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Coimbra's parochial network: aspects of its definition in the 12th century*

Maria Amélia Campos

Following the last Christian conquest of the city, in 1064, Coimbra displayed, on one side, the typical profile of an ancient Visigothic diocesan seat, and on the other the morphology and social fabric of an Islamized urban nucleus¹. The military pacification of this territory allowed the city to become an attractor of populations from southern regions, including Mozarab groups². From the standpoint of ecclesiastical organization, the diocesan seat was restored – we hear of its first bishop, D. Paterno, as early as 1080³. Towards the end of the century, we see the construction of new churches and the rebuilding of the cathedral and smaller temples which had survived during the Islamic period⁴.

The political and military process led by Afonso Henriques, which resulted in the independence of the Portuguese nation, had a landmark in 1131, when he arrived in Coimbra. This city already featured a multifaceted society, based on labour, production and trade. The coming of the young prince to the city on the margins of the Mondego

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1 Coimbra was under Islamic rule from the 8th century to 879, and from 987 to 1064. The presence of different people from North Africa characterized the society and the urbanism of this city. See GOMES, Saul António – “Mundo rural mundo urbano”. In SERRÃO, Joel e MARQUES A. H. de Oliveira (dir.) - *Nova História de Portugal*, vol. 3. COELHO, Maria Helena da Cruz e HOMEM, Armando Luís de Carvalho (coord.) – *Portugal em Definição de Fronteiras (1096-1325): Do Condado Portucalense à Crise do Século XIV*. Lisboa: Presença, 1996, pp. 391-395 and PICARD, Christophe – *Le Portugal musulman (VIII^e-XIII^e siècle). L'occident d'al-Andalus sous dominations islamique*. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000, pp. 221-246. For other perspectives on the urban morphology of Coimbra in the 11th and 12th centuries, see VENTURA, Leontina – “A muralha coimbrã na documentação medieval”. In *Actas das I Jornadas do Grupo de Arqueologia e Arte do Centro*. Coimbra: s.n., 1979; *idem* – “Coimbra medieval. A gramática do território”. In *Economia, Sociedade e Poderes: Estudos em Homenagem a Salvador Dias Arnaut*. Vila Nova de Gaia: Ausência, 2004, pp. 23-40; *idem* – “As Cortes ou a instalação em Coimbra dos Fideles de D. Sesnando”. In *Estudos de Homenagem ao Professor Doutor José Marques*, vol. III. Porto: Faculdade de Letras, 2006, pp. 37-52; ROSSA, Walter – *DiverCidade. Urbanografia do Espaço de Coimbra até ao Estabelecimento Definitivo da Universidade*. Coimbra: Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, 2001 (PhD dissertation presented at FCTUC), pp. 199-423; GOMES, Saul António – “Coimbra: aspectos da sua paisagem urbana em tempos medievos”. *Biblos*, IV (2006), pp.125-163 and ALARCÃO, Jorge – *Coimbra: A Montagem do Cenário Urbano*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2008.

2 MATTOSO, José – “Moçárabes”. In *Fragments de uma Composição Medieval*. Lisboa: Estampa, 1983, pp. 19-34; GOMES, Saul António – “Moçárabes”. In SERRÃO, Joel e MARQUES, A. H. de Oliveira (dir.) – *Nova História...*, vol. 3, p. 340-347.

3 See MORUJÃO, Maria do Rosário – *A Sé de Coimbra: A Instituição e a Chancelaria (1080-1318)*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian e Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, 2010, pp. 31-50.

4 According to Art historians, after the conquest of the city the old Visigothic cathedral was rebuilt (between c. 1080 and 1110); in the city's suburbs, an existing church is thought to have been devoted to the patron saint Santiago and reconstructed (between c. 1064 and 1072). On the other hand, it is considered that the churches of St. John and St. Salvador, both located in the Almedina, may have been built at this stage. For an overview of these subjects, see BOTELHO, Maria Leonor – *Corpus Historiográfico do Românico Português*. 2010, database online <http://doutoramento.marialeonorbotelho.com/> [consulted: 6-10-2014].

river, along with his entourage, encouraged other noblemen residing in the vicinity to come and settle down in the old citadel, thus enhancing the urban dynamics of what was probably the most prosperous city of the day, in the territory of the future kingdom of Portugal. In Coimbra, then, Afonso Henriques would act within a non-noble society, organized around the power of the municipality⁵, thereby distancing himself from the Northern nobility, a social group which conditioned his actions and weakened his stand as a political leader⁶.

In Coimbra, among other relevant decisions, Afonso Henriques accepted the initiative by the Sé's archdeacon, D. Telo, and supported the foundation of a community of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, which he favoured with abundant donations. This decision expressed the young ruler's wish to support the establishment, in his lands, of the new religious currents born in the context of a wider programme of renewal of the Western Church⁷. Founded in 1131, this monastery would later on receive the Pope's "nullius diocesis", an exemption which placed the convent and its churches directly under the authority of Rome, thereby freeing them from episcopal jurisdiction. This showed the Curia's interest in having, in a kingdom that was becoming emancipated, an institution which acted directly under its own jurisdiction and authority⁸.

In the context of the foundation of this convent, among other important donations, Afonso Henriques gave to the Monastery of Santa Cruz the *Almuinha do Rei*, located nearby, in 1137⁹. Two years later, we find the highest figures in the Portuguese Church and in the diocese of Coimbra establishing, on that site, the limits of the Santa Cruz Monastery parish, by command of Afonso "*infantis Portugalis*"¹⁰. This record constitutes an

5 The municipality of Coimbra was established at the beginning of the 12th century, and its first *foral* (municipal charter) dates from 1111. See MERÊA, Paulo – "Sobre as origens do concelho de Coimbra". *Revista Portuguesa de História*, n.º1 (1941), pp. 49-69; COELHO, Maria Helena da Cruz – *O Município de Coimbra: Monumentos Fundacionais*. Coimbra: Câmara Municipal e Imprensa da Universidade, 2013.

6 VENTURA, Leontina – *Livro Santo de Santa Cruz de Coimbra. Cartulário do Século XII*. Lisboa: INIC, 1990, pp. 9-44 (from this point onwards, this book will be identified as *Livro Santo*); *idem* – "Coimbra medieval: uma cidade em formação". ALARCÃO, Adília (coord.) – *Inventário do Museu Nacional Machado Castro. Coleção de Ourivesaria Medieval. Séculos XII-XIV*. Lisboa: Instituto Português de Museus, 2004, pp. 16-29; MATTOSO, José – *Afonso Henriques*. Lisboa: Temas e Debates, 2007, pp. 105-112.

7 MARTINS, Armando Alberto – *O Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra na Idade Média*. Lisboa: Centro de História da Universidade, 2003, pp. 136-144; GOMES, Saul António – In *Limine Conscriptio: Documentos, Chancelaria e Cultura no Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra (Séculos XII a XIV)*. Coimbra: Palimage, 2007, pp. 71-159.

8 MATTOSO, José – "Cluny, crúzios e cistercienses na formação de Portugal". In *Portugal Medieval: Novas Interpretações*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1985, pp. 101-121.

9 *Livro Santo*, doc. 7 (September, 1137); ALARCÃO, Jorge – *Coimbra: A Montagem do Cenário Urbano...*, pp. 155-180.

10 *Johannes Peculiaris archiepiscopus Bracara <et> Bernardus Colimbriensis episcopus cum Roderico pretore Colimbrie et Gundisalvuo Diaz et Martino Anaia et Suario Goterriz et Menendo Artaldi et Randulfo Zoleimaz et Pelagio Guoterriz et Salvatore Zoleimaz et Fernando Guoterriz et Martino Zouparel et Mendo Pelaiz et Fromariguo Guoterriz, tunc temporibus maiordomo civitatis, et Petrus Menendiz iudice et multis aliis civibus Colimbrie*" see *Livro Santo*, doc. 1B, p. 106, and *Documentos Medievais Portugueses, Documentos Régios*, v. I, t. I. Lisboa: Academia Portuguesa de História, 1940, doc. 172 (from this point onwards, this book will be identified as *DR*). In the cartulary of Santa Cruz it was dated 1134 and 1137. In the compilation of royal documents is published a copy from the 13th century, which refers to its making in 1144. The date 1139, which we adopt in this study, was assigned by Rui d' Azevedo. See *DR*, v. I, t. II, note XXXV. According to this author, D. João Peculiar had come to Coimbra, directly from

exceptional document in the Portuguese panorama, not only for being rare but also for dating so far back in time¹¹. On the other hand, it is also meaningful for the history of Coimbra's ecclesiastical structure, since it clearly shows us that this parish found its place among the already existent parishes of Santiago and Santa Justa, on the outskirts of the city.

Given the prior existence of the other churches, those who study Coimbra's institutions have generally agreed to consider this to have been the youngest of its nine urban parishes¹². As was the case with other European cities¹³, the establishment of the parishes of Coimbra, in this period, probably resulted from demographic increase coupled with the import to the Iberian Peninsula of Roman Canon Law, in the context of Gregorian Reform¹⁴.

Concerning both of these factors let us remember that, from the definitive conquest of Coimbra in 1064 on, this city was an urban centre which strongly attracted population. Its importance in the context of the future Portugal's urban network has been borne out by the large dimensions of its citadel¹⁵, even in that period. And the demographic growth that it witnessed from the 11th to the 13th centuries has been proven by studies of rural history

Rome, where he had received the papal *pallium* as Metropolitan of Braga (26th April, 1139). Deep study has been devoted to the influence of this clergyman in Afonso Henriques's ascending process as the political leader of an independent kingdom. Read, among others, ERDMANN, Carl – *O Papado e Portugal no Primeiro Século da História Portuguesa*. Coimbra: Instituto Alemão da Universidade, 1935; COSTA, Avelino Jesus da – "D. João Peculiar, co-fundador do mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra, bispo do Porto e arcebispo de Braga". In *Santa Cruz de Coimbra do Século XI ao Século XX. Estudos*. Coimbra: s.n., 1984, pp. 59-83; MARQUES, Maria Alegria Fernandes – "A Viabilização de um reino". In SERRÃO, Joel e MARQUES, A. H. de Oliveira (dir.) – *Nova História...*, vol. 3, p. 23-37; GOMES, Saul António – In *Limine Conscriptio...*, pp. 150-158. The laymen mentioned in this document were studied by VENTURA, Leontina – "Apêndices Biográficos". In *Livro Santo*, pp. 45-60.

11 COSTA, Avelino de Jesus da – *O Bispo D. Pedro e a Organização da Arquidiocese de Braga*. Braga: Irmandade de S. Pedro da Porta Aberta, 1997-2000, p. 357.

12 VENTURA, Leontina – "Coimbra Medieval...", pp. 18-19.

13 The multiplication of urban parishes in Western Christendom accompanied the movement of urban expansion of the 12th and 13th centuries. See GAUDEMET, Jean – "La paroisse au Moyen Âge. État des questions". *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France*, 59/162 (1973), pp. 12-15. See, for instance, some cases of parish network definition in French cities: NOIZET, Hélène – "De l'église au territoire : les paroisses à Tours (XI^e-XIII^e siècles)". *Médiévales*, 49 (2005), pp. 45-56 [online: <http://medievales.revues.org/1275> [consulted:16-10-2014] and COMTE, François et GRELOIS, Emmanuel – "La formation des paroisses urbaines: les exemples d'Angers et de Clermont (X^e-XIII^e siècles)". *Médiévales*, 49 (2005), pp. 57-72 [online: <http://medievales.revues.org/1280> [consulted 16-10-2014].

14 COSTA, Avelino Jesus da – "Paróquia". In SERRÃO, Joel (coord.) – *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, t. V. Porto: Livraria Figueirinhas, 1963-1971, pp. 7 e 8; MATTOSO, José – "A história das paróquias em Portugal". In *Portugal Medieval...*, pp. 37-57; GOMES, Saul António – "Organização paroquial e jurisdição eclesiástica no priorado de Leiria nos séculos XII a XV". *Lusitania Sacra*, 2.^a série, 4 (1992), pp. 163-309 [online: <http://repositorio.ucp.pt/handle/10400.14/4869> [consulted 9-10-2014] and MARQUES, José – "Formas de organização do espaço na Idade Média". In *Arquitectando Espaços: da Natureza à Metápolis*. Porto/Coimbra: Faculdade de Letras do Porto/Departamento das Ciências e Técnicas do Património/Centro de Estudos de Arqueologia, Artes e Ciências do Património, 2003, p. 161; RODRIGUES, Ana Maria S. A. – "A formação da rede paroquial no Portugal medievo". In *Estudos em Homenagem ao Professor Doutor José Amadeu Coelho Dias*. Porto: Faculdade de Letras, 2006, pp. 71-84. [online: <http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/4407.pdf> [consulted 14-10-2014] and MENDES, Francisco José dos Santos – *O Nascimento da Margem Sul. Paróquias, Concelhos e Comendas (1147-1385)*. Lisboa: Colibri, 2011, pp. 71-91.

15 GOMES, Saul António – "Mundo rural e mundo urbano...", p. 393.

focused on its surrounding area¹⁶. Concerning the implementation in this diocese of the Western Church's new currents, we should note the action of French bishops such as Maurício Burdino (1099-1108)¹⁷ and D. Bernardo (1128-1146†)¹⁸, as well as those of Peninsular origin who committed early on to the establishment of the Roman Rite in this territory, such as D. Crescónio (1092-1098)¹⁹ and D. Gonçalo Pais (1109-1127†)²⁰. In spite of the strong resistance it faced, the Romanization of the ecclesiastical and political structures of the city of Coimbra was carried out, from the end of the 11th century into the 12th.²¹

From a global perspective, it is also interesting to point out that this period saw the Romanization of the city's ecclesiastical architecture. In fact, from 1138 (S. João de Almedina) to 1206 (Santiago) we see a new reconstruction of the Cathedral and the other parochial churches²². This Romanesque reform of religious buildings was a visible mark of the reorganization and Romanization of the territory. To these temples was thus applied a common stylistic programme, international in its character, which would be forever associated with the *Reconquista* process and the reorganization of the national territory²³. Just like in other regions of Western Christendom²⁴, this process of construction and reconstruction of parochial churches received financial support from lay communities.

From what has been said so far, we understand that Coimbra already possessed, in the early 12th century, a complex ecclesiastical network, which would later on provide the stage on which several power struggles would play out. Generally speaking, the Portuguese cities' parochial networks were slow in defining themselves. The obligation of receiving one's sacraments in one single church arrived in the Iberian Peninsula only in the 11th and 12th centuries, obeying the Gregorian Reform's doctrine. The first directions, ecclesiastic and civil, on parochial jurisdiction date from 1229, and the territorial fixation

16 COELHO, Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho – *O Baixo Mondego nos Finais da Idade Média*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1989, pp. 11-18; *idem* – "As cidades medievais portuguesas – População". In *Atas do I Congresso Histórico Internacional As Cidades na História: População*, vol I. Guimarães: Câmara Municipal, 2013, pp. 145-162.

17 MORUJÃO, Maria do Rosário B. – *A Sé de Coimbra: A Instituição e a Chancelaria (1080-1318)*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian e Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, 2010, pp. 90-93.

18 *idem, ibidem*, pp. 99-101.

19 *idem, ibidem*, pp. 86-90.

20 See *idem, ibidem*, pp. 93-98.

21 See ROSA, Maria de Lurdes – "A força dos ritos na identificação comunitária: os moçarabes de Coimbra e a introdução da liturgia romana (1064-1116)". In AZEVEDO, Carlos Moreira (dir.) – *História Religiosa de Portugal*, v. I. Jorge, Ana Maria C. M. e Rodrigues, Ana Maria S. A. (coord.) – *Formação e Limites da Cristandade*. Rio de Mouro: Círculo de Leitores, 2000, p. 433-440. The municipality of Coimbra was raised, precisely, on this antagonistic context, see COELHO, Maria Helena da Cruz – "A propósito do foral de Coimbra de 1179". In *Homens, espaços e poderes: séculos XI e XVI*, I, *Notas do viver Social*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1990, p. 105-116.

22 ALARCÃO, Jorge – *Coimbra. A Montagem do Cenário Urbano...*, p. 114.

23 BOTELHO, Maria Leonor – *A Historiografia da Arquitectura da Época Românica em Portugal (1870-2010)*. Lisboa: Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia / Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2013, pp. 448-456.

24 We can find processes of this kind in other European regions. See HAMILTON, Sarah – *Church and People in the Medieval West*. Harlow: Pearson, 2013, pp. 36-55.

of these entities would not be complete before the beginning of the 14th century²⁵. Bearing in mind the national context, the organization of Coimbra's parishes was a relatively precocious process. A decisive factor was the action of the new monastery's founders and canons, committed to a pastoral that was international and *Roman*²⁶. Actually, the parish of S. João de Santa Cruz is the only one whose territorial limits we know, which reveals precisely the preoccupation, by those in charge, of establishing their own jurisdictional framework. As we will see later, the other urban parishes had their boundaries determined in less perceptible ways, to judge from documents from that period. That process was also, probably, a slower one²⁷.

Nowadays it is fairly consensual that, in the Late Middle Ages, the urban parish represented the most stable unit in the Portuguese city²⁸. It worked as a nucleus for populating activity; but in addition to being a unit of organization of the population, the parish provided the concrete framework of religious life, the one the faithful could feel in the closest, most tangible way. In fact, the urban parish offered its inhabitants not only a spiritual, but a socio-economic structure as well. In their parish they formed and partook of a community which enjoyed a unique, differentiated character²⁹.

These ecclesiastical circumscriptions which, in documents dating from the 13th century and later, we recognize as territories endowed with a population and a set of defined, more or less stable rights, are very hard to discern in the preceding centuries. The root of the problem lies in the secondary status of the parish in the primitive organization of Christian society. In effect, Christian life was initially organized in diocesan communities, gathered around their bishop.

In the Iberian Peninsula, the first parish division we know of was carried out in 569, in the context of the Lugo Council. The diocese of Coimbra had at this time only seven parishes, an ecclesiastical structure which will be dismantled by more than three centuries of Islamic occupation³⁰. After the Christian conquest, in the Iberian Peninsula as in other European kingdoms, even while the programme for Reform of the Western Church was

25 MATTOSO, José – "A história das paróquias em Portugal...", pp. 49-51.

26 Since they belonged to the ecclesiastical seignory of the Santa Cruz Monastery, in Coimbra, the parishes of Leiria and its surroundings were also organized in a very quick process. GOMES, Saul António – "Organização paroquial"..., p. 199.

27 As was the case with other cities in Western Christendom, see NOIZET, Hélène – "De l'église au territoire..."; ZADORARIO, Elisabeth – "Territoires paroissiaux et construction de l'espace vernaculaire". *Médiévales*, 49 (2005), pp.105-120 [<http://medievales.revues.org/document1306.html>] [consulted 16-10-2014].

28 BEIRANTE, Maria Ângela – *Évora na Idade Média*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and JNICT, 1995, p. 55.

29 AUBRUN, Michel – *La paroisse en France: des origines au XV^e siècle*. Paris: Picard, 1986, pp. 113-119. About pastoral aspects in other European regions see, for instance, PLATELLE, Henri – "La paroisse et son cure jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle: orientations de la recherche actuelle". In *L'encadrement religieux des fidèles au Moyen-Âge et jusqu'au Concile de Trente*. Paris: C.T.H.S., 1985, pp. 11-26 and HELANDER, Sven – "The liturgical profile of the parish church in Medieval Sweden". In HERRERNAN, Thomas J. and MATTER, E. Ann (eds.) - *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2005, pp. 145-186.

30 MARQUES, José – "Formas de organização...", pp. 155-159 and COSTA, Avelino Jesus da (ed.) – *Liber Fidei Sanctae Bracarensis Ecclesia*, v. I. Braga: Junta Distrital de Braga, 1965, doc. 10, fl. 4v.

being carried out, the parochial framework was not presented as mandatory. This led historians of the Church to consider that the parish appeared mainly in connection with the progress of evangelization and, as mentioned already, with the new demographic dynamics.

So, in order to understand the gradual emergence of parochial jurisdictions in Coimbra in the early days of the Portuguese nationality, we will have to focus on the sociological aspects implied by these institutions. Sociologically considered, a parish is a society of believers which presupposes a territory and a population, thus implying a drawing of frontiers. Gradually, the whole of Western Christendom saw the creation of a link between each church and its parishioners, a link made tangible by their obligation to receive sacraments and pay tithes and oblations in their own church.

From the 13th century onwards, the economic prerogatives associated with parochial jurisdiction will originate the need to create instruments of control, such as church lists drawn up to enable collection of ecclesiastical taxes. In the dioceses, bishops established the values paid for each parish³¹ and ordered the organization of *censuais*³². In Portugal, we have also some examples of those instruments of control, written following the king's orders³³.

In the same way, from the 13th century onwards, the exertion of parochial authority and the collection of the tithe originated numerous conflicts among churches, of which we learn by reading the sentences passed by the Ecclesiastical Court to settle them³⁴. In order to decrease the frequency of those disagreements, churches were encouraged – and sometimes forced – to write property registers in which all their property should be identified. These documents are very relevant for understanding the boundaries of

31 In the first half of 13th century, in Coimbra, the bishop and the parish churches established the amount due by each church, annually, when the bishop visited them. ANTT, Cabido da Sé, 1.^a incorp., m. 2, n.º 82 (1251, February); ANTT, Cabido da Sé, 1.^a incorp., m. 15, n.º 32 and GUARDADO, Maria Cristina Gonçalves – *A Colegiada de S. Bartolomeu de Coimbra em Tempos Medievais (Das Origens ao Início do Século XV)*, v. I. Coimbra: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1999 (Master's dissertation), doc. 6 (24-12-1257).

32 For the dioceses of Coimbra, we only have this source for the 14th century. SOALHEIRO, João – "Censual da diocese de Coimbra – século XIV – ANTT: COM, Ordem de Cristo/Convento de Tomar, liv. 264". *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura*, 6 (2006), pp. 51-90. See also Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra (AUC), Dio. MECBR/06; *Censuais e registos de receitas e foros e rendas*; Mitra episcopal de Coimbra, L. 122. The bishop collected tributes like the "terça", "colheita" and the "ceras". See, for instance, the study of the collection of parish tributes by the bishop of Coimbra in the case of the parish of Santa Justa: CAMPOS, Maria Amélia Álvaro de – *Santa Justa de Coimbra na Idade Média: O Espaço Urbano, Religioso e Socio-económico*, v. I. Coimbra: Faculdade de Letras, 2012 (PhD's thesis), pp. 83-89.

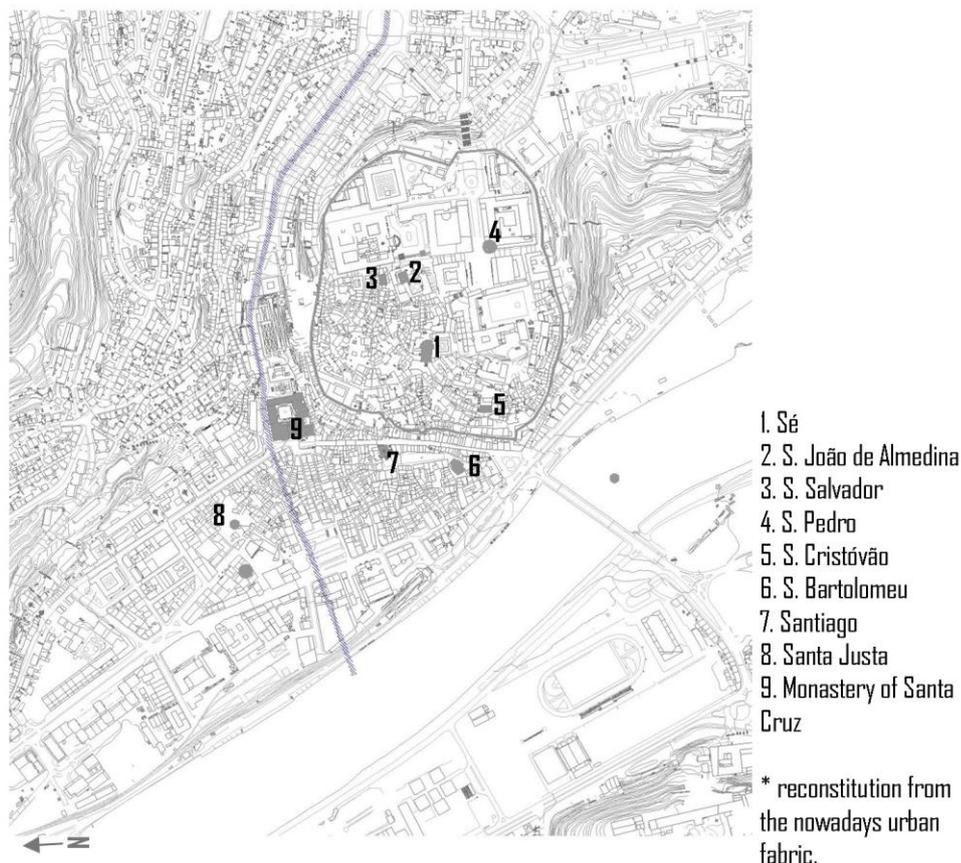
33 The oldest of these dates back to the year 1220. This document, produced between 1220 and 1229 by the central administration, lists all churches belonging to the royal patronage and those under the jurisdiction of the Mitras in their respective dioceses. See BOISSELIER, Stéphane – *La Construction administrative d'un royaume. Registres de bénéfices ecclésiastiques portugais (XIII^e-XIV^e siècles)*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa, 2012, doc. 1.

34 The conflicts between the See and the other urban churches because of the tithe on the parishioners' labour were common. See, for instance, GUARDADO – *A Colegiada de S. Bartolomeu...*, v. II, doc. 23 (1324-11-25). We can also find several examples of conflicts among the other churches, as the conflict between the churches of Santa Justa and S. João de Almedina motivated by the division of tithing. ANTT, Colegiada de Santa Justa de Coimbra, m. 15, n.º 302 (1331-02-11).

parochial territories. In the case of the parochial churches of Coimbra, however, their production only becomes systematic much later, in the 16th century³⁵.

To sum up, anticipating the conclusion of these reflections, we can see that documents from the 12th century – as opposed to what would happen in the following centuries – offer very little information. As a consequence they reflect the ill-defined character of these circumscriptions of ecclesiastical administration in their early years.

Leaving aside, in this paper, the other ecclesiastical institutions in the city, we will seek to investigate the foundation of the parochial network. In doing so, we will question the extent to which this parochial network was already laid out at the start of the 12th century, and the ways in which these parishes were perceived by their inhabitants as providers of a physical and spiritual framework. To this end, we will begin with a brief identification of these nine circumscriptions and then continue by problematizing and reflecting on the early days of their institutionalization.



Location of Coimbra's medieval parishes

35 Composed between 1511 and 1551, we acknowledge registers of property for five of the urban parishes of Coimbra. See ANTT, Colegiada de Santa Justa de Coimbra, L. 1 (1547); ANTT, Colegiada de Santiago de Coimbra, L.1 (1511); ANTT, Colegiada de São Cristóvão de Coimbra, L.1 (1520); ANTT, Colegiada de S. Salvador de Coimbra, L. 2 (1551) e ANTT, Colegiada de S. Pedro de Coimbra, L. 2 (illegible date).

At least until the end of the 11th century, Coimbra is thought to have been under the ecclesiastical sway of one single parish: that of the Sé (the See)³⁶. Following the definitive conquest of the city, the diocese of Coimbra was reinstated and the Sé probably recovered, around that time, its role as the main centre of worship in the Christian city. From the 12th century onwards, when in the whole of Western Christianity we notice the secularization of urban institutions³⁷, we recognize other parochial jurisdictions.

Around the time Coimbra was definitively conquered by Christians, there were two churches, in addition to the Cathedral, inside the citadel: the church of S. Pedro, mentioned as early as 980³⁸, and that of St. Salvador, mentioned in a document from 1064³⁹. Planted between the castle and the *alcazaba* we find the church of S. Pedro, which depended on the monastery of Lorvão (near Penacova), one of the most important in the diocese of Coimbra. The church of S. Salvador was dependent on the monastery of Vacariça⁴⁰ (near Mealhada). The antiquity of both places of worship makes us realize the strength of Coimbra's Mozarab community. In fact, the monasteries presiding over them were also important Christian bastions during the periods of Almohad and Almoravid occupation⁴¹. According to the historians of the city of Coimbra, the Mozarab community kept a connection to the parish of S. Salvador until the second third of the 12th century⁴².

In the citadel, next to the See, was located the parish of S. João de Almedina, mentioned as early as 1083⁴³. This was a very particular church, since it constituted a part of the episcopal palace and was used as a temple by the Coimbra prelate. After the definitive conquest of the city, from the term of D. Paterno (1080-1087†) to that of D. João Anaia (1148-1155), every bishop was buried in this church⁴⁴. Although its construction was

36 MERÊA, Paulo – "Sobre as origens do concelho de Coimbra". *Revista Portuguesa de História*, I (1941), p. 54.

37 NOIZET, Hélène – "De l'église au territoire...", p. 51.

38 VARANDAS, Carla Patrícia Rana – *A Colegiada de S. Pedro de Coimbra das Origens ao Final do Século XIV. Estudo Económico e Social*, v. I. Coimbra: Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Coimbra, 1999 (Master's dissertation), p. 9.

39 *Livro Preto. Cartulário da Sé de Coimbra*, RODRIGUES, Manuel Augusto and COSTA, Avelino de Jesus da (dirs.). Coimbra: Arquivo da Universidade, 1999 (from this time on, this book will be identified as *Livro Preto*), doc. 73.

40 *ibidem*, doc. 73 (1064) and doc. 41 (1093).

41 Unfortunately, little is known on the Monastery of Vacariça. The Monastery of Lorvão was founded c. 879, and around 1085 it stood as one of the Iberian Peninsula's Benedictine houses. At the start of the 13th century, however, it was transformed into a female Cistercian convent by D. Teresa, a daughter of king D. Sancho I. See MARQUES, Maria Alegria – "Inocência II e a passagem do mosteiro de Lorvão para a ordem de Cister. As primeiras freiras de Lorvão". In *Estudos sobre a Ordem de Cister em Portugal*. Lisboa e Coimbra: Edições Colibri e Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1998, p. 75-125; 127-180; SOUSA, Bernardo Vasconcelos (dir.), PINA, Isabel Castro, ANDRADE, Maria Filomena and SANTOS, Maria Leonor Ferraz de Oliveira Silva – *Ordens Religiosas em Portugal. Das Origens a Trento – Guia Histórico*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2006, pp. 66, 117-118.

42 VENTURA, Leontina – "Coimbra Medieval...", p. 17.

43 *Livro Preto...*, doc. 456.

44 MORUJÃO, Maria do Rosário B. – *Sé de Coimbra...*, p. 84. The paleobiological study of the medieval cemetery of this parish attests to the privileged origins of its occupants. CUNHA, Eugénia – *Paleobiologia das Populações Medievais*

begun after the conquest of Coimbra, by the time bishop D. Paterno died this church is thought to have been already consecrated, and its cult established⁴⁵.

At the southern end of the Almedina was the church of S. Cristóvão, referenced for the first time in 1108⁴⁶. Studying the 12th and 13th century documentation of this collegiate church brings to light the action of continued support by the Anaia family, who came from the Asturian region and subsequently became associated with the ecclesiastical and political elite of the day. This family came to Coimbra in the entourage of Count D. Henrique and settled there⁴⁷.

Outside the city walls, from the gates outward, the outskirts were growing up: these, in the 12th century, were already significantly occupied⁴⁸. In a period of demographic expansion and return to peace, the outskirts received those people who were drawn to the advantages of life in the city but could find no place inside it.

On the river's right bank has stood, since the year 957, the S. Bartolomeu church⁴⁹. In earlier times, it took its name from the patron saint S. Cristóvão. For this reason it has been hypothesised that this change of name, in the 10th century, indicates the transfer of the first patron saint to the Almedina temple⁵⁰. Through that document, the church is donated to the Monastery of Lorvão, which will exercise its right of patronage over it for several centuries to come⁵¹.

On the outskirts we also find the church of Santiago. It is likely that it already existed as far back as the 10th century, dedicated to another patron saint⁵². The church's dedication to Santiago (St. James) and its affiliation to the patronage of Santiago de Compostela⁵³ occurred after the definitive conquest of Coimbra, and have been interpreted as a gesture of thanks by the conquerors toward that saint.

Portuguesas: Os Casos de Fão e S. João de Almedina. Coimbra: Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, 1994 (PhD's thesis), pp. 76-81.

45 ROSSA, Walter – *DiverCidade ...*, pp. 265-268.

46 MATOS, João da Cunha – *A Colegiada de São Cristóvão de Coimbra (sécs. XII e XIII)*. Tomar: Instituto Politécnico, 1998 (*working paper*), p. 5.

47 Anaia Vestrariz, a knight from *Asturias*, came to Coimbra in the entourage of Henrique, count of Boulogne. MATOS, João da Cunha – *A Colegiada de São Cristóvão...*, pp. 51-53.

48 ALARCÃO, Jorge – *Coimbra. A Montagem do Cenário Urbano...* p. 155.

49 GUARDADO, Maria Cristina Gonçalves – *A Colegiada de S. Bartolomeu...*, pp. 26-28.

50 MATOS, João da Cunha – *A Colegiada de São Cristóvão...*, p. 6. Unfortunately, the scarcity of documentation from this period doesn't permit any certainties on this subject.

51 At least until the second half of the 14th century, see GUARDADO, Maria Cristina Gonçalves – *A Colegiada de S. Bartolomeu...*, v. I, p. 32.

52 ROSSA, Walter – *DiverCidade...*, pp. 281-283.

53 ANTT, Colegiada de Santiago de Coimbra, single ream (former special collection). The document is undated. It was issued by M., archbishop of Compostela. If we admit that it was written during the tenure of D. Martín Martínez, we can date it from between 1156-1167 and the *Livro Preto*, doc. 7 (1183-03-19).

On the northern outskirts of Coimbra lay the church of Santa Justa, mentioned as early as 1098⁵⁴. This church was donated in 1102, by the bishop of Coimbra, D. Maurício, to the Abbey of Santa Maria da Caridade do Loire, dependent on Cluny⁵⁵.

Finally we must name the parish of S. João, created to depend on the Monastery of Santa Cruz, whose foundational context we have already referred.

Having introduced the nine churches which worked as parish seats throughout the whole Late Middle Ages, we will now seek to analyse the process which defined parochial jurisdiction. Documents produced between the 11th and 13th centuries allow us to grasp the process of territorialization of their respective circumscriptions, and also to characterize laypeople's perceptions of their own parishes.

In order to make that analysis we examined the documents belonging to the archives of each of the city's parochial churches, except those of the Sé de Coimbra and the Monastery of Santa Cruz. The sheer volume of these two document collections would have implied several months of research, out of line with a project of this kind. Instead we consulted the editions of the Cartulary of the Sé de Coimbra, better known as *Livro Preto*, which contains diplomas dating from the 8th to the 13th century, and of the Cartulary of the Monastery of Santa Cruz, better known as *Livro Santo de Santa Cruz*, whose documents date mostly from the end of the 11th century to the first quarter of the 13th century. Although we saw hundreds of documents, it is worth pointing out that very few of them gave us information on the parishes. We should therefore draw attention to the fact that the scarce references analysed here are conditioned, in part, by the small number of written testimonials at our disposal. Our analysis of these groups of documents allowed us to achieve an identification of the urban parishes, through contracts celebrated among private parties for buying and selling property, as well as barter and donations to relatives or to churches in the city.

As regards the delimitation of parochial territories and the distribution of city dwellers among the different circumscriptions, the document which defines the parish of S. João do Mosteiro de Santa Cruz, in the year 1139, is very enlightening. It not only describes the frontiers of the newly-created parish but also tells us that it was created «inter parrochianos Sancte Crucis et inter parrochianos Sancti Jacobi et Sancte Juste». The

54 *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica. A saeculo octavo post Christum usque ad Quintumdecimum*, v. I, *Diplomatae et Chartae*. Lisboa: Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, 1873, doc. 981; *Livro Preto*, doc. 427.

55 *Livro Preto*, doc. 22 (1102 or 1103, February 4th). About the first centuries of this church, see CAMPOS, Maria Amélia Álvaro de – *Santa Justa...*, pp. 66-76.

institution of this new parish, dependent on the Monastery of Santa Cruz, triggered a conflict between this monastery and the See of Coimbra, on account of the tithes subtracted from the adjacent parishes. This conflict, caused also by the transfer of other privileges and properties from the Sé to the recently founded monastery, would only end at the start of the following century, thanks to Pope Innocent III's intervention. To reach his final verdict, the pope had several apostolic judges nominated and established regular correspondence with them⁵⁶. Likewise, he ordered an inquiry to confirm the origin of all rights and possessions at stake. In the course of this conflict, the depositions gathered by an ecclesiastical inquiry carried out in the early 13th century⁵⁷ allow us to confirm that the boundaries of the three parishes were acknowledged by their inhabitants. In their replies, they described the limits of the three circumscriptions, and they also added some episodes of usurpation of tithes and tombs, imposed by that monastery on its neighbouring churches⁵⁸.

These testimonials demonstrate the very real perceptions that laymen and clergy had of parochial jurisdiction, its prerogatives and its physical definition inside the city. Nevertheless, these depositions were taken in the context of an ecclesiastical process involving the two most powerful ecclesiastical institutions in the diocese. For that reason, we cannot consider that these aspects were equally clear and well-known to the population in general, throughout the whole urban space. Thus, when we search the sources of the same period relating to perceptions of these aspects in other parishes in Coimbra, the documents are not so explicit. But they still give us important information, which it is interesting to add here.

By 1139, the topography of Coimbra's parishes was already known: the use of the word *ecclesia* to identify its temples meant, in that period, the existence of a group of Christians connected to a common place of worship⁵⁹. Thus, from 1064 (*ecclesia Sancti Salvatoris Colimbria*) to 1131 (*Colimbriane ecclesie Sancti Johannis*) we can reference all the city's parishes except that of Santiago, which we can find only in the document from 1139 we have already mentioned⁶⁰.

56 Actually, most of the correspondence issued by that pope in 1198 and 1199 refers to this conflict, settled only in 1203 (June 26th) with the bull *Cum Olim*. COSTA, Avelino de Jesus da and MARQUES, Maria Alegria Fernandes (eds.) - *Bulário Português: Inocêncio III (1198-1216)*. Coimbra: INIC, Centro de História da Sociedade e da Cultura, 1989 (from this point on, this book will be identified as *Bulário*), doc. 89.

57 *Bulário*, doc. 71, pp. 116-149.

58 *ibidem*, doc. 71, pp. 120-129.

59 GOMES, Saul António – "Organização paroquial...", pp. 179-181 and NOIZET, Hélène – "L'église au territoire...", p. 3-4 (online edition).

60 See, respectively, *Livro Preto*, doc. 73 (1064) and *Livro Santo*, doc. 123 (1131). The church of Santa Justa was identified as *ecclesia*, on 1102, February 4th, see *Livro Preto*, doc. 22; S. Bartolomeu was mentioned as an *ecclesia* on 1106, March 4th (*Livro Preto*, doc. 545); The first identification of the *ecclesie Sancti Christoforis* dates from May 1108 (See MATOS, João

The perception of their territoriality, as circumscribed spaces within the city, comes at a later stage, when such spaces are identified through the words *recurrentia* and *collationis*⁶¹. In the citadel's parishes those circumscriptions are referenced as early as 1119 (S. Cristóvão)⁶², 1153 (S. João de Almedina)⁶³ and 1165 (S. Pedro)⁶⁴. As regards the parishes on the outskirts, and although the contention between the See of Coimbra and the Monastery of Santa Cruz had already hinted at their territoriality, their presence in the remaining documentation only came later. The *collatione Sanctae Justae* is mentioned for the first time in 1217⁶⁵; the first reference to the *collacione Sancti Jacobi* dates from 1227⁶⁶; and, in that time period, no references are found to the territory of S. Bartolomeu. Although the boundaries separating these two parishes had been established by 1139, at the latest, comparing the chronologies of their references to the ones affecting the parishes inside the city walls leads us to believe that, inside the citadel, parochial territorialization was assumed earlier than in the suburbs. We think that the characteristics of this space⁶⁷ and, probably, its lower population density made it less necessary to achieve a precise territorialization of the parochial jurisdiction.

As the first half of the 12th century comes to a close, we spot another element which reveals the way these ecclesiastical institutions already possessed their own identity and were able to capture their faithful: the confraternities (*confrarias*). By the year 1147, the church of Santiago already had a confraternity⁶⁸; in the church of S. Bartolomeu, in 1149, there probably was another such communal welfare organization⁶⁹; and in the parish of S. Pedro we think there existed a confraternity, joining clergymen and lay people of both sexes, from 1159 on⁷⁰.

Regarding the identification of the inhabitants as parishioners of those jurisdictions, the oldest mention we have collected dates back to 1165, when a couple, involved in a

da Cunha – *A Colegiada de S. Cristóvão...*, doc. 5); although references to S. Pedro are very old, this church is mentioned as an *ecclesia* only in May 1127 (See VARANDAS, Carla Patrícia Rana – *A Colegiada de S. Pedro...*, v. II, doc. 1 e 2).

61 The latin word *Collatio, onis* means the payment of a tribute, see *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 1968 and GAFFIOT, Felix – *Dictionnaire latin-français*. Paris: Hachette, 2000. This word was often used in the context of Coimbra's parochial network. The word *recurrentia*, more difficult to explain, appeared only in the case of the parish of S. Cristóvão.

62 MATOS, João da Cunha – *A Colegiada de S. Cristóvão...*, doc. 7 (1119, October) "...in *recorrentia Sancti Christophori*...".

63 *Livro Preto*, doc. 449 (1153, May) "... in *collacione Sancti Joannis*...".

64 VARANDAS, Carla Patrícia Rana – *A Colegiada de S. Pedro...*, v. II, doc. 6 (1165, January).

65 ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1.^a incorp., m. 10, docs. 18 e 19 (1217, December).

66 ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1.^a incorp., m. 10, n. 27 (1227, October).

67 Let us note that, toward the end of the 12th century, the territory of the Santa Justa parish was still referred to as *hereditatem Sanctae Justae*, see ANTT, Colegiada de Santa Justa de Coimbra, L. 2, fls.162v-163 and 163v-164 (1185, March and 1194, May).

68 *Livro Santo*, doc. 33 (1147 May).

69 *ibidem*, doc. 37 (1149 February).

70 VARANDAS, Carla Patrícia Rana – *A Colegiada de S. Pedro...*, v. II, doc. 5 (1159 April).

property sale contract with the church of S. Pedro, call themselves "*ego Petrus Pelaiz et uxor mea Frandia vobis freigueses*"⁷¹. This is followed, around 1171, by the testamentary will of Martim Anaia, leaving to the "*ecclesie Sancti Christofori unde sum parrochianus*"⁷² some houses in Penela.

At the beginning of the 12th century, Coimbra's urban maturity was visible also in the precocity with which the ecclesiastical institutions organized themselves following the military conquest of the city. A decisive factor was the arrival in Coimbra of regular and secular clergymen committed to the standardization of rites and ecclesiastical organization of national churches throughout the West.

In the wake of the diocese's restoration and the re-establishment of worship in its cathedral, the city's churches were recognized in the documentation as *ecclesiae*. Donations poured in, and around them the Christian communities of the city were organized. By mid-century, some of these churches even had their own fraternities.

Thanks to the Canons Regular of St. Augustine the last parish in the city was defined, at a time when the notion of territoriality of the parish jurisdiction was not yet a reality throughout Coimbra. Documentation from the period shows that the territoriality of parish units only becomes the norm, in Coimbra, in the first quarter of the 13th century. This process seems to have been quicker within the walled city than in the suburbs outside.

These pieces of information, however scarce, allow us to see that the parochial centres of Coimbra were already perceived by their inhabitants as units of a spatial framework. The terms used to designate parochial circumscriptions – *collatione, recurrentia* – make us picture a space whose residents were part of a community, subjected to their own taxes. It will be more difficult to demonstrate whether or not these lay people felt their parish as a framework in the spiritual sense as well. But this difficulty is shared by historians from different countries, because the tax-related and economic dimensions implied by parochial circumscription, in this period, depended more on the written record than its spiritual components. For matters of liturgy and religious experience we will have to await the more regular practice of visitations and the better organized systematization of parochial regulations, which only the Council of Trent will come to impose.

71 *idem, ibidem*, v. II, doc. 6 (1165, January). The Portuguese word *freguês* (still in use) means *fillius ecclesiae*.

72 MATOS, João da Cunha – *A Colegiada de S. Cristóvão...*, doc. 23 [1171-1176].