





46.

**BRIDGE**  
OF FUNDO  
DE RUA




-  Rua de Ovelha e Honra do Marão, Aboadela Amarante


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-  41° 16' 38.36" N  
7° 59' 43.82" W


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-  Submitted to classification


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The Bridge of Fundo de Rua evokes ancient paths that crossed the river Ovelha. It was part of one of the two routes that crossed the Marão and led the traveller to Vila Real. The other one was the road that connected Amarante to Lamego, crossing the Douro.

This is a work from the Modern Period (perhaps the date of 1630 carved on the base of a cross placed on the left bank marks the year of construction), which surely succeeds to a medieval crossing that was crucial in an area of the river, which was rather wide and subject to strong currents in the winter.

So, perhaps during the reign of King Filipe III (k. 1621-1640), a stone Bridge was finally built here, supported by four round arches with different sizes on which a platform, slightly raised above the larger arch, rests. The pillars are protected by sharp cut-waters upstream and by buttresses downstream.

At the entrance, in the town, a cross and the pillory recall fears and dangers. The former ensures the protection of the traveller and the latter, where sentences and punishments inflicted by the judicial authorities were enforced, reminds us of the autonomous status of



## THE CUT-WATERS

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The cut-waters served to "cut" the current, i.e., to break it, thus protecting the bridge's pillars from being directly struck by currents or debris. On the opposite side, facing downstream, the buttresses prevented the bridge from being continuously under pressure due to the normal flow or stronger currents.

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Ovelha do Marão, one of the few "beetrias" in the kingdom. A "beetria" was a form of local government that allowed the residents to choose their lord. Although it was not a democratic form of government, as we now understand it, it was a somewhat extravagant municipal model in which part of the residents of a given town, or group of towns, decided to hand power over to a specific lord. The "beetria" of Ovelha do Marão suffered ups and downs caused by lords that

were more focused on power and prestige than on the concerns of local people. After a few lords who negotiated the domain of the "beetria", residents sought protection from the Dukes of Bragança and, shortly afterwards, it was extinct by King João II (k. 1481-1495). The residents of Ovelha do Marão asked the king's son to take over the government of their lands, but he died young and the vacant position was occupied by his half-brother. With the rehabilitation of the House of





Bragança there was a dispute over the ownership of the “beetria” which was claimed by the Duke Teodósio. The issue dragged on until the extinction of the “beetrias” and the incorporation of Ovelha do Marão in the royal assets. Perhaps this course of events may explain the construction of the Bridge of Fundo de Rua from a political and economic standpoint: its construction had a regional and national interest because it was

placed on one of the main lines of penetration between the Atlantic coast and the inner Iberian regions. It was possibly built using regional taxes, like in the case of the bridge of Meimoa (Penamacor). Ovelha do Marão was quite a busy place. It suffered the consequences of the French invasions in 1809, but it was immortalised in Camilo Castelo Branco’s (1825-1890) novels, whose literary geography mentions this region rather frequently.



### LUGAR DA RUA – “ALDEIA DE PORTUGAL”

Enjoy your visit to the Bridge and learn about the Lugar da Rua, classified as “Aldeia de Portugal” [Village of Portugal]. Its simplicity will surprise and delight you at a first glance. Visit the Interpretative and Cultural Centre of Marão and, leaving the village, explore the natural beauty of the mountain along its footpaths (“Rota de São Bento”, 12 km).

