

**The medieval fortified structures in the Diocese of Porto
(North of Portugal) and in Brianza area (North of Italy):
a comparative study (9th-12th century)**

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Resumo

O primeiro objetivo desta pesquisa é fornecer uma lista das estruturas fortificadas pertencentes à Diocese do Porto, seguindo uma abordagem interdisciplinar. O segundo objetivo é comparar esses resultados com os de uma outra realidade europeia, a área de Brianza, no norte de Milão, Itália. A investigação tem como limites cronológicos os séculos IX e XII. O material recolhido permitirá a construção de mapas interativos e de “castle trails”, bem como o desenvolvimento de métodos para a promoção dos vários locais analisados.

Abstract

The first aim of this research is to provide a list of the fortified structures belonging to the Diocese of Porto, following an interdisciplinarity approach. The second purpose is to compare the results with the ones of another European reality, the Brianza Area, in North of Milan, Italy. The investigation has the 9th and 12th century as chronological limits. The material will be the basis for the development of interactive maps and of some “castle trails”, as well as methods for the promotion of the various sites analysed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The topic chosen and discussed in this research concerns all types of fortified architectures: the *castra* with their wooden or stone walls, fortified villages, towers, moats...

This research will focus mainly on the period between the 9th and the 12th century, but it will take into account documents from later periods that might contain indications of earlier defensive elements,² or attest their memory through toponymy.

In order to pursue our investigation we have chosen the territory of the Diocese of Porto (*Dioecesis Portugallensis*) which, subsequently, will be compared with a micro-region of Lombardy (Northern Italy): the Brianza area (North of Milan).

This choice was mainly due to the will to conduct studies regarding the *incastellamento* of the Portuguese territory at an international perspective, through the comparison with a similar situation in an Italian region which, together with France, has always been focused on when studying fortified buildings. Choosing the Diocese's territory was not related with the institution itself but with the proceeding of a correct and scientific historical investigation, in which it is needed to delimitate a geo-historical area.

Under the new philosophy of a common and united Europe we are witnessing the increasing commitment to find common roots, rather than the peculiarities of each member state.

From this point of view, comparative studies can give an important contribution to the analysis of historical issues concerning Portugal: to apply the theories that scholars from other countries have elaborated on the rise and proliferation of

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² *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica – Inquisitiones* (Lisboa: Academia das Ciências, 1878), vol. I, fasc.I-II.

fortifications, thus obtaining a number of similarities and differences to be analysed, will be of great support to the progress of historical reflection on the subject.

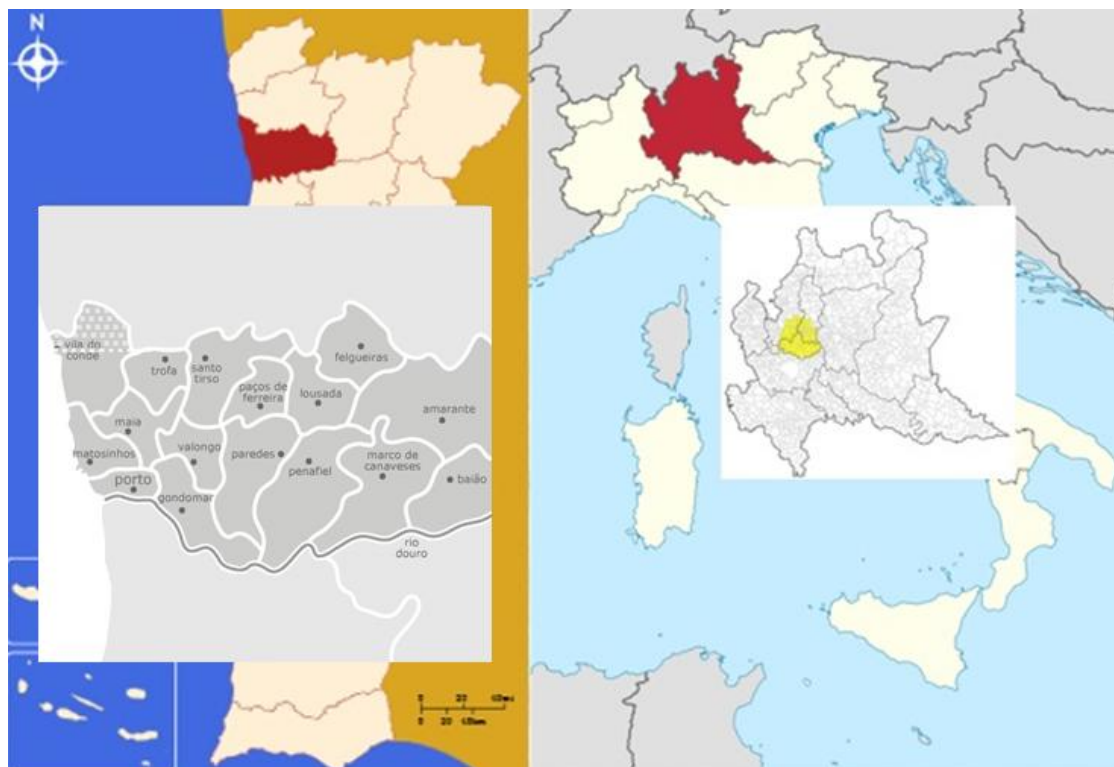


Fig. 1 - Territories investigated (font: Wikipedia.com [April 2015])

These two areas have similar characteristics: chorographically mostly hilly, bordered by two rivers and housing solid ecclesiastical institutions. Both have suffered external attacks (Normans and Muslims in Portugal and Hungarians in the North of Italy) and both had the presence of very strong systems (Arabs in Portugal – Carolingian / Holy Roman Empire in North of Italy). Only the Portuguese people managed to free themselves from that situation; in North of Italy, the attempts of “the kings of Italy” failed.

Studies on fortified architectures in this part of the North West of Portugal were carried out mostly between the late 1970s and the 90s, but they have always focused on a limited area or without trying to establish a correlation among various defensive elements.

Hence the decision to examine, for the first time, the Diocese of Porto in its entirety, with the main intention to make a selection of all data, whether in writing or as physical evidence, up to the present day in order to be able to relate the various defensive elements with each other. Basing on these data we will argue about when they were built, by whom and why; whether or not they were part of a Public will in a pattern of general defensive strategy or whether they were erected by *domini loci*, lay or clergy ones, who wished thereby to strengthen their control over the territory.

Following Aldo A. Settia's suggestion of the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, we decided to base our research not only on written sources - literary and archival³ - but also architectural and, when possible, archaeological ones.

³ *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica - Diplomata et Chartae* (Lisboa: Academia das Ciências, 1867-1873); *Documentos medievais portugueses* (Lisboa: Academia Portuguesa da História, 1945-1980), 5 vols.

At the same time the research shall avail of the "advice" of those among architects, archaeologists, historians, art historians which will be able to help in finding particular data or to compare theories and ideas. The insight brought up by non-professionals will also be taken into account; these people, knowing the territory very well, will support the research through oral memory, toponymy and topographic data.

This project will also include a research *in loco*, aimed at verifying all the pieces of information collected from books and from other sources and trying to access ruins and spot traces of fortifications; it will make use of the maps from the Portuguese *Instituto Geográfico do Exército* and all the information that other cartographic documents, including any available land registers, will provide. The use of technology will be very important too, as it will not just allow to verify theories but also to formulate new ones: using programs such as *Google Earth*, it is possible virtually visiting places difficult to reach or settled in private properties.

Once we achieve a complete list of the fortifications, it will be possible to elaborate a virtual map in which some features and relations between the defensive elements can be used as useful and didactic products, suitable both for school programs and for general audiences.

THE OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH WILL BE PRESENTED AS FOLLOWS:

In the first chapter we will briefly address the question of the historiographical debate: first of all we will analyse the development of studies related to the *incastellamento*; then, after an introduction about the birth and evolution of the historiographical discipline and the difference between local history and general history, we will proceed to illustrate the work of leading scholars, contemporary or not, that dedicated their efforts to the events related to the analysed territory. In addition, a list of the main instruments will be made available to anyone who is preparing to study this territory.

The proper research will be developed in the second chapter where, after giving a geographical and historical profile of the area being analysed between the 9th and 12th century, forms will be proposed in alphabetical order, according to the modern municipalities, showing all the defensive elements traced.

The third chapter will similarly present the results of research related to the Brianza area, along with a brief historical and geographical note to frame the territory.

The fourth chapter will proceed to compare the two territories and contains the concluding remarks.

Finally, in the appendices, some reasoned tables and maps will show the results graphically, in a direct and immediate way. This material will constitute the basis for the development of interactive maps and further study of individual elements using 3D graphics, that will conclude the project, as well as a development of some "castle trails" and methods for the promotion of the various sites analysed, such as living history and experimental archaeology.

STATE OF ART

Toubert's studies on local history and fortifications,⁴ which started back in the early 70s, had the most relevant impact on historiography by introducing the new concept according to which structures are not static but constantly evolving. Since then,

⁴ In particular: Pierre Toubert, *Les structures du Latium médiéval: le Latium méridional et la Sabine du IX^e siècle à la fin du XII^e siècle* (Roma: École Française de Rome, 1973); Pierre Toubert, *Dalla terra ai castelli. Paesaggio, agricoltura e poteri nell'Italia Medievale* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995).

many studies have been developed by European historians about the phenomenon of the *incastellamento*, mainly focusing on the Italian territory.⁵ While numerous researches were done on Italian, French, German, British and Spanish territories, there was not any intensive and specific development in the studies focused on Portugal

In comparison to the North of Portugal, the first fundamental contribution on the defensive elements presence was carried out at the end of the 70s;⁶ afterwards the Portuguese castles' network and its development was mainly studied by Barroca,⁷ as well as by means of some studies on Portuguese landlords⁸.

The first studies on the Dioceses of Porto focused mostly on its relation to Cluny;⁹ later is principally the work of Moreira about the *Freguesias* of Dioceses of Porto that helps to border its limits, in addition to providing extensive information concerning different places.¹⁰

It was only in the 90s that a part of its territory is examined in a context of castles' network analysis.¹¹

Hence thus far, no interdisciplinary in-depth study of all the defensive elements of the Diocese of Porto (9th-12th centuries) has ever been carried out to contextualize such elements in a broader territorial vision.

In order to integrate the Portuguese case within a broader European context, a comparison will be established with the micro region Brianza, located north of Milan, Italy. This choice is based on two criteria: firstly geographical similarities and secondly cultural similarities such as the presence of strong ecclesiastic entities, the terror for an external danger (Normans and Muslims in Portugal, Hungarians in North of Italy) and the presence of very strong political systems (Arabs in Portugal, the Carolingian Empire followed by the Holy Roman Empire in North of Italy).

The first studies on Brianza territory, being basically part of one of the counties of Milan (Martesana) during the Middle Ages, were developed throughout the XVIII and XIX century. Only between the 1960s and the 90s, some historians accomplished truly scientific studies basing their research on archive documents, archaeological

⁵ Some examples: Gina Fasoli, "Castelli e signorie rurali," in *Agricoltura e mondo rurale in Occidente nell'Alto Medio Evo*, Atti della XIII Settimana CISAM (Spoleto, 22-28 aprile 1965), 531-570 (Spoleto: CISAM, 1966); Aldo A. Settia, *Castelli e villaggi nell'Italia padana: popolamento, potere e sicurezza fra IX e XIII secolo* (Napoli: Liguori, 1984); Aldo A. Settia, *Proteggere e Dominare. Fortificazioni e Popolamento nell'Italia Medievale* (Roma: Viella, 1999); Chris Wickham, "Documenti scritti e archeologia per una storia dell'incastellamento: l'esempio della Toscana," *Archeologia Medievale* 16 (1989): 79-102.

⁶ Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, "Castelologia medieval de Entre-Douro-e-Minho: desde as origens a 1220" (Complementary paper for PhD presentation in Art History, University of Oporto, 1978).

⁷ Mario Jorge Barroca, "Do castelo da reconquista ao castelo românico (Séc. IX ao XII)," *Portugalia*, vol. XI-XII (1990-91): 89-136; Mario Jorge Barroca, "Da reconquista a D. Dinis," in *Nova História militar de Portugal, volume I*, coord. J. Mattoso, 21-162 (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2003); Mario Jorge Barroca, "Fortificações e Povoamento no Norte de Portugal (Séc. IX a XI)," *Portugalia*, Nova Série, vol. XXV (2004): 181-203.

⁸ Leontina Ventura, "A nobreza de corte de Afonso III" (PhD thesis. University of Coimbra: Faculty of Arts and Humanities, 1992), vol. II, 997-1038.

⁹ José Mattoso, *O Monaquismo Ibérico e Cluny* (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2002), Portuguese translation of the PhD thesis published in 1968.

¹⁰ Domingos A. Moreira, *Freguesias da Diocese do Porto. Elementos onomásticos alti-medievais. I Parte: Introdução histórica geral* (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 1973); Domingos A. Moreira, *Freguesias da Diocese do Porto. Elementos onomásticos alti-medievais. II Parte: Inventariação onomástica, Fascículo A*, Sep. de Boletim Cultural da Câmara Municipal do Porto (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 1974); Domingos A. Moreira, *Freguesias da Diocese do Porto. Elementos onomásticos alti-medievais. II Parte: Inventariação onomástica, Fascículo B-F*, Sep. de Boletim Cultural da Câmara Municipal do Porto (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 1984); Domingos A. Moreira, *Freguesias da Diocese do Porto. Elementos onomásticos alti-medievais. II Parte: Inventariação onomástica, Fascículo G-O*, Sep. de Boletim Cultural da Câmara Municipal do Porto (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 1985-86); Domingos A. Moreira, *Freguesias da Diocese do Porto. Elementos onomásticos alti-medievais. II Parte: Inventariação onomástica, Fascículo R-V*, Sep. de Boletim Cultural da Câmara Municipal do Porto (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 1989-90).

¹¹ António Manuel de Carvalho Lima, "Castelos medievais do curso terminal do Douro (Séculos IX-XII)" (Master's thesis, University of Oporto, 1993).

founding and still existing buildings, even if changed remarkably along the ages.¹² These studies were always focused on particular areas of Brianza. Only recently, all the Brianza area was fully analysed.¹³

This research will amplify the studies of castles and defensive elements giving a contribution to the Portuguese historiography. Besides, it intends to create a valid method of interdisciplinary research that could be extended for other regions.

In order to bring a broader audience into research on castles and other defensive elements, it was conceived the idea of the “castle trails” that links tourism and historical studies.¹⁴ This aim will be improved with the creation of an interactive map with some 3D graphics to allow virtual visits.

RESEARCH ISSUES

The main objectives that this investigation pursues:

Theoretical Objectives

- Analysing through a *Mittel European* point of view the situation of the *incastellamento* in a reality such as the Portuguese one, traditionally bound to the Iberian Studies' context.
- Making an analytical comparison of the results achieved in the Diocese of Porto with other spatial contexts, in particular with the castles' network in Brianza area, North of Italy. This will highlight the peculiarities of the Portuguese case as well as it will list all the similarities.
- Creating a list of the defensive elements in the region, including their contextualization in the territory and in the historical context, which will allow the characterization and interpretation of the military organization.
- Analysing the specific nature of the castles' network of the Diocese of Porto. Establishing, mapping and comprehensively measuring the differences between its distinct geographical areas.
- Examining and synthesizing the spatial relationships that the *incastellamento* phenomenon generated in relation to the upper and lower ranks settlements and their respective spatial structures, providing new information or alternative points of view related to the study of the population in the territory.
- Distinguishing and assessing the impact that specific categories of secular and ecclesiastical entities had in the development of the castles' network in the Diocese of Porto.
- Studying the relationship between the communities and the *domini loci*. Formulating hypotheses about how landlords interacted among them.

Practical Objectives

- Providing a valid research method that could be used for other regions.
- Creating an interactive map with digital tools at different levels, including 3D graphics.
- Developing “castle trails”, a reasoned guide that links fortifications with similar features, in order to bring out the analysed fortified systems by making them

¹² Virginio Longoni, *Le corti medioevali dell'alto Lambro*, Monografie periodiche dei Musei Civici di Lecco, I, anno II (Lecco: Stefanoni, 1987); Virginio Longoni, *I castelli medievali della Bevera* (Oggiono: Sistema bibliotecario brianteo, 1995); Arnaldo Martegani, “L'indagine d'archivio quale mezzo di conoscenza di particolari aspetti dell'architettura fortificata: la pieve di Galliano-Cantù,” *Rivista Archeologica dell'antica provincia e diocesi di Como* 168 (1987): 217-233.

¹³ Andrea Mariani, “Elementi difensivi nel territorio Brianzolo: fonti scritte e materiali. (Secoli X-XIII)” (Master's thesis, University of Milan, 2014).

¹⁴ Federico Del Tredici and Edoardo Rossetti, ed., *Percorsi castellani da Milano a Bellinzona* (Milano: Nexo, 2012).

accessible to the public.

- Proposing the promotion of the defensive elements still existing, through living history, experimental archaeology and didactic activities.

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

The first problem to face with is the different language. Even if reading books and articles in Portuguese is not so difficult, that takes more time than to read the same ones in Italian or English.

Then the initial lack of specific knowledge of the Diocese of Porto territory (modern and ancient political division) and geography is being overcome with a patient work on maps (on paper and digital too) and *conchelos* website.

If the different *formulario* used in Portuguese medieval documents is on one side a problem, in their novelty, on the other it could turn into something useful for the comparison between the two areas. At this point of the research we also noticed that some specific words that in Italian documents could be a signal of the presence of defensive elements (such as “spinata”, “scaraguaita” or “scarawacta”, “guaita” and so on...) are apparently totally missing in the Portuguese ones.

It is also clear that the lack of coeval archive documents for the centuries investigated will not help.

We also find few studies on Portuguese *incastellamento* and a scarcity of specific local effective bibliography, in comparison with the ones for Italy and Brianza area.

Last problem is a technical one: how to develop in the best way interactive maps. For that we will get in contact with specialists in order to improve this part of the project.

Most of the problems should be overcome during the project development; however the unclosed problematic that may not find an answer in this research could serve as starting points for future investigations.