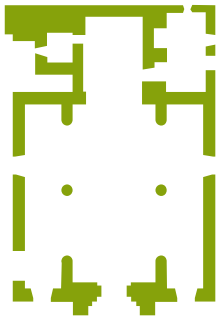




5.

CHURCH OF SAINT MARY OF AIRÃES



Lugar do Mosteiro
Airães
Felgueiras



41° 18' 54.421" N
8° 11' 52.88" W



+351 918 116 488



Sat., 6.45 pm (wint.) or
7.45 pm (sum.); Sun., 11
am; Tue., 6.30 pm



Saint Mary
15th August



National Monument
1977



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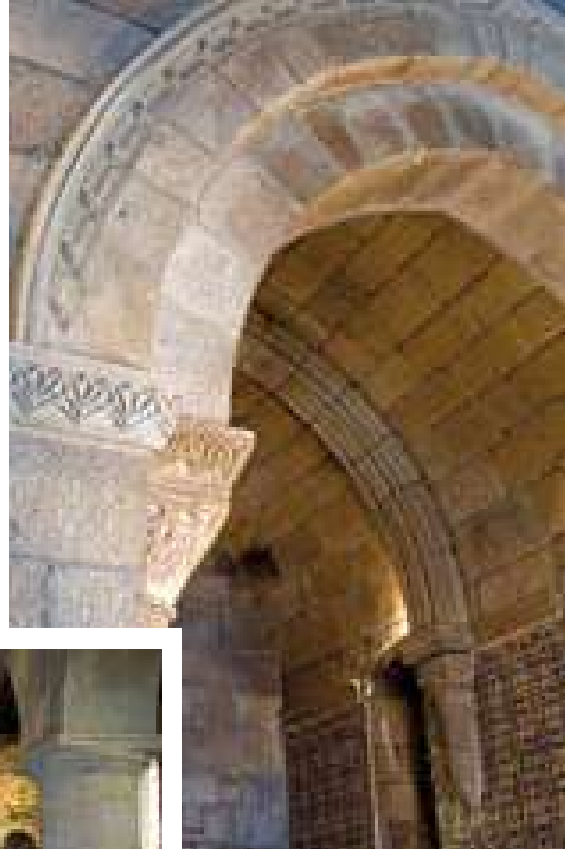
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The Church of Saint Mary of Airães is a significant example of the long persistence of the Romanesque construction standards in this region. One of the most significant and peculiar aspects of Romanesque architecture in the Sousa basin has precisely to do with the acceptance of the building models and decorative solutions of the Romanesque period. The late appearance of some elements, such as the capitals of the western portal and the mouldings and capitals of the chevet, indicates that the Church probably dates back to the late 13th or early 14th century.

The Church of Saint Mary corresponds to an old foundation, given that it has been documented since 1091. In the royal inquiries of 1220 it is referred to as the “ecclesia de Araes”, from the “julgado” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Felgueiras. In the royal inquiries of 1258, “Sancte Marie de Araes” was still a noblemen’s patronage and presented by the archbishop of Braga. The patronage of the Church was transferred several times; in 1394 it already belonged to the Crown that bound it to the Order of Aviz. In 1517, it became a Commendation of the Order of Christ.



Although the Church features three naves, the only remains of the original one-nave Romanesque building are the rectangular chevet covered by a pointed barrel vault and the central section of the west-facing main façade.

On the main façade, the portal has a similar composition to that of the portals in the Churches of Sousa (p. 38), of Unhão (p. 42), both in Felgueiras, and of Ferreira (Paços de Ferreira) (p. 66). It is surrounded by a pentagonal stone structure that protrudes from the façade in order to make it look deeper. The four archivolts do not bear any decoration and both the shape and size of the capitals are already suggesting Gothic solutions. The decoration of the bases and plinths follows the region's typical models.

The bell tower stands to the north of the chevet; it is difficult to date, although its entrance door and windows seem to be from the Gothic period. On the Church's

base there are ashlar with protruding panels of Roman typology suggesting the existence of an old building from that period in the vicinity, perhaps even a primitive Paleo-Christian or Swabian-Visigothic church. In 1758, the number of altars and their devotions was very different from the current one. The chancel was equipped with a golden altarpiece and a tabernacle; in the naves there were four collateral altars - two in the central nave and one in each of the lateral naves. The chapel of Saint Lucy, an invocation quite representative of the parish's devotional universe, was located in the north nave. On the opposite nave, we find the altarpiece of Saint Anthony. Regarding the two altars of the central nave, we can only tell that one was dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus. The woodwork ensemble that we may currently find in the Church was made after the information provided in 1758.