

Fig. 01 - Façade of Saint Anne's Church in Talaulim, 1951, Mário Chicó; drawing with ink on paper
(source: Mário Soares and Maria Barroso Foundation, Mário and Alice Chicó's documents, file 07096.023)

Editorial

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Half a century has passed since the independence of the last Portuguese colonies in Africa and the East, marking the end of Europe's longest colonial empire. Two generations have since grown up without direct experience of colonialism, yet postcolonial issues remain influential in contemporary society, especially in debates around heritage. On the one hand, there are discussions on decolonising European museum collections and repatriating art from the former colonies; on the other, there is ongoing debate over whether to preserve heritage created during colonial rule, alongside the complex symbolisms that such heritage evokes. However, this special issue of *ARTis ON*, published in collaboration with the **ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Shared Built Heritage**, does not focus on these topics, important though they are. Instead, it addresses the **safeguarding of heritage during the colonial period**, examining the processes, ideologies, people, and institutions involved in preserving cultural heritage in colonies under European rule.

In some colonial territories, preservation efforts prioritised colonial heritage, but in many others, intensive studies and conservation of pre-colonial heritage were carried out, revealing monuments and artworks previously unknown to much of the world. In certain cases, approaches used in colonies later influenced heritage debates in the European metropolises. The extent and nature of heritage actions varied widely, depending on the colonial power and the cultural richness of the territories in question. This issue explores a range of topics, including cultural heritage missions in colonial territories, heritage safeguarding efforts, the ideological use of cultural heritage, colonial heritage legislation and institutions, and the exchange of heritage theories and practices between metropolises and colonies.

Siegfried Enders, former president of ICOMOS ISCSBH and guest author, offers insights on heritage preservation during the German colonial period, which, as is well-known, was significantly shorter than that of other European powers. Meanwhile, **Danilo Matoso Macedo** examines an early heritage approach in Brazil, which, during the Napoleonic invasions, became the centre of the Portuguese empire and began preserving its heritage as part of a broader identity-building process. At the opposite end of the colonial spectrum is Macau, with a unique colonial history that concluded only in 1999 when administration returned to China; **Maria José Freitas** details heritage preservation initiatives from the final decades of Portuguese administration there.

Also focusing on Portuguese colonial history in the East, **Joaquim Rodrigues dos Santos** investigates the development of colonial legislation on heritage protection in Portuguese India, examining how Portuguese heritage laws were adapted to local conditions under a nationalist, imperialist regime. Again in India, **Mayur Thakare** presents a rare study of how the British preserved Portuguese-influenced heritage in the Bombay/Mumbai region. In Sri Lanka, British heritage efforts primarily focused on conserving pre-colonial Sinhalese Buddhist relics, as described by **Sagara Jayasinghe**.

Heritage activities by other colonial powers are also covered. **Tular Sudarmadi** explores how the Dutch studied and protected the historic Indonesian city of Yogyakarta, later recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. **Samir Belgacem**'s essay reflects on how Algeria's current heritage practices echo the approach taken during the French colonial era. Lastly, **Manuel Parodi Álvarez** examines Spain's heritage activities in northern Morocco, its last colonial possession.

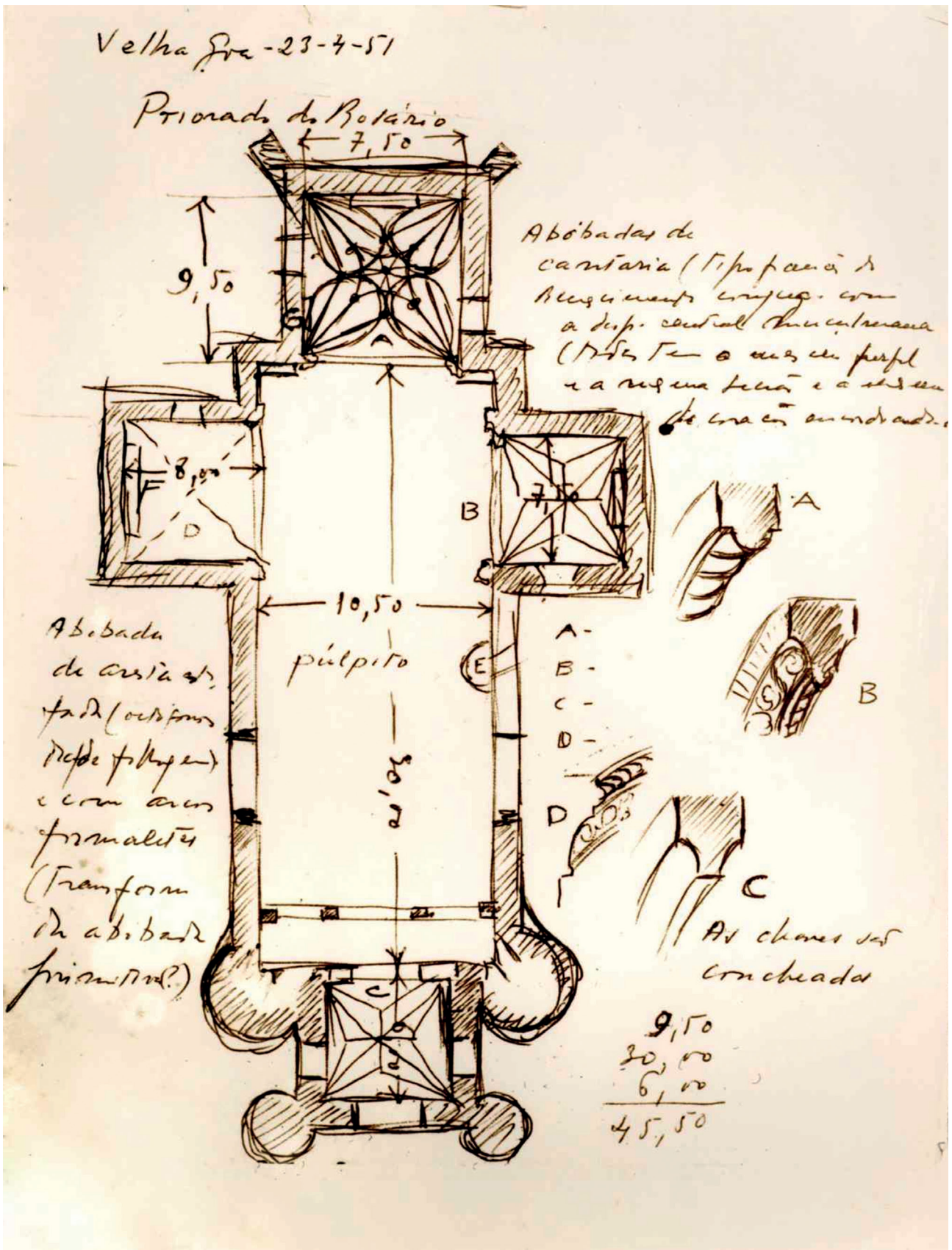


Fig. 02- Plan of Our Lady of Rosary Church in Old Goa, 1951, Mário Chicó; drawing with ink on paper (source: Mário Soares and Maria Barroso Foundation, Mário and Alice Chicó's documents, file 07096.023)

This issue also includes two fascinating interviews offering insights into heritage concerns in former colonies. **Michela Decortes'** interview with **Massimiliano Munzi** highlights the Italian colonial administration's conservation of ancient Roman ruins in Libya, a project aligned with the Fascist regime's idealisation of Classical Antiquity. Another interview, conducted by **Joaquim Rodrigues dos Santos** and **Clara Moura Soares**, with **José Manuel Fernandes** and **Maria de Lurdes Janeiro**, shares personal accounts from individuals involved in heritage work in former Portuguese colonies and explores heritage studies in the post-colonial period.

In the journal's "Varia" section, a collection of essays on diverse topics provides intriguing updates. **Carlota Cortesão** clarifies longstanding confusion around the Garvo family, Italian architects whose shared name (father and son) led to several misunderstandings. **José Pedro Tenreiro** discusses the work of **António Mendes Coutinho**, a relatively unknown 18th-century architect who worked in Viseu. Teresa Vale examines a silver statue crafted in Rome for the Patriarchal Basilica in Lisbon, while **António Cota** and **Sasha Assis Lima** introduce a collection of Chinese porcelain held at Lisbon's Ajuda National Palace. **Duarte Pedro** and **Pedro Freitas** propose a classification system for Portuguese tile patterns. Finally, this section includes critical reviews by **Vitor Serrão** of Sofia Braga's book on Cyrillo Volkmar Machado and by **José Carlos Meneses** on Eduardo Pires de Oliveira's study of the Palace of Dom José de Bragança in Braga.

Colonialism was – and, regrettably, still is in some regions – an age-old phenomenon that has touched nearly every corner of the globe. Yet, concerns over heritage, recognising the cultural value of artistic, architectural, historical, and landscape assets for future generations, are relatively recent, emerging just over two and a half centuries ago. Since the Romantic period, notions of nostalgia and a fascination with the exotic spurred more consistent historical and artistic studies, ultimately including cultural heritage not only within Europe but also in its colonial domains and beyond.

Whether shaped by cultural appreciation or ideological motivations, heritage concerns in most colonial territories originated during European rule, significantly influencing the post-colonial heritage landscape. This transcultural heritage, formed through cultural intersections, can evoke both aversion, due to colonial associations, and appreciation for the unique symbolic identity it represents within communities shaped by cultural miscegenation. Many examples of cross-cultural heritage, created during the colonial period, have since been recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, alongside local heritage sites valued since the colonial era.

Preserving cross-cultural heritage associated with marginalised communities presents a greater challenge, particularly in regions where supremacist discourses are increasingly vocal against such minorities. These distinct identities often emerge from centuries of colonial influence, rooted in differences of history, religion, ethnicity, and culture – characteristics that have been absorbed and adapted through complex processes of cultural negotiation. With the added threat of climate change, this transcultural heritage linked to vulnerable groups stands as one of the most endangered in the world today, urgently requiring study and preservation. But this, too, may be a debate for a future issue of *ARTis ON*.