

Capuchos Convent - Almada

Chronology

1558 - foundation and construction of the convent with the invocation of Our Lady of Mercy, part of the Arrábidos Franciscan Order, ordered by D. Lourenço Pires de Távora (1510-1573), of the noble family of the Távora, 4th lord of the House and Morgado da Caparica, born in Almada, a man of arms and diplomat in the service of Portugal, who became its patron saint.

The construction is simple, with the cells in the upper stories and the rest of the rooms in the lower part, at the back of the church.

A hermitage is built in the convent's surroundings, invoking the Apostle St. Peter, for the private prayers of the religious.

The religious community is protected by the convent's patron saints, the owners of the farms in the region and by King Sebastião himself.

1560 - Pope Pius IV grants the high altar the same indulgences enjoyed by the churches of St. Gregory in Rome and St. Sebastian outside the walls of the same city.

1573 - death of the founder of the convent who, five weeks before his death, had retired there.

1618 - renovation of the dormitories.

1630 - extension and improvement works with the re-erection of the building, probably including the main façade, with the addition of the high choir and the narthex with a serliana, which, in addition to the Franciscan symbol and the Távoras' arms, now has two side windows and a niche in the center, the narthex is covered with tiles and the pulpit of the church is made by the Provincial Friar Lourenço da Madre Deus (Arcos, 1972).

1755, November 1st - earthquake causes serious destruction of the convent, with the exception of the façade.

18th century - José Menezes Távora is patron saint of the convent.

1778 - date inscribed on the tile panel of the gateway to the raised garden of the fence.

1779 - the friars started running a "school for reading, writing and counting" where young people from the surrounding villages flocked.

1834 - extinction of the Religious Orders and subsequent decline of the convent and disappearance of the tiles from the narthex, only 9 friars then lived in the convent, and guardianship passed to the Parish People's Judge, suppression of the convent due to the low number of resident friars and the fact that it was considered useless.

1872 - nationalisation of the convent's assets.

19th-20th centuries - suffers long vicissitudes that lead to the ruin of the hermitage of São Pedro along with the convent, leaving only a few vestiges, which make it possible to later raise the walls of the latter, in the same place, it is occupied over the years by shepherds and farmers from the region with pastures in the vicinity, having undergone several transfers.

1925 - the church's tiles disappear.

1950 - purchase of the entire rustic and urban part of the property of the former Capuchos convent by Almada Town Council from the then owner Virgílio Alves Xavier.

1952 - date of the images of the interior of the church and the gilded carving of the altar, offered by Dr. João Couto, then Director of the National Museum of Ancient Art.

October 18 - return of the bones of the convent's founder and patron and their burial at the entrance to the chancel.

1960s - 1970s, decades - construction in the gardens, time of images of saints and other works on display, the result of gifts from demolished monuments in Almada and Lisbon, some of which were carried out by master builders and stonemasons.

1982 - date inscribed on one of the arches of the recent viewpoint, possibly marking its construction.

1984 - drawing up of an agreement between the Almada Municipal Museum and the Almada Archaeology Center, start of the structuring phase and installation of the Almada Municipal Museum in the convent.

2000, May 13 - signing of the consignment note marking the start of the work to restore, consolidate and extend the convent.

2000 - start of the refurbishment of the convent by Almada Town Council.

