



ÉVORA | PORTUGAL

CONVENT OF REMEDIES



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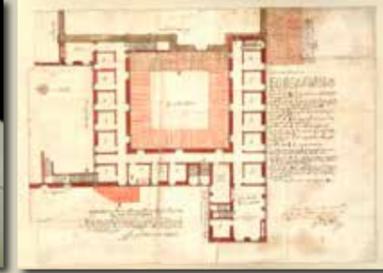
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Évora
 Historic Center



Celestino Manuel

BN (Portugal): 18th century



FUNDATION

The Convent of Our Lady of Remedies in Évora, was the 3rd men's foundation of the Discalced Carmelite order in the kingdom of Portugal (1594) preceded only by Lisbon (Convent of Our Lady of Remedies - 1581) and Cascais (Convent of Our Lady of Mercy - 1594).

Formerly a convent of friars, its foundation was due to the endeavour of the Archbishop of Évora *D. Teotónio de Bragança* and to Tereza of Avila, in the meantime diseased, founder of the new Order of Discalced (Avila - 1593). This first order ever created by a woman, was owed to the enterprise of the religious woman who sought to establish poorer more dynamic religious communities, regardless of cloister being still mandatory for female religious houses.

The evidence of the bond of St. Teresa of Avila to this Portuguese religious community became clear with the assignment in 1617, shortly after her death, of a relic (of flesh) stored in the then established chapel adjoining the vestry at the convent church of Remedios (chapel of *Santa Teresa*, adapted for funeral chapel in 1825).

Friar Joseph of the Holy Spirit from this religious community of Évora, prior at the Convent of Remedies, was appointed vicar of the new foundation to be established overseas. Accompanying him were a few monks and after two months of travel they arrived to Salvador, in Bahia de Todos os Santos, Brazil, establishing there first monastery of this Order in the Americas (Convent of St. Teresa of Jesus - 1665). The religious artefacts to the new foundation, conveyed by Friar *José do Espírito Santo* since Évora, had been funded with money from his preaching in this church and were items artistically identical to those existing in this convent of Évora.

The last foundation of this Order in the city of Évora - the Convent of *São José* (female branch) happened only much later in 1681 and was the 24th in the Portuguese world.

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CURRENT USE OF THE FORMER CONVENT

With the extinction of the religious orders in Portugal, this former religious complex was assigned to the Municipality of Évora, by Royal act of *D. Maria II* in 1839, there to be installed, the new cemetery. This equipment seen today as historic, is located within the wide premises of the former religious house, having been then enriched with sculptural pieces from the Convent of São Domingos, some of remarkable quality, as is the case of the portal with the inscription "1537" assigned to *Nicolas Chantereine*.

The requalification of the secular building was carried out in the late twentieth century with the ambitious remodelling project of the architect *Vitor Figueiredo*, according to the basic program established by the City Council of Évora, the author created to the site a solution of mainly multi-purpose spaces, intended for culture and heritage. Currently, a part of this building hosts the *Associação e Conservatório Regional de Évora* (Association and Regional Conservatory of Évora) | Eborae Mvsica with intense activity in music teaching as well as in the high quality programming held in the cloister and church of Remedios. The remaining area hosts municipal services, assigned to culture and heritage which have been carrying out already acknowledged work (the APOM award 2012) and a number of initiatives, sometimes along with national and foreign institutions.

As for permanent exhibitions, the recent *Núcleo Interpretativo do Megalitismo* (Interpretive Megalithic Center), should be mentioned.

These are some of the activities which have significantly contributed to the development and preservation of the building, which, along with the church and porch of the cemetery, have been classified as Monument of Public Interest in 2015.

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CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF REMEDIES

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ALTARPIECE ART

The set of altarpieces still existing in the convent church, are of highly artistic relevance. The first to be created was the one in the chancel, whose deed of adjustment was held on September 25, 1756 between the convent Prior and the prestigious Master *Sebastião Abreu do Ó*, owning an open workshop in the city of Évora. The drawing or project of this great work may possibly be ascribed to master *Luís João Botelho*, from Évora. It is also worth noting that in this altarpiece, in addition to the sculptural representations of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, of St. Joseph and St. Teresa of Avila (founder of the Order of Discalced Carmelites) the Holy Sacrament in *Jubilees* or *Lausperene* (Perpetual prayer), was solemnly displayed to the religious community residing there.

The twin altarpieces, parallel to the triumphal arch, were created in the following years. Of them is only known that in 1761, they were golden, and possibly designed by the same professionals who performed

the main altarpiece of the church. These were devotional to a single theme, i.e. in the center of the composition there is a framed niche with glazed door, with the sculptural representation of the patron St. Michael the Archangel and Our Lady.

Also in the church there is another gilded altarpiece about the invocation of *Santa Ana*, created in the three-year period, of 1772 - 1775, of unknown authorship, but certainly of artists dwelling in the city of Évora. This piece was partially renovated in the three-year period, of 1781 - 1784, at the time when several loci or niches have been opened in the altarpiece and several reliquaries placed inside.

In the church vestry there is a magnificent reliquary shrine, upon the chest of drawers. This is one of the most famous pelic shrine, in Portugal. Created in the three-year period of 1787 - 1790 by unknown local artists.

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