

SAN PAIO DE NARLA MUSEUM-FORTRESS

(Lugo Provincial Museum Network)

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

The earliest parts of the Tower of Xiá or of San Paio de Narla undoubtedly date from the 12th or 13th century, although the earliest documents referring to it are from the 14th century. The Irmandiño Wars were responsible for the destruction of much of the Tower, as in 16th-century documents Vasco das Seixas ordered work to rebuild it.

In 1939, thanks to the management and intervention of Manuel Vázquez Seijas, it was bought by the Provincial Government of Lugo, avoiding its demolition.

In the building, consisting of three storeys and an external chapel, elements from different periods can be seen, dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries, reusing medieval materials.

GROUND FLOOR

1. COURTYARD

The courtyard displays different collections relating to traditional occupations such as agriculture, basket-making and *zoqueiros* (clog-making). In an adjacent room there are four beds, three of the Olot type and one Neoclassical, which are part of a collection of beds in the museum.

2. STABLES

This space could be called the “transport gallery”, as it contains several pieces relating to this activity, such as a sedan chair and a litter (donated by Juan López Suárez and originally from the Pazo de Rivas in Sober), Spanish and South American saddles, and a beautiful set of spurs.

3. WINE CELLAR

Curious items such as a wineskin, measuring cups for wine, wine presses and barrels illustrate the purpose of this room, which connects to the salon through a vestibule.

UPPER FLOOR

4. KITCHEN

This contains three elements from the earlier structure: the *lareira* (fireplace), the oven and the toilet. There is also the typical furniture of a Galician kitchen: three benches, a chicken crate, an *alzadero* or china cabinet, two *cunqueiros* for storing cups; in glass-fronted cabinets there are small collections of chocolate pots, irons, items of Galician ceramics, etc.

5. SALON

The dominant architectural element in the room is the large corner *parlatorio* with seats. There is also a notable fireplace with Renaissance decoration, and a beautiful sacristy cupboard, probably 17th-century. There are collections of grandfather clocks and water filters, used by the nobility to purify water for human consumption.

In the central space, display cases show interesting items such as an 18th-century monstrance, religious images and two souls in Purgatory, and a 17th-century *santero* box depicting the *Virgen de las Ermidas*. There are also examples of traditional Galician metalwork and jet jewellery (this protective stone is intimately linked to the culture of Galicia).

6. LOOM HALL

The original use of this room is not known, but as it connected the wine cellar and the salon we think it was probably used by the servants, and therefore the items on display here relate to working with wool, cotton and linen: a *caneleiro*, a *sarillo*, a loom, lace-making pillows, combs and carders, spools, spinning wheels and spindles.

7. CORRIDOR

Leaving the salon there are several collections of items relating to industries, such as lighting-related objects (wick-trimmers, snuffers, oil lamps, various types of lanterns, candlesticks and Argand lamps) and mortars, mostly from the 18th and 19th century.

8. SCRIPTORIUM

This room has various objects relating to the work of scribes: portable ink-horns, as used by scribes in the 18th and 19th centuries, and sanders; a large collection of walking sticks, and a Baroque cupboard and *bargueño* desk.

9. BEDROOM

A reconstruction of a bedroom, with a bed with a trunk at the foot to store clothes, a bedpan and a washstand.

TOWER AND CHAPEL

10. FIRST STOREY OF THE TOWER

Here there is a section devoted to knives and swords, presided by an impressive suit of 17th-century samurai armour, donated by Juan López Suárez. It is worth seeing the machetes from the Philippines and Cuba, daggers, sabres, rapiers, knuckledusters and a medieval chain-mail gauntlet.

A trap-door gives a view of the former dungeon of the fortress, which still has an enormous chain with iron collars.

11. SECOND STOREY OF THE TOWER

The entrance to this room is dominated by a suit of Moro armour from the Philippines, made of pieces of water buffalo horn, chain-mail and brass, from the 17th-18th centuries. There are also front-loading and breech-loading pistols and revolvers, shotguns, carbines, rifles, cannons, etc., complemented by horns and boxes used for gunpowder.

12. THIRD STOREY OF THE TOWER

The most notable element in this room is the Renaissance fireplace which Vasco das Seixas had built in the 16th century, decorated with plant and animal motifs. The remaining pieces from collection of bedroom furniture are here, consisting of two Olot-type Baroque beds, two Galician beds in the Portuguese style, a cradle and a Dompedro chair.

13. CHAPEL

Outside the building, at the end of the ramp leading to the tower, is this small building with a rectangular plan, built in the 18th century.

It has a 19th-century altarpiece with various popular images, including St. Pelagius; a confessional, an organ, prie-dieux and various religious images.

VISITING HOURS

From 1 April to 30 September:

- Tuesday to Friday: 11 am – 2 pm, 5 pm - 8 pm

- Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays: 12 pm – 2 pm, 5 pm - 8 pm

- Mondays: closed

From 1 October to 31 March:

- Tuesday to Friday: 11 am – 2 pm, 4 pm - 6 pm

- Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays: 12 pm – 2 pm, 4 pm - 6 pm

- Mondays: closed

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