle of Arnoia, under the Route of the Romanesque.

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