

Convent of Sant Bartomeu of Bellpuig

Visit





Historical synthesis

The convent, or friary, of Sant Bartomeu, on the outskirts of the village of Bellpuig, is an interesting example of the transition from late Gothic to Renaissance styles. It was founded in 1507 by Ramon Folc III of Cardona-Anglesola, baron of Bellpuig and at the time viceroy of Sicily, who obtained a papal bull from Julian II to found a Franciscan friary on the site of the ancient chapel of Sant Bartomeu. The initial project for a large monastery built of carved stone was carried out only in part, and underwent a series of modifications, destructions and readaptations. It is recorded that the church was finished by 1591, but work on the rest of the monastic buildings went on into the 17th century. The church, which between 1531 and 1841 contained the Renaissance tomb of the founder, was damaged, like the rest of the friary, by its occupation by French troops (1809) and by Spanish troops during the Peninsular War. But monastic life resumed, and restoration began in 1815. However, after the suppression of the monasteries in 1835, it fell into ruin until 1899, when it was occupied by the Pauline Fathers, who built a new church (1903-1906) and established their lesser seminary there. In 1990 they donated the convent to the Government of Catalonia to be used for social and cultural purposes.

The conventual building, rectangular in plan, is organised around two cloisters. The cloister with the cistern is noteworthy: here can be seen the superimposition of styles in the chapter house, the Plateresque lavabo of the refectory and the Florid Gothic aumbry, or repository for liturgical vessels, in the sacristy.

The convent was declared an asset of cultural interest with the category "monument" in 1984.



1



Entrance

The semicircular arch of the entrance to the convent is built of large voussoirs, with the Cardona-Anglesola arms on the key-stone.

Plane

2



Courtyard

Having passed through the vestibule and the corridor, we come to the entrance to the courtyard. In the centre of this cloister is a fountain, with a modern bowl and 17th-century shaft, the lower part of which is decorated with ovals.

Plane

3



Staircase

The staircase was built in the 17th century, like most of this part of the convent. Note the semicircular arches that transform the impost of the columns into false capitals, the volutes of the springing of the arches, the balustrade and the stellar vault.

Plane



4



Cloister

16th–17th centuries

This second cloister is the most noteworthy architectural feature of the convent and is redolent of late Gothic. Notice the innovative architectural solution of the arcades, with their braided form. Around the eastern side are the main rooms used by the community. The upper galleries were added in the 17th century and maintain the Renaissance style.

Plane

5



Old refectory

The old refectory is an elongated room. Its ceiling consists of a simple ribbed vault, and it contains an ornamental Gothic-Renaissance lavabo in white marble which dates from the time of foundation.

Plane

6



Old kitchen

This spacious room consists of two vaulted bays and opens onto the garden through two windows. The kitchen and the larder are separated by a small lobby that leads to the refectory.

Plane

7



Chapter house

Beside the refectory is the chapter house. On the bosses of the vault you can see portraits of the founders, Elisabet (Enríquez) de Requesens and Ramon Folc III of Cardona-Anglesola.

Plane

8



Sacristy

A large L-shaped room, with a ceiling consisting of three bays of stellar vault. There are two doors: one leads out onto the Duke's Mirador and the other into the church. On one of the walls is the aumbry, or repository for liturgical vessels, with elaborate filigree decoration.

Plane



9

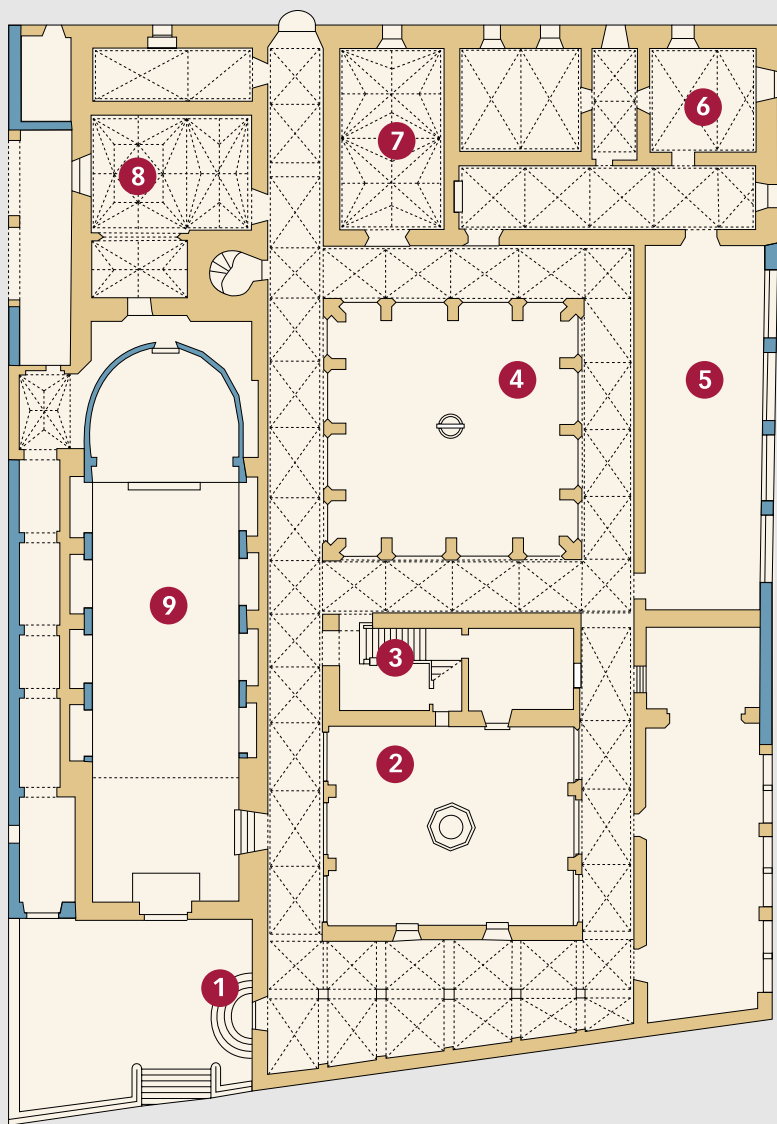


Church

20th century

The most notable feature of the old church was the tomb of Ramon Folc III of Cardona-Anglesola, which stood in a chapel on the south side and was transferred piece by piece between 1841 and 1842 to the parish church of Bellpuig, where it still remains.

Plane



16th–17th centuries

20th century