



MOSTEIRO DE VILAR DE FRADES

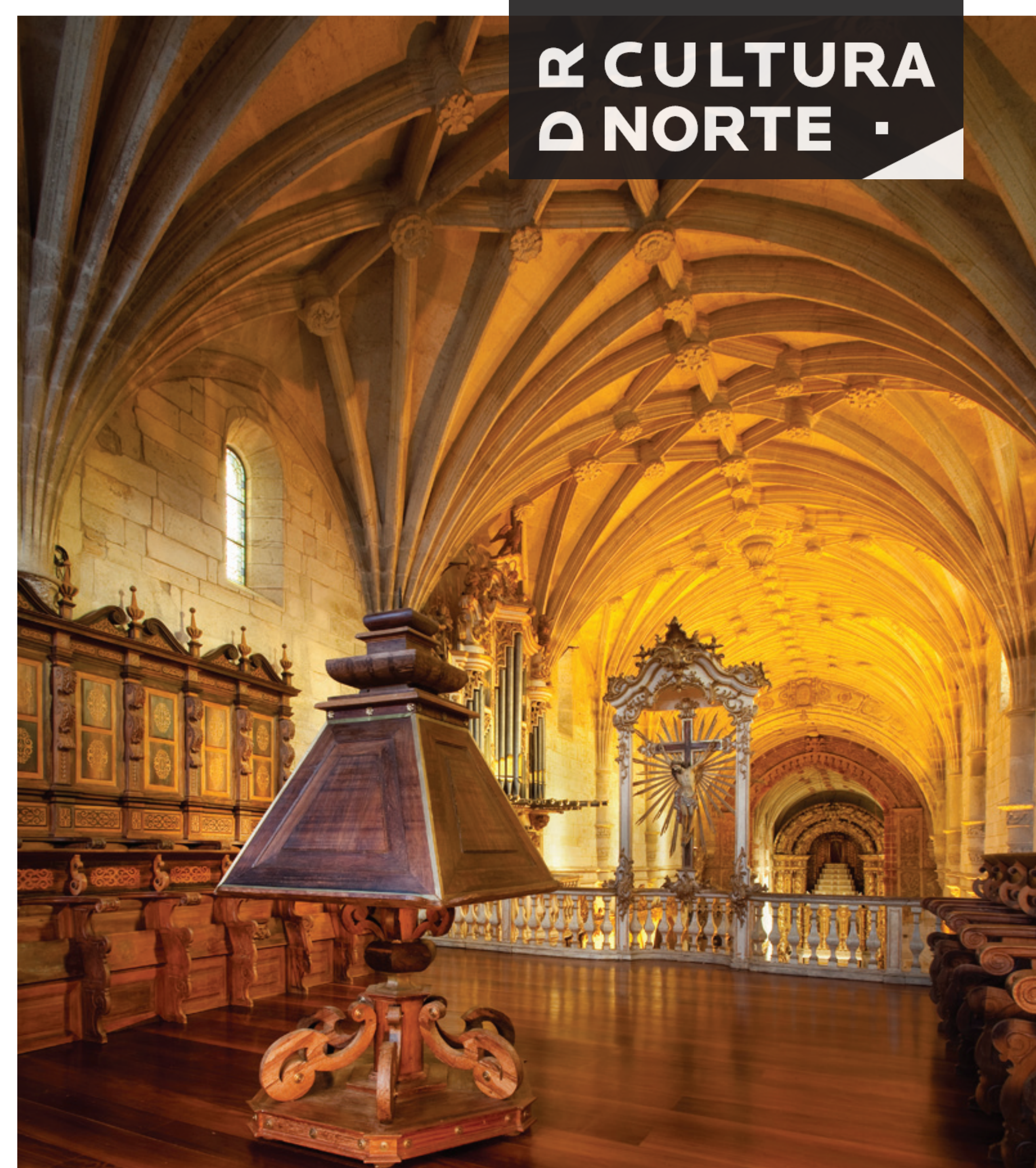
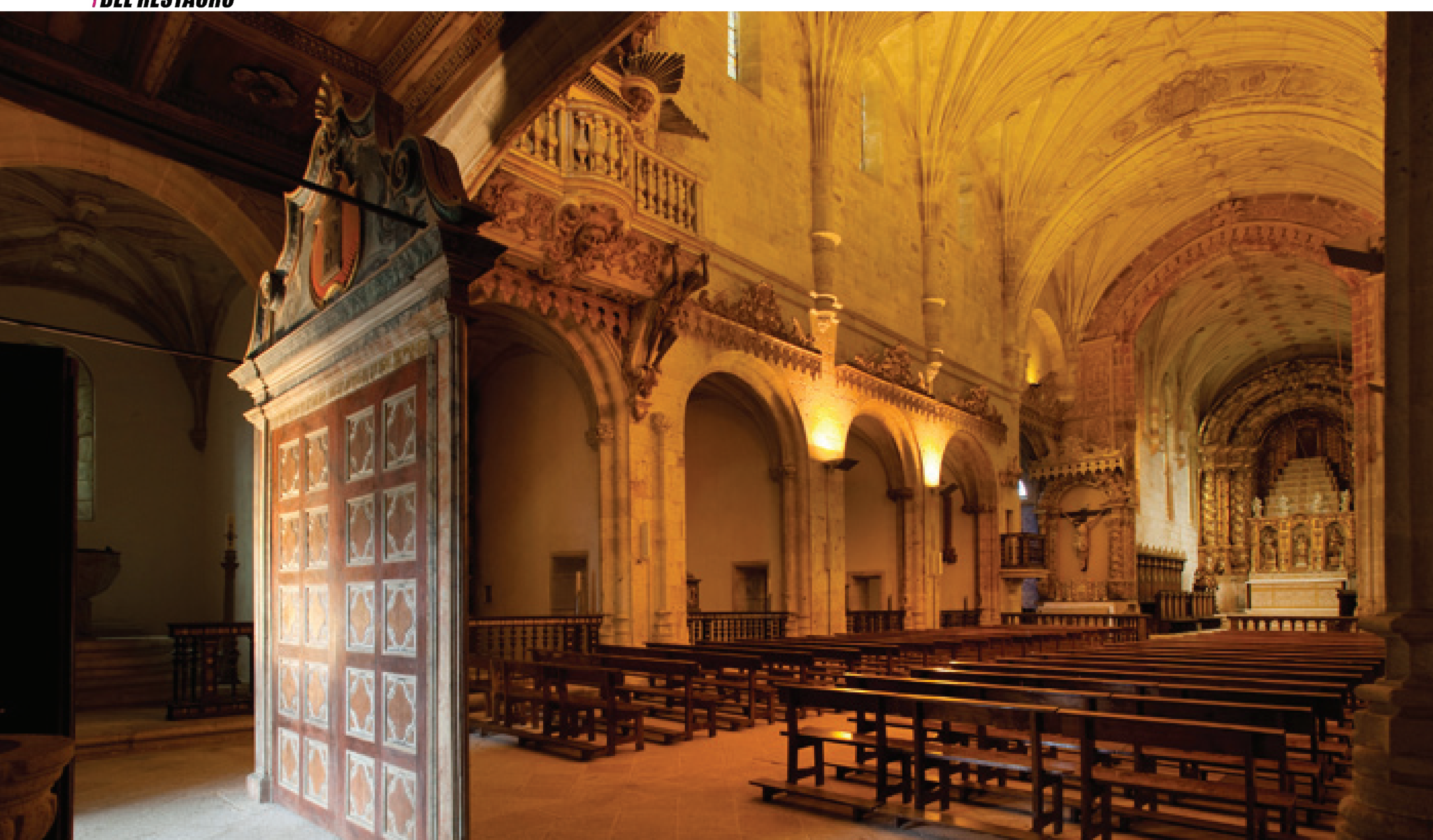
VILAR DE FRADES MONASTERY

In the Vilar de Frades Monastery, the oldest architectural element identified belongs to a late Romanesque style, from the last quarter of the 12th century. These elements are the window and a portal, in the southern tower of the church.

The façade, on the eastern side, exhibits two portals from the Romanesque and Manuelino periods. On the northern side stands a tower, also built in Manuelino style. The church has maintained its original design, with a single aisle with five chapels on each side, interconnected by passageways.

* Manuelino is a Portuguese architectural style, following Gothic structural principals but using unique decoration, associated with navigation and ocean motifs, such as ropes, shells, the armillary sphere, corals and algae.





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The intervention possibilities in the physical body of the monument presented themselves in the form of a challenge: It was necessary to resurface the Vilar de Frades Convent. It is not, however, reviving the old Convent, but instead, vivify a new monumental entity, in response to modern needs of assets, assumption that guides the lecture of Vilar de Frades while an architectural object, whose knowledge - tell about its evolution – results crucial to the understanding of their current pathologies.

Indeed, in Vilar de Frades, persists and resurfaces the original structural deficiencies. There is a qualitative gap between artistic object and the execution mode. It is no coincidence that, in the first intervention, when the North outer drainage was being built, the walls foundations and buttresses were put out in the open, revealing the great fragility in its execution (on the surface of the ground, with poor and irregular equipment).

On the other hand, the buttresses developed by Loios Friars as a corrective measure for enhancing the support of the ribbed vault ceilings (which led to the destruction of the Convents library), proved to be poor and deficiently executed. Subverting the character of a buttress in itself, in Vilar de Frades, this is nothing more than a perpendicular plan to the nave's exterior walls, with rare strengthening fibers in pre-existences. Thus, we were forced to strengthen its foundation, to consolidate the cracks exposed, and, in one case, it was necessary to nail steel elements, in this way, to fulfill the goal of its initial execution. The first of the works implemented in Vilar de Frades had for purpose the Church lateral naves covers and, by its scope, the improvement of its stagnation. With this goal, it was introduced a new element – the subtitle – as a way of enhancing the sealing degree of the tile.

However, and in concomitance with the execution of the finishing of the interiors of the rooms underlying those coverings, re-emerged, in a general way, signs of deficient roofs leaks. Again we have tried to overcome the degradation arising from stormwater infiltration using, this time, a new form to carry out the waterproofing execution, replacing the subtitle by another insulating material and rebuilding, once again, the pre existent ones. However, the entire investment – conceptual, technical and financial – in improving the humidity conditions of isolation in Vilar de Frades, never forgets that these interventions only focus on the symptom of a faulty construction system, namely, a sufficient covers inclination.

The genesis of this pathology lies in the original conception of the building, which, again, refers to the cyclic approach of this monument. Cyclical and, never the less, the natural result from systemic link between the architectural object and the mobile partst/integrated heritage. Consequently, all the action in Vilar de Frades - for the minimum size - is of great complexity and demand. To envisage, in the context of the global recovery of the Church, the urgency to proceed with the consolidation of the arc of the high choir, there was a need to clarify the relationships of dependency between the structural element – bow – and the mobile and integrated heritage, in order to the establishment of a working programme in which the different actions and specialties found themselves conveniently articulated.

The latest interventions made at the Convent of Vilar de Frades, in addition with the installation of the reception/shop on the ground floor of the lower Tower, give continuity to the intervention carried out on the ground floor of the conventual wing. The works were essentially related to rehabilitation of the upper floor of the cloister galleries, the covering and the partial arrangement of the Churchyard. In these works the recovery was focused on the floors, walls and door frames of the galleries, the room over the registry, the back façade of the Sacristy and the improvement of the monument accessibility. Inherent in these proceedings are the introduction of infrastructures and the implementation of drainage and ventilation system at the base of the outer walls of the conventual wing, extending the system achieved in the Church.

