



35.

**CHAPEL**  
OF OUR  
LADY OF  
DELIVERANCE  
OF  
FANDINHÃES



Rua da Nossa Senhora da  
Livração, Paços de Gaiolo,  
Marco de Canaveses



41° 6' 22.95" N  
8° 7' 45.93" W



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Our Lady of Deliverance  
Last Sunday of May



Public Interest Building  
2012



P. 25



P. 25



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The enigmatic Chapel which is currently dedicated to Our Lady of Deliverance is an isolated case within the context of the Portuguese Romanesque style. While throughout the history of art there was a tendency to extend or replace the chancels of Romanesque churches, in this specific case we stand before what we think may be the opposite situation, if we are to believe in the possibility that the nave of what was once the parish church of Fandinhães was demolished before 1758. However, this church that, in the medieval period, was dedicated to Saint Martin may have had a different fate: the one of never being finished. At the moment this is all we know, because the existing documentary sources are not clear on this subject. Only the conduction of archaeological excavations on site may unravel this puzzle.

Located at approximately 500 meters above sea level and far from the circulation channels that ran parallel to the water courses, the church of Saint Martin of Fandinhães was built according to the canonical orientation, meaning that it is not facing the human and agricultural space it was supposed to protect. On the contrary, its history was definitely influenced by this distance and

by the advance of humanisation towards the valley. The hamlet of Paços de Gaiolo, "Gayol" or "Goyol" was already somehow populated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The migration of the local population to places with lower altitudes may justify the non-completion of the Romanesque building.

So, when we reach this place, we are faced with a Chapel that, at a certain point during its life witnessed the replacement of the worship of Saint Martin by that of Saint Blaise and, later, by the Marian invocation. Today only the chancel remains, and the triumphal arch was turned into the main portal. Close by we are still able to see the ruins, much to the Romantic taste, of the nave's foundations (which began being built or were left behind); as usual, the nave was wider and higher than the chevet.

This architectural legacy from the Romanesque period is one more evidence of the itinerancy of shapes and artists so

typical of this medieval stage. Following a model that we find in the Monastery of Travanca (Amarante) (p. 212) and in the Church of Abragão (Penafiel) (p. 152), we see atlas-shaped figures supported by protruding leaves sculpted on the angles of the main portal's capitals. In the existing churchyard we find two ashlar, judging by their shapes, were probably part of a typical cornice supported by little arches, a motif that was very appreciated by the Romanesque style of the Sousa basin and which arrived there through Coimbra. The existence of dihedral tori on the crevices tells us of an influence that came from the Porto region which, in turn, had gotten it from the French Limousin region. And, as we are talking about elements of foreign origin that spread across national centres that assimilated them, we should highlight the theme of the *beak-heads*, which spread from the church of São Pedro de

### THE BEAK-HEADS

The *beak-heads*, an Anglo-Saxon motif that first appeared in the church of São Pedro de Rates (Póvoa de Varzim) was widely spread across national territory. This is the depiction of animal heads biting the voussoirs' torus. In addition to the inner archivolt of the portal of the tower of the Monastery of Travanca (Amarante) (p. 212), we find this motif on the external voussoirs of back crevice of the pantheon of the Resendes (Monastery of Cárquere, Resende (p. 121)), on the arch that surrounds the south crevice of the chancel of the Chapel of Fandinhães, and on the triumphal arch of the Church of Tarouquela (Cinfães) (p. 109), which is the only one of its kind in Portugal. However, in the last example, instead of the traditional bird heads,



we find representations of tiger or wolf heads. In the cloister of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel) (p. 90) there is still a separate voussoir depicting this theme.



Rates (Póvoa de Varzim) and decorates the voussoirs of the south crevice.

While most corbels show motifs with a geometric flavour, two of them stand out by the representation of somewhat stylised human figures; on a third one we find the theme of the *exhibitionist*, a squatting male figure that is depicted naked and with its right hand over its genitals, while the left hand is touching its face. We also find this scheme in Tarouquela (Cinfães)

(p. 109). On the nave's foundations, on the north side, we see the representation of a bird (a pelican?) and, on the opposite side, we see a new approach to the theme of the *exhibitionist*. It is a stylised representation of a man who is holding his beard with both hands, which reminds us of a typology that is found in several Spanish Romanesque buildings or the figure on the corbel that supports the tympanum of the main portal of the Monastery of Paço de Sousa (Penafiel) (p. 90).





## THE ROMANESQUE ICONOGRAPHY

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Provocative and obscene iconography was a common feature of the European Romanesque style, although less explicit themes that were also related with the sin of lust were often used; these could be mermaids, women with serpents or serpents alone, which we believe to be depicted on a capital from the existing main portal, on the south side, of the Chapel of Fandinhães.

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In the space that used to belong, or might have belonged, to the nave, two slabs identify two graves. The larger one features a carving depicting a rather stereotyped sword: a blade, a straight guard and a pommel. In the other slab, which is smaller, has a simple cross.

The crevice above the main portal was covered by a recent polychrome tile panel depicting the Virgin and Child.

Inside the Chapel there is a National Baroque [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)] polychrome altarpiece that houses the image of the patron saint flanked by Her predecessors, Saint Blaise, on the left, and Saint Martin, on the right. We should highlight the altar's frontal piece composed of *Mudéjar arista* or *cuenca* tiles, thus forming a geometric floral composition.

