

—Interior of church

Manueline Art stated above. As several art critics and historians have already remarked, the whole nave resembles a marine grotto, but a grotto in which stalactites and stalagmites have been, so to speak, disciplined, thereby acquiring in its entirety an aesthetic significance of its own. The octagonal pillars which support the vault, carved in baroque style from top to bottom, resemble gigantic palm trees, their stone leaves interlacing each other along the ribbed capitals in a manner that is vastly different from the Gothic or Renaissance style. The vault above the transept unquestionably constitutes one of the boldest and most original aspects of Portuguese architecture. João de Castilho finished it in 1522.

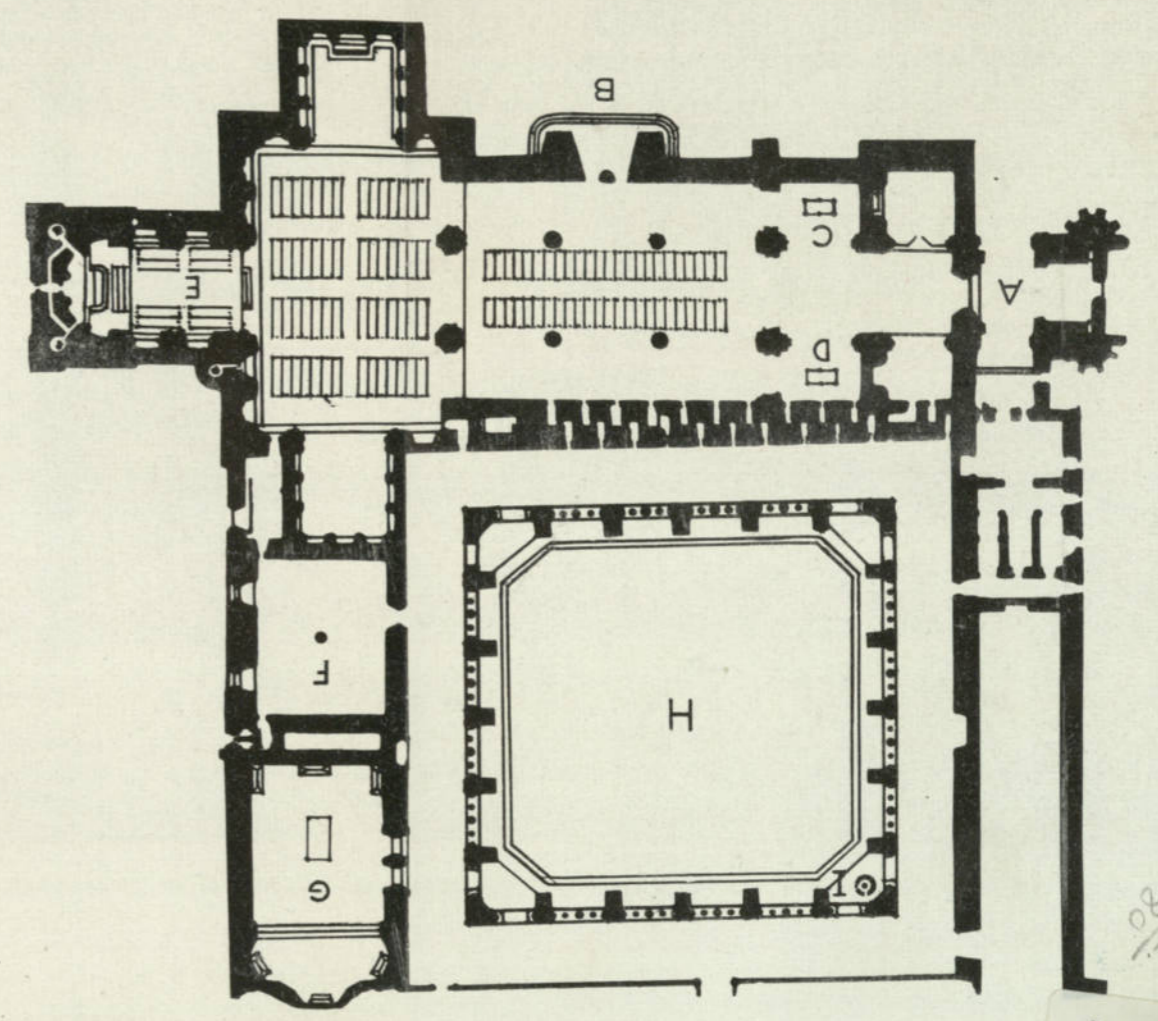
Amongst the other art treasures in the basilica that deserve special mention are the chapels at the extremity of the transept, which date back to the epoch of the foundation of the Abbey, although certain of their elements are of a later date; and the altars at the ends of the lateral naves, with Manueline arches, but decorated in seventeenth and eighteenth century baroque. It is on this side of the basilica that are situated the tombs of Vasco da Gama and Camões, which, although modern, attempt to imitate the Manueline style. The chancel undoubtedly represents a superposition of the classical trend of the Renaissance epoch on the initial «Atlantic» style. On the high-altar are especially noteworthy the relatable representing the Passion of Jesus Christ, (ascribed to Cristovão Lopes), and an exquisite silver sacrament of the seventeenth century. In recesses in the lateral walls are the marble sarcophagi of King Manuel I, Queen Maria, King John III, and Queen Catarina. They are leaning on elephants, which symbolize their vail over the realm and its overseas territories.

We should also emphasize the great beauty of the sacristy, which is also in pure Manueline style, as are the vault, the wrought iron gate, and the central column, of which the capital represents an oriental palm tree, such as the many similar ones which the Portuguese planted all over Lisbon, symbolizing Africa and Asia in this country of seafarers, discoverers and mariners. The Chapter house, although of lesser artistic interest, has on the other hand considerable historic interest, since in its quality of National Pantheon the Jeronimos Abbey contains the tombs of the great writers Almeida Garrett, Alexandre Herculano, Teófilo Braga, and Guerra Junqueiro, as also those of the late Presidents of the Republic Sidónio Pais and Carmo.

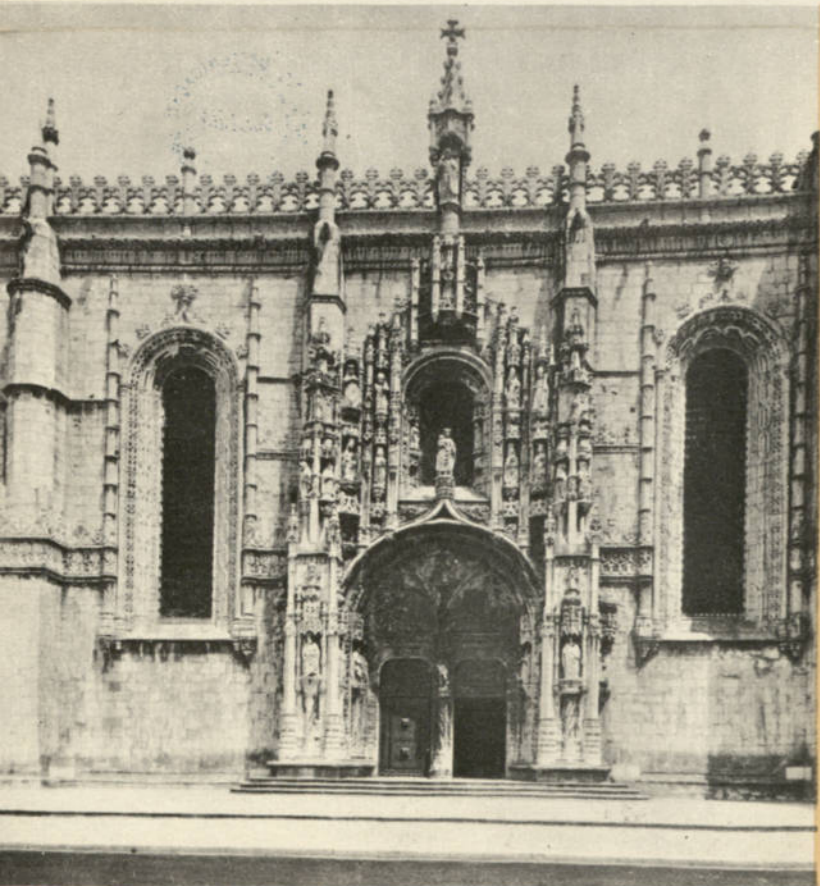
In the widest significance of the word, this is a monument to the sea. A monument to the glory of the sea and in honour of the men who pioneered its routes, the routes of that immense and mysterious sea that became the link of the mutual encounter of continents, races, religions, and of the multiple traditions of our world, which only in the sixteenth century began to become aware of its real vastness.

- A — Western Portico
- B — South Portico
- C — Tomb of Camões
- D — Tomb of Vasco da Gama
- E — Principal Chapel
- F — Sacristy
- G — Chapter House
- H — Cloister
- I — Cloister Fountain.

—General plan of Monastery



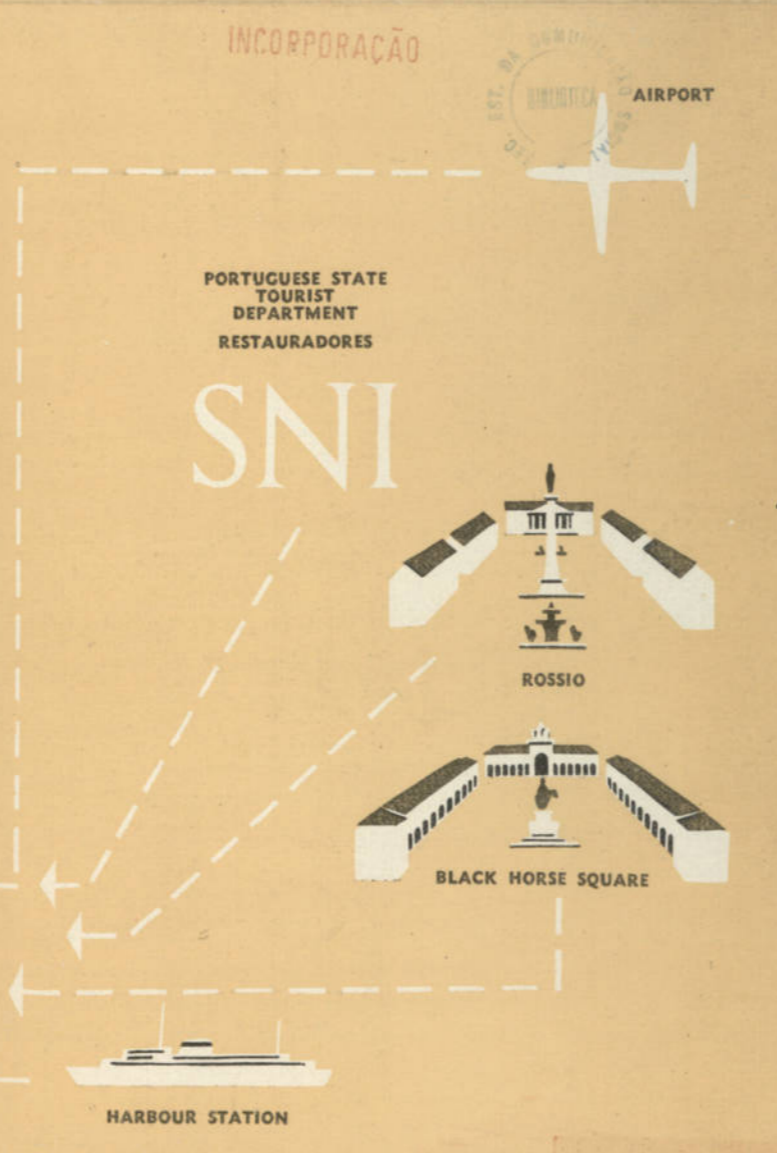
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ESTORIL



MONASTERY OF JERÓNIMOS



1688

LISBON
MONASTERY OF JERONIMOS

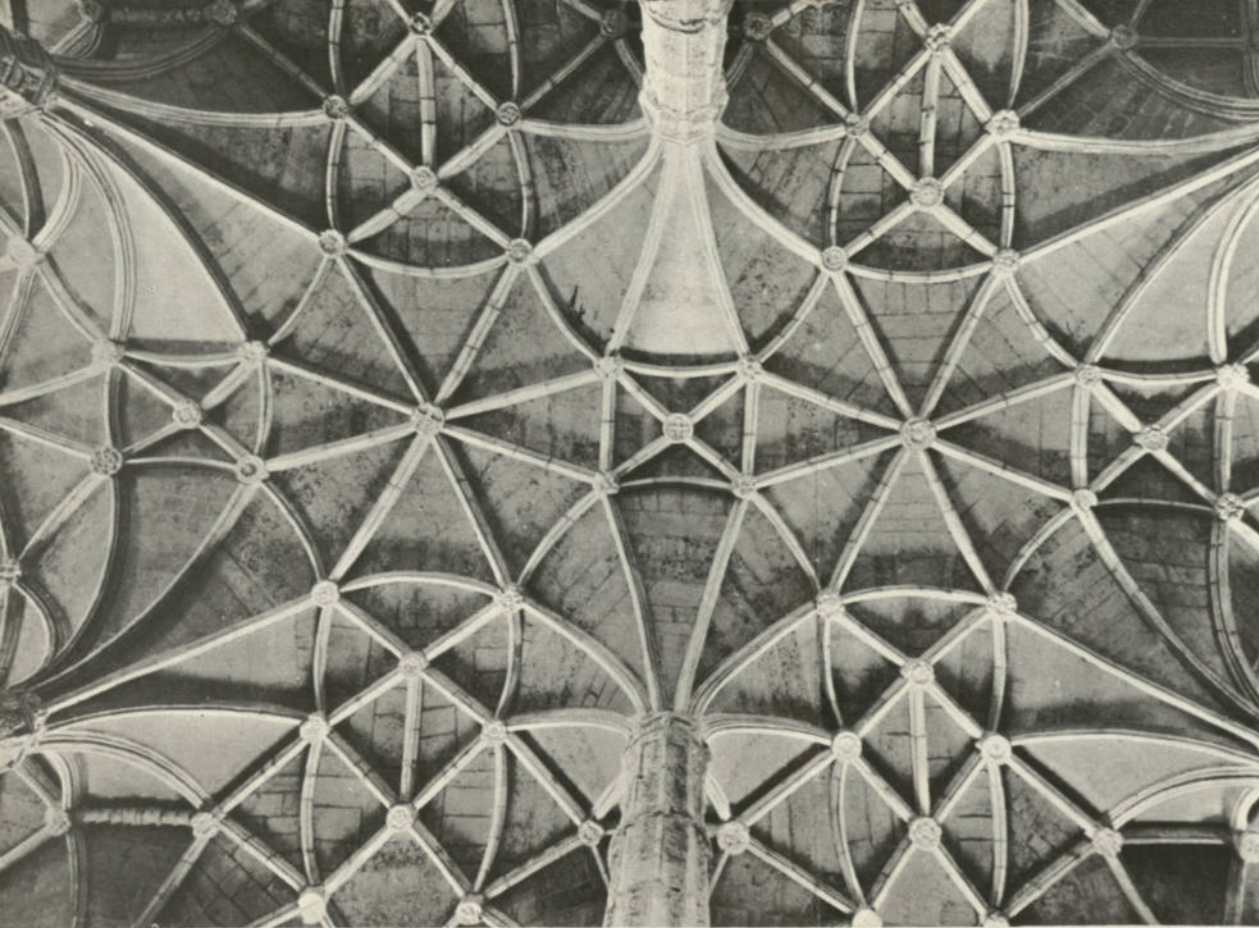


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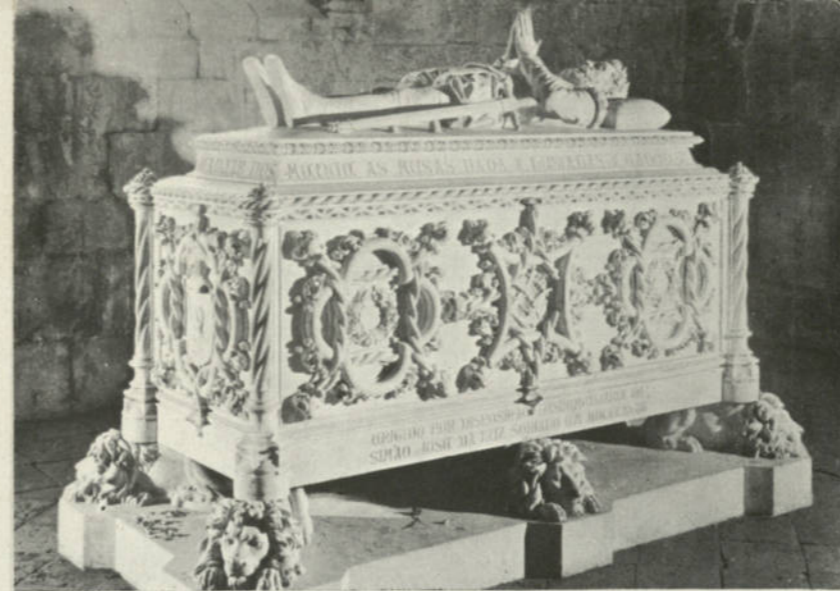
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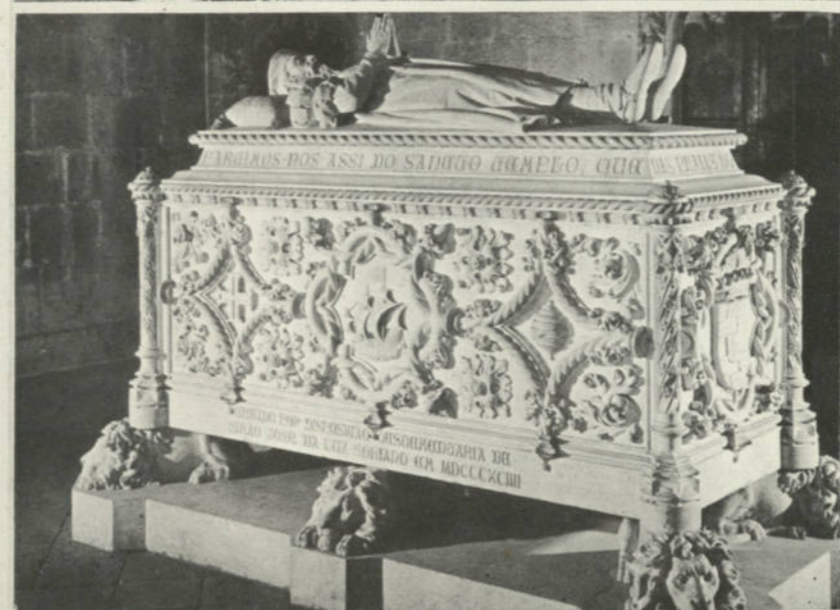


—Detail of the vault's nervures in the interior of church

—Camões' tomb



—Vasco da Gama's tomb



Europe to co-operate in a project of which the guiding spirit and conception differed so fundamentally from the art of their own countries. Worthy of special mention are the names of such eminent artists as the Frenchman Nicolas de Chanterenne and the Spaniards Diego de Castillo and Pero Trillo. It is remarkable how Boytac's Gothic-naturalist tendencies and Castilho's Renaissance trends adapted themselves to Portuguese symbolic thought, so much so that in certain aspects the specific elements of each are undistinguishable from one another. Such, for instance, is the case of the cloister, commenced by one and finished by the other, and of which the artistic concept is unique in the world not only by reason of its forceful architectonic naturalism, but also by reason of the superposition of the galleries, the arabesque sculpture work of the arches, the symphony of the nautical symbolism, the allegoric motifs relating to the maritime discoveries, and the religious and royal emblems which form their decoration.

In outlining the principal elements of the Jerónimos Abbey, and apart from the Cloister, we wish to emphasize especially:

— *The South Doorway*, designed by Boytac and João de Castilho, is a veritable baroque symphony of Renaissance and «Atlantic» elements arranged around two principal figures, whose statues explain and harmonize the ensemble: Saint Mary of Belém, Patroness of the Portuguese, and Prince Henry the Navigator, pioneer of the maritime discoveries. The whole suggests the capricious tangle of coral formations, with other carved figures set, with the Apostles, in the curves of a true architectonic jewel wrought of oceanic motifs, with globes and interlaced cordage.

— *The Main Doorway*, which is not, as might erroneously be assumed, the one facing the Tagus, but the one facing East, which today is interior owing to the position of the aisle that connects with the wing of the building in which are the dormitories of the Hieronymite friars, and where an ethnographical museum has been installed. This doorway, which bears the date 1517, is in Manueline or «Atlantic» style, whence derives its undeniable originality. Its author, however, the Frenchman Chanterenne, could not resist the temptation, in this last phase of King Manuel's reign, of shaping in Renaissance style the beautiful sculptures in the niches, which represent The Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Adoration of the Magi. A curious detail is the fact that the Magi are actually the patron saints of the building. To each side of the doorway are the figures of Portugal's sovereigns, King Manuel I and Queen Maria, with their respective patrons St. Hieronymus and Saint John the Baptist. As in all other «Atlantic» works of art, here also are present the decorative elements that are classic of this style, such as ship's tackle, globes, coral, sea shells, and kindred motifs.

— *The Interior of the Abbey*. The nave of the Jerónimos basilica confirms and amplifies our considerations on the subject of

It would be impossible to understand Portugal without realizing that in a manner of speaking the Portuguese is born, grows and acquires his right to exist, from a dialogue between the spirit and the sea. Indeed, the sea is essentially the base of Portuguese adventure. The Portuguese hero is the man whose thought is the sea, who discovers the sea, who sings the sea, who fashions the sea in stone. The sea, the deep and empty sea, the sea as destiny or as the theme of all songs, the sea as defiance, the sea as symbol, as a concept of travel, which, from being geographic in essence, little by little becomes spiritual in character. Thus, the Portuguese hero is Prince Henry the Navigator, Vasco da Gama, Camoens, Diogo de Arruda. And his theme, whenever stretched to the farthest limit that his mind can possibly conceive, always is and remains the sea that no race loved more, conquered or expressed better than the Portuguese: from the futurist concept of the Dreamer of Sagres to the Atlantic baroque style which Arruda erected in Tomar like a system.

«Atlantic baroque», that would indeed be the aptest denomination for the famous «Manueline» style of architecture which Portugal created on the ruins of the Gothic, long before the Renaissance had begun to affirm its influence on architecture in the country. A sort of pre-baroque, a human and artistic replica of the most baroque of elements, the sea, with its unending motion, its unending caprice and its unending significance.

In Lisbon, near the Restelo beach, whence since the days of Prince Henry the Navigator the caravels of the Discoveries set sail, the Portuguese people erected their greatest monument to the sea, which is at the same time the greatest and perhaps the only monument that mankind ever erected to the Ocean: the Cathedral of Saint Mary of Belém, better known in our time as the Jerónimos Abbey, a name derived from the Hieronymite monks to whom it was originally donated. Already Dom Henrique had built there a hermitage dedicated to soutound and home-coming mariners. But it was D. Manuel I who, like a new and mythological king, transformed that hut into a palace. The discovery of the sea-way to India and the link thereby established between West and East, was to accelerate the building project of the Cathedral of the Sea. Thus the sea-way to India became its theme, its «leit-motiv», its artistic thesis. It also became its source of revenue, the latter being the product of the duties levied on spices, precious stones, and all the other untold riches that soon began to arrive from the Orient as the precious cargoes of the caravels of the Order of Christ, thus supplying the funds that were needed for the building project.

Actual building was begun in 1502, under the direction of Boytac, King Manuel's master architect. In 1517 João de Castilho took over the supervision of the construction work, having under his orders a brilliant team of renowned sculptores and artists, who by reason of their talent had been summoned from all over



—Detail of the church's portico (D. Manuel's statue)



—Detail of the fountain in the cloister

—Exterior aspect of cloister

