



48.

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR OF LUFREI



Rua da Igreja
Lufrei
Amarante



41° 16' 25.04" N
8° 3' 15.84" W



+351 918 116 488



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Divine Saviour
6th August



Public Interest Building
1971



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The Church of Lufrei is located in a fertile valley, thus opposing the deployment of a large number of parish churches built on hills or ridges more or less elevated. Its monastic origin may explain this location, deemed ideal by Cluny and by the Benedictines and definitively adopted by Cistercians as the model-location for the deployment of their homes. In fact, Lufrei was granted the status of convent intended to house Benedictine nuns (perhaps founded by the family of Gonçalo João da Pedreira) and, like so many other cases in the region, was eventually abandoned (mid-15th century) and later turned into a parish church (1455).

With a modest size, the Church of Lufrei served as a parish church since then and was replaced by a new church for such purpose in 2001. We are standing before another building that fits into the “resistance Romanesque” style and is a good example of the vernacular and the popular nature that the Romanesque *modus aedificandi* achieved among us. Therefore, Portuguese Romanesque architecture should be understood in its diachrony.

Despite the homogeneity we can find in terms of the height of the rows of ashlar, the masonry work that



MEM DE GUNDAR

Tradition says that Mem de Gundar was the founder of the three Benedictine convents in the region: Lufrei, Gondar (p. 202) and Gestaço (Baião). Despite the lack of documentary grounds, the memory of the connection of this monastery of Lufrei to Gondar - which frames these two monastic houses within the movement that created female Benedictine communities from the 12th century onwards - remained in the submission of Lufrei to that Church due to their patronage. The rector of Gondar was responsible for presenting the vicar of Lufrei.

shapes this small temple is mostly characterised by an irregular appearance. The Church of Lufrei, which does not bear any sculpted decorative elements, is only illuminated by extremely narrow crevices of Romanesque flavour located in key spots along the building: above the main portal and over the chancel arch and a single one on each of the nave's walls. The corbels feature mostly square rather than rectangular profiles and are plain, thus showing their late nature.

This is also corroborated by the composition of the portals, which are carved on the thickness of the walls with no columns or tympanum. The main façade's gable is interrupted by a double Romanesque belfry. Inside, visible Romanesque traces are scarce. We only feel the Romanesque atmosphere of this Church in the crevices that tenuously illuminate it or in the size of the triumphal arch that intimately closes the chancel.

Main altarpiece before the restoration works (2013)





The inner walls were all covered in white until the end of 2013, when the Church underwent a mural painting conservation and restoration intervention. However, the whitewashed walls maintained their preponderance, since the intervention was focused on three different areas of the Church: the chancel (behind the main altarpiece), the wall of the triumphal arch and its adjacent areas (behind the collateral altarpieces).

It was confirmed that, in the chancel, there were strong chromatic layers, which had already been hinted by the “windows” that had been mechanically opened during the surveys. At the top end of the wall of the triumphal arch it was possible to identify two mural painting campaigns, with similar compositions, representing



the *Calvary*. On the north wall of the nave, we highlight a fresco painting that depicts *Saint Andrew*, together with an inscription dated 1608.

The main altarpiece and the nave's collateral altarpieces are from the Mannerist period, as proven by the integration of pictorial panels in their structure.

FUNERARY ART

In the surrounding churchyard, there are three surviving tombs with their corresponding lids. They are monolithic sarcophagi with trapezoidal, perhaps anthropomorphic, shapes; their lids are also monolithic, with pentagonal sections and gabled volumes. These three chests were mentioned in the *parish memoirs of 1758* - as evidence of the existence of notable men in the parish of Lufrei - with the following words: “there are three tombs



made from single-slab stones preserved in the churchyard, raised from the ground, with lids made also from single-slab stones, carved in a pointed shape along its entire length. There aren't any similar tombs in these surroundings. In two of these tombs there are a few traces of chisel-carved names but, because time has weathered the letters, it is no longer possible to find out what was written, nor is there any tradition in human memory regarding the individuals who were buried in them”.



DON'T MISS OUT

- 2.8 km: Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso Municipal Museum (p. 277)
- 2.8 km: Church and Convent of Saint Gonçalo (p. 278)
- 2.8 km: Church of Our Lord of the Afflicted – Museum of Religious Art (p. 279)
- 8.3 km: Amarante Water Park (p. 280)