

Portuguese Landscapes: Symbols and Sacred Architecture

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The interest in observing these places stems from the desire to construct an imaginary realm where one can dwell with the gaze. Rosario Assunto, in a brief text clarifying the concepts of territory, environment, and landscape (Assunto, 1980), states that landscape is the form through which humans have organized the raw matter of the territory into an environment. We inhabit a place when its form gathers and integrates fragments of meaning that would otherwise be lost. These fragments remain alive over time because they are renewed, assuming a new symbolic significance.

The photographic sequence explores a possible relationship between landscape and the sacred dimension. Among the examples, there is a brief reference to a garden by Fernando Távora—an exemplary case of spatial organization that takes shape through fragments and the experience of place. One observes the traces of a religious symbology that shaped the construction of places and landscapes in northern Portugal. Two examples of hermitages in the Alentejo and a sophisticated Renaissance architecture hidden within the Mitra garden are also highlighted. Finally, there is a reference to the architect Vítor Figueiredo, recognized for his ability to sense and translate the memory of a place into his projects.

Even while maintaining a natural survival instinct, we inhabit the landscape. It is precisely in the landscape, Assunto reminds us, that we can continue to keep watch—in the etymological sense of the word, meaning to preserve. Photographer Robert Adams, in the essay *Truth and Landscape* (Adams, 1995), writes that photographs are instruments of understanding, capable of revealing the transformation of one thing into another. They achieve this in a way akin to an epiphany, illuminating what is no longer before our eyes and what easily hides in memory. Just as within the walls of a garden, the boundaries of a frame can preserve the relationship between humans, nature, and the landscape.

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Figure 1. Quinta da Conceição, Fernando Távora, Porto



Figure 2. Quinta da Conceição, Fernando Távora, Porto



Figure 3. Espigueiros no Alto do Minho



Figure 4. Medusa, Museu nacional de Conímbriga

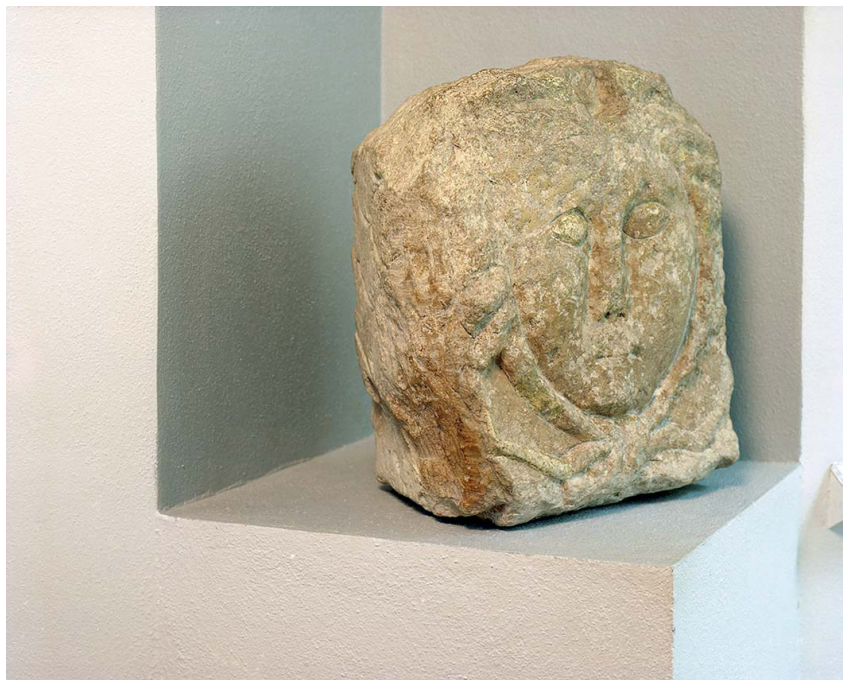


Figure 5. Sator arepo tenet opera rotas, palindromo romano, Museu nacional de Conímbriga

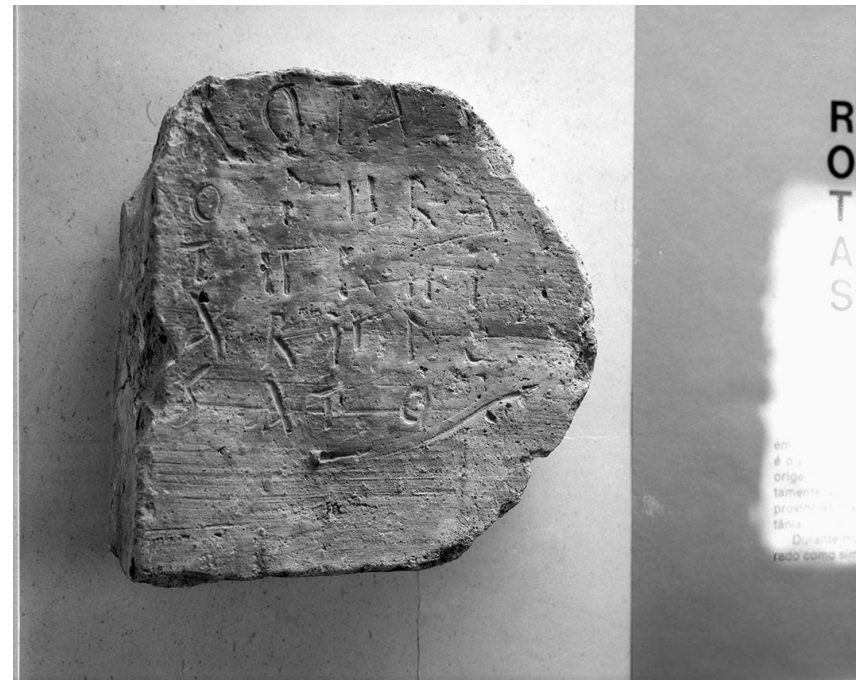


Figure 6. Altar do génio de Conímbriga, Museu nacional de Conímbriga



Figure 7. Convento de Santa Margarida do Aivado, Alentejo



Figure 8. Convento de Santa Margarida do Aivado, Alentejo



Figure 9. Convento de Santa Catarina no Alentejo



Figure 10. Convento de Santa Catarina no Alentejo



Figure 11. Herdade da Mitra, Évora



Figure 12. Herdade da Mitra, Évora



Figure 13. Capela renascentista da Mitra, Herdade da Mitra, Évora



Figure 14. Capela renascentista da Mitra, Herdade da Mitra, Évora



Figure 15. Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Outeiro, Vitor Figueiredo, Albergaria dos Fusos

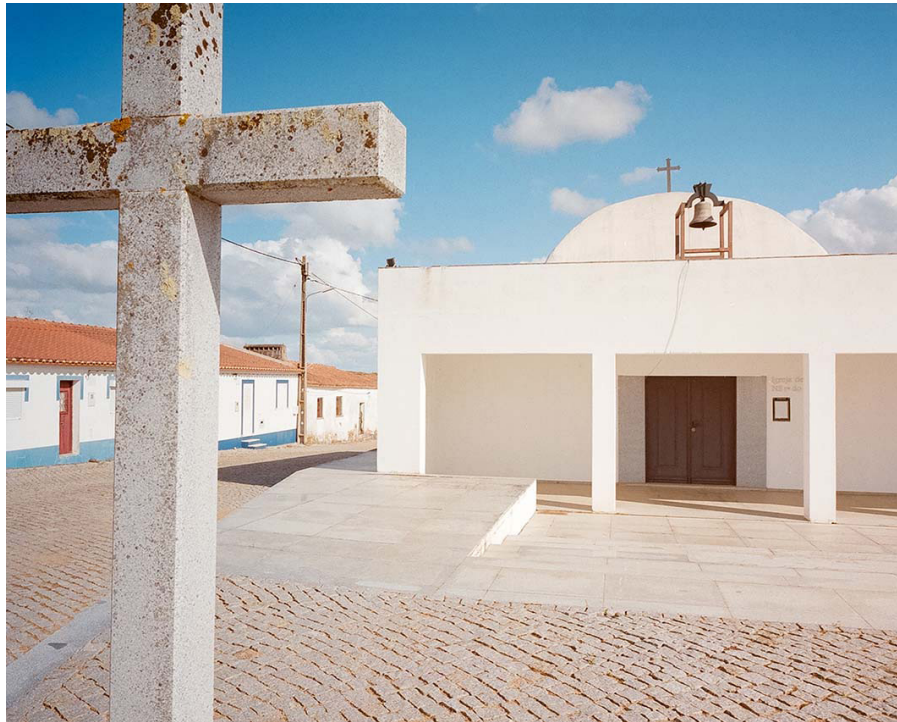


Figure 16. Capela de Santa Luzia, Alvito



References

Adams, R. (1995). *La bellezza in fotografia*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 7-12.

Assunto, R. (1980). Paesaggio, ambiente, territorio: un tentativo di precisazione concettuale, *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica*, 47/48, 49-51.