



53.

## CHURCH OF SAINT ANDREW OF TELÕES



Largo do Mosteiro  
Telões  
Amarante



41° 18' 36.54" N  
8° 6' 28.73" W



+351 918 116 488



Saturday, 4.30 pm  
Sunday, 9.30 am



Saint Andrew  
30<sup>th</sup> November



Public Interest Building  
1977



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Near Amarante, we find the Church of Saint Andrew of Telões, part of a large number of family churches or monasteries that were founded in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region during the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Telões was already referred to as a parish church. Its importance in the region did not decrease due to that, and it kept on asserting itself as an important religious and cultural centre. Although two centuries later it was still being referred to as a “monastery”, the truth is that, by then, there were no remains of the monastic space and its secular status as a parish church was well established. The right of presentation of Telões, which was a rectory from the archbishopric of Braga at the time, had been held by the chapter of the collegiate of Our Lady of Oliveira, in Guimarães, since the second quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite being deeply transformed, it is in the chevet that we find the most important traces of the Romanesque period. With a rectangular plan, the apse of the Church of Telões was surely designed to be vaulted, as suggested by the external buttresses that end well below the cornice and are placed along the Church's lateral and back walls.



## JOSÉ SARAMAGO IN THE CHURCH OF TELÕES

"Here there is a monastery with a graceful, yet restored, galilee. When the traveller leaves the main roads, he always charges large rewards. The valley where Telões was built is open, wide; there is some small brook flowing by and when the traveller is about to enter the church it is time to strike the clock". These were the words used by José Saramago (1922-2010), awarded with the Nobel Prize for Literature, to describe his arrival to the Church of Telões.

An analysis of the remaining Romanesque legacies allows us to conclude that the building of the Church of Telões is of a late chronology. On the triumphal arch, the bulb-shaped bases are rather evolved, the impostes bear a late appearance and the robust capitals feature botanic themes that are already quite attached to the frustum. On the main portal, the archivolt is devoid of decorations and rest on the walls; the tympanum is plain and supported by fluted corbels. The modillions from the apse and the nave are predominantly flat and, finally, the oculus shaped like a fleur-

-de-lys carved on the main façade, corroborate the idea that the Romanesque structure was built in the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Considering that in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century a canon from the Porto cathedral called Domingos Pais left, in his will, a few lamps to illuminate and decorate the altars of Saint Lawrence and Saint Mary Magdalene to the "monastery" of Telões, the Church would have been, by then, complete or almost finished.

The Romanesque Church of Telões was subject to several transformations over the centuries, as proven by the scars on





the nave's walls, the construction of the galilee and the sacristy or the opening of large rectangular windows on the lateral walls of the body and the apse during the Modern Period. The high choir and its corresponding access were also assembled approximately in the same period; they were demolished during the restoration interventions carried out in the 1980's.

However, it was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the Church underwent one of the most significant transformations, which resulted in a large mural painting campaign, although currently we are only able to appreciate the painting on the nave's back wall, which was recently revealed and depicts a *Nativity* scene overlapping a previous layer. The painting that alludes to the birth of Christ has been ascribed to a workshop associated with the Delirious Master from Guimarães because of the torsioned heads and the gestures that emphasise the painting's movement; it shows clear similarities with a painting alluding to the *Beheading of Saint John the Bap-*

*tist*, which is currently displayed at the Alberto Sampaio Museum (Guimarães) and belonged to the Chapter House of the collegiate of Guimarães. We should bear in mind that, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of Telões belonged to that collegiate's patronage and that, as it is known, the ones who held the right of patronage were responsible for decorating the chancel; sometimes this decoration was extended to the nave, thus prevailing over the parishioners' sponsorship for its maintenance and decoration.

In the Modern Period, there were already no traces of the altars for which the canon from Porto had offered a few lamps in 1269. But, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, this Church was provided with new altars and corresponding altarpieces, which reflected the new invocations which were imposed and still somehow persist: the main altarpiece, the two collateral altarpieces and the two lateral altarpieces placed inside arches carved on the wall.

## THE MURAL PAINTING

The rest of the paintings from Telões, arranged along the nave's back and lateral walls, are hidden by the Neoclassical main altarpiece. The pictorial programme probably took up the entire back wall of the nave, where the figure of *Saint Andrew* surmounted by angels has already been identified, as well as the presence of several decorative elements that connect this campaign to the workshop that produced the painting that alludes to the *Adoration of the Magi* from Freixo de Baixo (Amarante) (p. 224), or to the ones found on the apse chapel of Pombeiro (Felgueiras) (p. 30), which date back to 1530.



## THE PROCESSIONAL CROSS

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The processional cross that is currently associated with the Church of Telões is also from the Middle Ages. This is a Romanesque cross pattée whose manufacturing date may be settled in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The cross is decorated with intertwined motifs, elements that were inspired in Byzantine models; the absence of a Crucified Christ does not allow us to provide a more accurate chronological and stylistic reading of the piece that, however, should be compared with the processional cross kept in the National Museum of Ancient Art (Lisbon) and is part of a legacy from Barros e Sá, in which the anatomy of Christ reveals the inherent characteristics of the Byzantine crucifixes.

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## THE LAST SUPPER

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On the Church's south wall we are currently able to see an interesting bas-relief depicting the *Last Supper* made by an artisan or group of artisans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This painting is worth mentioning because it is possible to see the influence of the *Last Supper* (1542) by Jacopo Bassano (1510-1592) in this composition. Such is possible due to the intense market of engravings over paintings of the major European artistic centres, which provided the most peripheral workshops with the necessary themes and iconographies to fulfil their institutional commissions.

