



8.

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR OF AVELEDA



	Lugar da Igreja Aveleda Lousada
	41° 16' 46.51" N 8° 15' 10.95" W
	+351 918 116 488
	Sunday, 10.30 am Saturday, 6.30 pm
	Divine Saviour 6 th August
	Public Interest Building 1978
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The Church of the Saviour of Aveleda is worth visiting, despite its constructive simplicity. This Church is an interesting example of the long persistence of Romanesque shapes in Portuguese medieval architecture. It is on the Church's west portal that the more obvious, although very late, Romanesque elements are preserved. The capitals with botanic motifs are all similar and the outline of the bases finds a parallel in other examples from the Sousa basin, such as the Churches of Sousa (p. 38), of Unhão (p. 42) and of Airães (p. 47), in Felgueiras, and of Boelhe (p. 156), in Penafiel. The lateral portals, which do not feature any columns, are also a sign of a very late Romanesque style. It would be more accurate to fit these elements into the "resistance Romanesque" style, due to their late nature. The plain modillions that crown the nave's walls are another evidence that this Church was most probably built in the late 13th century, or even in the early 14th century. Above the lateral portals runs an eave that suggests the existence of porches, which were commonly found in Portuguese Romanesque churches.



The first documentary references to Aveleda date back to the late 11th century when, on May 23rd 1098, Pedro Astrufiz and his wife, Emizio Cidiz, sold a few assets they had inherited in the “villa” of Aveleda to Guterre Mendes and Onega Gonçalves. In 1177, there was already a reference to the “ecclesia of Auelaneda”. Vela Rodrigues donated the assets he possessed in Lousada - which he had inherited from his father, Rodrigo Viegas, and his grandparents, Egas Moniz and Teresa Afonso - to the Monastery of Paço

de Sousa (Penafiel) (p. 90). The Church’s patron saint - the Divine Saviour - is mentioned in a document from 1218, as well as in the royal inquiries of 1258. Since this is a Church of medieval origin, it shows, both outside and inside, architectural and artistic elements that evidence the transformation it underwent during the Modern Period, such as the sacristy, the chancel and the bell tower. These structures date back to the 17th and 18th centuries and create volumes with different levels within the same building.





The collateral altarpieces depict an elaborate Rococo design and the main altarpiece is Neoclassical. However, we must highlight the paintings found on the ceiling of the chancel and of the nave and on the triumphal arch, whose authorship is yet to be ascertained. Their author, perfectly aware of the Rococo aesthetics, left an indelible mark of his artistic quality in these paintings: it is an iconographic programme executed by the hand of an excellent artist,

where the paintings exude their own autonomy, in addition to the pedagogical and decorative functions of the sacred space. The main altarpiece that was replaced by the current one followed the same aesthetic guidelines that characterise this space. Were it not for the replacement of the main altarpiece and this would be a parish Church renovated in the third quarter of the 18th century where formal harmony was the key note.

ROSETTES

Regarding the Church of the Saviour of Aveleda, we should also mention the existence of a decorated piece included in one of the steps that separate the nave from the chevet. It is a rectangular granite piece with two carved motifs. On the edges there are six-petalled rosettes framed by circles and, in the middle, a diamond.

Both in terms of the motifs it shows and in terms of the sculpting technique that was used, the decoration of this element recalls the friezes of the church of São Torcato (Guimarães) that, in turn, finds parallel in São Frutuoso de Montélios (Braga). In São Torcato, a Romanesque church that underwent many changes in the Modern Period, there are still traces of an ancient temple dating back to the first half of the 10th century, thus fitting into the Mozarabic movement and in the process of re-population of the North-western regions. The dating of the church of São Frutuoso de Montélios is still not altogether clear. The authors who have studied it place it either within the Visigothic period or in the Mozarabic period.

While this is not the moment to discuss the complexity of these issues, the fact is that the piece reused in the Church of Aveleda is similar to the friezes found in the two examples we have mentioned. It is possible that it had belonged to an older building that actually existed, given that the chronology of the existing Church is associated with a much later period than that of the documentary references mentioned above.



DON'T MISS OUT

- 3.1 km: Gourmet Routes (Lousada Tourism Office) (p. 254)