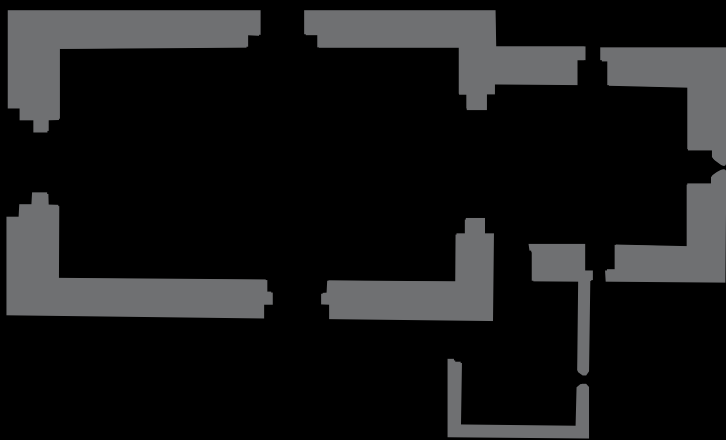


**CHURCH**  
**OF SAINT**  
**MARY**  
**OF JAZENTE**  
AMARANTE

CHURCH  
OF SAINT  
MARY  
OF JAZENTE  
AMARANTE



Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The document written in 1726 by the memoirist Francisco Craesbeeck about Jazente is rather short<sup>1</sup>. He refers that the abbey had belonged to the bishopric of Porto, that it had affiliate chapels, but didn't have a tabernacle or epigraphed graves that could provide the chronicler with the material he needed to decorate his paragraphs. However, he alludes to the memory that guaranteed this would have been an institute for religious women (Craesbeeck, 1992: 57).

Historically located within the limits of the diocese of Porto, Jazente integrated the term of the municipality of Gestaçô, which included, among others, the parishes of Saint Isidore of Sanche, Saint Andrew of Padronelo, Saviour of Lufrei and Saint Mary of Gondar. It was a small parish (perhaps that is why it still didn't have a tabernacle in 1623); however, its incomes were quite significant in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: 300 thousand "réis" [former Portuguese currency unit] to support the abbot and patron (Niza, 1767: 292).



General view.

<sup>1</sup> About the evolution of the toponym and invocation, please read Moreira (1985-1986: 92).

As most of Medieval churches in the region, the origin of Jazente may be found in a monastic institution<sup>2</sup>. Saint Mary, the patron saint, highlights its Medieval nature; this hagiotopeponym remained as a sign of an invocation associated with certain orders that defended the Marian invocation – which, in some cases, was replaced in the Modern Period by vocatives that were more in line with the status of Mother of God as man. However, like in the Churches of Telões or Gondar (Amarante), the status of small and poor monastery resulted in its secularization, notwithstanding the reference to religious women who were still associated with it in the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup>.

This Church stands out mainly for its connection to Paulino Cabral, known by the pen name of Abade de Jazente [Abbot of Jazente]. Despite being somewhat distant in body and mind, he belonged to the Arcádia Lusitana movement [Academy of poetry that occupied the centre of the literary life of Lisbon between 1756 and 1770], which criticized and satirized the crucial elements of poetry, based on Classical precepts. Paulino was born in the parish of São Pedro de Lomba, near Amarante, on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1719; he was the son of the graduate João Cabral and his wife, Ana Cerqueira, who lived in the hamlet of Reguengo<sup>4</sup>. He received a Canon degree from the University of Coimbra, a city he left in 1742 (Machado, 1759)<sup>5</sup>. The ecclesiastical career followed, first as an assistant, and then as the abbot of Jazente, positions he held between 1752 and 1784<sup>6</sup>. During his time in office, he wrote and lived mundanely. He often traveled to Porto to attend soirées and social gatherings, as mentioned by Arnaldo Gama in his novel *Um motim ha cem anos...*, while making a very particular description of this Arcadian clergyman:

“Our priest was, therefore, a foppish priest, a dapper, a real dandy, as we currently say. Here I am, watching my readers while they press their lips in a scornful smile... Do not laugh, however, because before you stands no less than the celebrated poet Paulino Cabral, one of the most distinct poets of his time, the cream, la crème de la crème of Porto’s bards – remarkable for the elegance of his concepts, for the bright colors that lined his verses, for his satirical wit, either fine and delicate, or rough and poignant, and also remarkable for the purity of his language and for the Classical precision of his style, which led Bocage to give him the honor of joining him in that famous sonnet, in which, to flagellate the poor doctor Quintanilha, they put in his mouth a savage criticism saying that the verse: *Trascala aos seiscentistas* belongs to our poet Paulino (...)” (Gama, 1861: 135-136)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> In 1258, the abbess Margarida testified before the inquirers and mentioned the private foundation of the monastery by Gomecio Mendes; other people added that, at the time, the founders’ descendants were Martinho Rodrigo Lopes “de Borona” and Vasco Mendes (Herculano, 1867: 1150).

<sup>3</sup> “Constança Martins”, considered as a concubine of Martim Gonçalves Leitão, a master of the order of Christ (Costa, 1706-1712: 142; Craesbeeck, 1992: 57).

<sup>4</sup> The godparents were: António Cerqueira Marinho, a clergyman *in minoribus* and Guiomar Cerqueira, a single woman, both children of António Álvares do Reguengo (ADP – Paroquiais. *Baptismos* (1588-11-06/1746-05-08), fl. 93).

<sup>5</sup> Diogo Barbosa says he was born in 1720 and adds that, before attending University, “he learned Latin, French and Italian” (Machado, 1759). His father was a physician.

<sup>6</sup> The first record of baptism written and signed by priest Paulino dates back to October 1752 (ADP – Paroquiais. *Baptismos* (1731-05-03/1780-07-26), fl. 32 v.º-33).

<sup>7</sup> The following pages provide further information about the Abbot of Jazente and his personality.

In his time the abbey of Jazente had an income of about 300 thousand “réis”, an amount he divided between his spiritual and bohemian life and an assistant that replaced him in his duties during his literary and spiritual journeys with the bards and abbots from Porto. In fact, in 1758, when the priests were asked to write a few words on the memoirs of their parishes, it was Father Manuel Pereira and not Paulino Cabral who wrote it, making a simple description (almost a report) about the geography of Jazente: a parish with 159 people, 52 dwellings spread across seven hamlets. Without any beneficiaries, chapels, pilgrimages or fairs, in short, without “anything worthy of a memoir”, Jazente must have seemed as devoid of interest to Father Manuel Pereira as it certainly was to abbot Paulino, or even more (Pereira, 1758)<sup>8</sup>. But his absences were temporary and the fondness for the quietness of his rural abbey was often shown in his poetry<sup>9</sup>. In 1760 and 1786-1787 he published his only two books: *Romance hendecasyllabo sobre o terramoto fatal da cidade de Lisboa sucedido no primeiro de novembro de 1755* and *Poesias de Paulino Cabral de Vasconcellos, abbade de Jazente*.

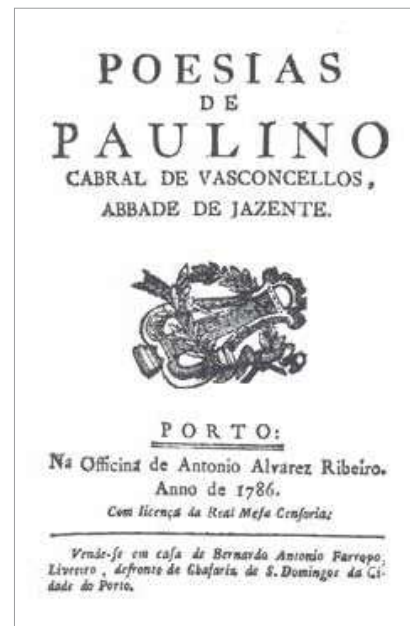
Forced to retire to Amarante, where he died in 1789, he wrote the following words alluding to his abbey of Jazente:

“I, who near the Caban where I lived,  
Had a rich Chapel: and lucky me  
So many sheep, that the pasture  
Turned joyfully white because of them:

I, who had the pleasure, had the joy,  
I had a name among the highest; I, the wretched,  
Of what I had I am now deprived,  
I have nothing more than the night and the day:

I myself left it all: and only,  
The longing in the vaults of memory  
Have I kept with care, but imprudently;

For by reading in it my sad story,  
Make this present harm seem ever harder  
Sweet memories of a past glory” (Cabral, 1786).



Reproduction of the frontispiece of the work *Poesias*, by Paulino Cabral de Vasconcellos.

<sup>8</sup> The vicar Manuel Pereira claims to have written the memoir “because the Abbot was not able to do it” (Pereira, 1758). We don’t know the reason why.

<sup>9</sup> “Brutos penhascos, rústicas montanhas, / Medonhos bosques, hórrida maleza, / Que me vedes, coberto de tristeza, / Saudoso habitador destas campanhas” (Cabral, 1786)

## THE MONUMENT BETWEEN PERIODS

“Usually classified as a Romanesque structure, perhaps we should fit it into our rural Gothic style, taking into account its late construction” (Almeida, 2001: 124). It is with these words that Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida places the Church of Saint Mary of Jazente within the stylistic variants offered by the Middle Ages. In fact, the architectural elements we may observe in this small Church from Amarante refer to a chronology that should be positioned at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, if not already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. That aspect is not surprising. We should not forget that many Romanesque monuments located along the Sousa, Tâmega and Douro basins are part of the movement that the latest historiography has chosen to call “resistance Romanesque” style, or even “popular Romanesque” style<sup>10</sup>.

Consisting of a single nave and rectangular chevet which is lower and narrower than the nave, thus creating a clear contrast between different volumes, the Church of Jazente stands out for the homogeneity of its construction, which was not subject to many transformations over time. Its masonry work includes ashlar blocks with different sizes. However, as noted in 1864 by the priest of this parish, its ashlar blocks do create “rows with similar dimensions at least in terms of height”<sup>11</sup>.

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East and south façades.

<sup>10</sup> About this issue, please read Botelho (2010: 395).

<sup>11</sup> Oliveira, João André de – Missiva de 18 de outubro [?] de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM, Cx. 3216/3. Correspondência Igrejas do concelho de Amarante, 1864-1867.



West façade.

The Church's main façade is dominated by the portal, one of the elements that better suggest its late nature. Composed of two slightly broken archivolts that rest directly on the wall in which they are embedded, its tympanum was worthy of a reference in an article by Pedro Vitorino, which was specifically focused on the study of *Tímpanos românicos ornamentados* (Vitorino, 1941: 5-17). According to this physician who studied the Portuguese Romanesque style, this tympanum is perforated by "a large cross with a central disc, together with another cross on the lintel, which has a similar shape and is simply engraved". It is supported by flat corbels that rest on the wall and are decorated with vertical grooves carved on their inner side. Here lies the greatest originality of this portal. Still on this façade – creating a somewhat restrained verticality in the middle – there is a narrow crevice surmounted by the belfry that accommodates one bell and visibly splits the gable. The bell is no longer there, but its presence will endure over time due to the scar of its strokes, which is still visible on the wall. On top of the bell tower there is a small cross.

In Jazente, the composition of the tympana is a sign that this small Church was built already during the final Romanesque Period, a time when there was a tendency to pierce the tympanum, not only with hollow crosses, but also with other orifices (Almeida, 1971: 114). Therefore, in the south portal, we find five circular openings placed in the form of a cross surrounded by a double circle carved in the granite. We should not forget that this late Romanesque style is already coeval of the first architectural examples of the Gothic style that seeks its very essence in the worship of light. This portal is also carved in the thickness of the wall itself and, therefore, it doesn't have any columns. The two slightly broken archivolts that shape it rest directly on the walls.



West façade. Portal.



South façade. Nave. Portal.





South façade. Chancel. Cornice.



South façade. Chancel. Corbels.

Still on the south façade, above the portal, there is a surviving eave that, associated with the protruding corbels placed at a slightly lower level, confirms the existence of a porch-like structure that, because it was built with perishable materials, did not manage to reach our days. Immediately above the eave there are two narrow crevices, much to the Romanesque taste. Finally, there is a cornice supported by modillions, which are mostly plain or decorated with very simple geometric shapes and have a square profile. This is another sign of the late nature of this Church within the chronology of the Portuguese Romanesque style.

In the chevet we also find the same type of corbels on both sides, and the same type of crevices, both on the side elevations and on the back wall. Together with the corbels we are still able to see small orifices which we believe may have been used to support other constructions (Basto, 2006). In fact, on the nave's front wall there is also a narrow crevice and, above its gable, a terminal cross pattée, much to the Romanesque taste. The sacristy is adjoined to the south side of the chancel, which is accessed through an opening shaped as a three-centered arch.

In general, the north elevation is identical to the south one. However, note the absence of an eave. But since there are corbels that might have supported a porch-like structure, we believe that this elevation would be simpler than the opposite one. Here, the straight-lintel portal is carved in the thickness of the wall and, inside, it corresponds to the niche where the image of Our Lady of Fátima is displayed. The corbels are plain.

Inside Jazente simplicity reigns. The granite of the walls is only interrupted by narrow crevices that, much to the Romanesque taste, illuminate it in a subtle way. The difference between the volumes of the chancel and the nave is emphasized here by the opening of the triumphal arch. Despite being broken, it looks more like a three-centered arch. However, we should note the existence of two pilasters with Tuscan capitals, one on each side of arch's intrados, which lead us to believe that, at some point during the Modern Period, sometime between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was an intention to transform this arch, ennobling it and increasing the size of its opening. However, the work was interrupted. The upper part of the free-standing double bell tower located on the south side of the churchyard was surely built during the same campaign. Above the cornice, a triangular pediment is interrupted by an opening in the middle that, judging by its size, may have even sheltered an image. It is surmounted by a cross. Two urns finish the pediment's upper ends.



East and north façades. Chancel.



Nave. North wall. Niche. Sculpture. Our Lady of Fátima.



General interior view from the nave.

Inside, the existing altarpieces do not correspond to the common 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century interventions, which introduced very deep changes in the Medieval churches. These are contemporary experiments that attempted to restore part of the heritage destroyed by the interventions occurred in the 1930s and 60s, because the inventory drawn up in 1912 by the Worshiping Commission still mentions the existence of three altars<sup>12</sup>. It is likely that, in this inventory, the list makers were referring themselves to the original Baroque altarpieces. At the time it included the images of Saint Mary, Saint Anne, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Alphonsus<sup>13</sup>. Currently, the worshiped images are the ones of Saint Mary, Saint Anne, the Infant Jesus Saviour of the World and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We've already mentioned that, in 1726, Francisco Craesbeeck's description of the movable and integrated assets was short and depreciating. However, the image of the Virgin and Child made of polychrome limestone which dates back to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century is noteworthy.

It is a sculpture produced according to the Gothic models and still attached to a lack of expression of which the faces of Mother and Son are good examples; the artist (certainly close to or influenced by a reputable workshop with foreign craftsmen) intended to liberate it from the Medieval formalisms by treating the pleats of the clothes more freely and emphasizing the movement of the body by using a *contrappunto*. Moreover, humanism and, in some ways, the sentimental realism are expressed to the devotee not through the richness of the ornamentation

<sup>12</sup> PORTUGAL. Ministério das Finanças – Secretaria-geral – Arquivo. Comissão Jurisdicional dos Bens Culturais, Porto, Amarante, *Arrolamentos dos bens culturais*. Igreja de Jazente. Liv. 67, fl. 87-91v. ACMF/Arquivo/CJBC/PTO/AMA/ARROL/022.

<sup>13</sup> Idem.



Triumphal arch.

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and the weak naturalism in the treatment of the faces and limbs, but through the loving act of the Child touching His Mother's face, thus demonstrating affection and filial love. With her right hand, Mary is holding a rose, a symbol of purity and virginity that the Marian devotion – which had been growing since the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Europe – intended to emphasize.

It is worth highlighting the fact that, in 1864, Father João André d'Oliveira alludes to the existence of “figures painted on the wall, discovered by him when, in 1825, he commissioned the repair of one of the collateral altars”<sup>14</sup>. In 1932 we find new information regarding this painting, this time provided by Father Virgínio Monteiro Alves e Guimarães<sup>15</sup>. During the “restoration intervention”, which was taking place at that time and to which we will return further ahead, it was found that “the altarpiece located in the chancel arch didn't have another painting underneath the visible one, so it probably should have little or no value. Once it was disassembled, a painting of which the altarpiece was a copy was found behind the rubble; that water-colored painting, which is very imperfect and almost completely erased, was probably made together with the ones that were found behind the main altarpiece, which Mr. Bragança said are worthless”<sup>16</sup>. We weren't able to find any further information about those paintings. They probably date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, judging by the remaining specimens found in the Amarante region.

The tiles located in the chancel's altar table are probably from the same period. Although the compositional scheme is nowhere close to the one of the examples found in the Church of Our Lady of the Nativity of Escamarão (Cinfães), the same cannot be said of the chosen technique

<sup>14</sup> Oliveira, João André de – Missiva de 18 de outubro [?] de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM, Cx. 3216/3. Correspondência igrejas do concelho de Amarante, 1864-1867.

<sup>15</sup> Guimarães, Virgínio Monteiro Alves e – Missiva, 13 de dezembro de 1932. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM/DM – DGEMN:DREM-2494, Cx.21/3.

<sup>16</sup> Idem.



Bell tower.



Chancel. Back wall on the Gospel side. Pedestal. Sculpture. Virgin and Child.



Nave. Font.

and polychromy. Ocher, blue and green shades compose a stylized floral motif that is repeated as a pattern made up of four tiles (2x2). The flowers are surrounded by frames adorned with arabesques.

In this case, the font probably dates back to the late Romanesque Period. The base and the bowl are both polygonal. It stands in the nave, close to the main entrance, on the Gospel side.



Chancel. Altar table.

## CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

In response to the inquiry conducted by the Director of Public Works of Porto in 1864, which sought to assess the condition of the churches from the diocese of Porto, the parish priest of Jazente reported immediately that “the building of the parish church of Saint Mary of Jazente was in a good condition, well kept and repaired”<sup>17</sup>.

We only find further information about this small Church of Jazente in the 1930's. As far as we know, between 1932 and 1933 there were several conservation works carried out in this Church, certainly at the parish's expense. These works included removing the plaster from the internal and external walls and cleaning the walls “of the Church's façade, inside and outside the chancel and of part of the church's body”<sup>18</sup>. This intervention was carried out under the responsibility of the then parish priest of Jazente, Virgínio Monteiro Alves e Guimarães, directed by architect Baltazar de Castro (whom he calls the “Engineer”), and revealed a “few holes on the chancel's outside, next to each corbel or support”<sup>19</sup>. Besides, the parish priest informs that the two lateral crevices were similar [to the one on the apse's back], and that, despite being ruined, their repair was rather easy”<sup>20</sup>.

In the book *A arte românica em Portugal...*, printed in 1918, José de Marques Abreu publishes a photo of the outside of the Church of Jazente viewed from the north, where we can see that the joints were whitewashed, as well as the outside of the chancel and the main portal (Vasconcelos & Abreu, 1918: 149). At the time, the legibility of this building was very different from what it is today. It is also said that, during this intervention carried out in the 1930's, the tympanum of the main door was also restored and a stone path with a one-span width, which was covering a row of tiles, was lifted (Basto, 2006).

A few years later, Father Manuel Pinto Coelho addresses the Director of the National Monuments asking if this monument was already registered in the list “of National Monuments”<sup>21</sup>. The parish priest of Jazente needed that information because the Church was in need of “a few repairs”<sup>22</sup>. Since he got no answer, in January 1949, the parish priest of Jazente tries again<sup>23</sup>. According to his explanation, “a parish priest ought to ensure the cleanliness and preservation of his parish church and, in the case of a national monument, the obligation of preserving and repairing the church is the State's responsibility”. Furthermore, he clarifies that the Church of Jazente must have “been built in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, but its style and craftsmanship are indeed very poor. It was, then, still in the same month that the DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]

17 Oliveira, João André de – Missiva de 18 de outubro [?] de 1864. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM, Cx. 3216/3. Correspondência igrejas do concelho de Amarante, 1864-1867.

18 Guimarães, Virgínio Monteiro Alves e – Missiva, 13 de dezembro de 1932. IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM/DM – DGEMN:DREM-2494, Cx.21/3.

19 Idem.

20 Idem.

21 Coelho, Manuel Pinto – Missiva de 24 de setembro de 1948 [SIPA.TXT.00900001] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/026-0091 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [Nº IPA PT011301180014].

22 Idem.

23 Coelho, Manuel Pinto – Missiva, 6 de janeiro de 1949 [SIPA.TXT.00900003 e SIPA.TXT.00900004]. Idem.

concluded that this Church was not classified, considering also that it did not meet the criteria so as to be worthy of such classification”<sup>24</sup>.

For a few years this issue was forgotten; then, in 1962, we find a new contact made by Father João Ferreira in order to ascertain if the Church of Jazente was classified or not<sup>25</sup>. However, despite the fact that it wasn’t<sup>26</sup>, we believe that it was that insistent attitude of the parish that triggered the opening of the classification process for this small Church built in such late Romanesque Period. So, by order of the then Secretary of State for Culture and Continuing Education<sup>27</sup>, the Church of Jazente was classified as a Public Interest Building on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1977<sup>28</sup>.

From then on the available sources are silent. In 2010, the small Church of Jazente becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque. [MLB / NR]

Within this context, it was subject to a protection, conservation and enhancement intervention. The project implementation was aimed at the maintenance and general conservation of the monument at the level of its roofs and outer vestments (Costa, 2010).

Inside, the front lining of the altar table, consisting of a panel of Moorish-Hispanic style tiles, was subject to a conservation campaign. The polychrome surface of the tile structure presented signs of significant deterioration; the glazed surfaces were cracked and fractured, while an excessive use of Portland-type mortar was also visible (Duarte, 2010: 4-5).

The sculpture of Saint Mary, which had dirt, volumetric gaps and detachments in its polychrome layer, where traces of earlier polychrome and repainting were also visible, was also treated and preserved.

Once the first phase of interventions is completed, the Route of the Romanesque shall resume, still in 2014, the conservation and protection works in the Church of Jazente, now dignifying its inner spaces, namely at the level of vestments, woodwork doors and ceilings, and also the remodelling of the religious celebration area (Costa, 2012). [RR]

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General view (adapted from Abreu, 1918). Source: National Digital Library.

24 Ofício n.º 634 da Direção dos Serviços dos Monumentos Nacionais, 28 de fevereiro de 1949 [SIPA.TXT.00900005]. Idem.

25 Ferreira, João – Missiva de 5 de dezembro de 1962 [SIPA.TXT.00899804] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/026-0083. Idem.

26 Silva, José Pena Pereira da – Missiva, 28 de dezembro de 1962 [SIPA.TXT.00899806]. Idem.

27 Ofício da Direção-Geral dos Assuntos Culturais de 20 de julho de 1975 [SIPA.TXT.00671412] PT DGEMN:DSID-001/013-004-1979/3. Idem.

28 DEGREE no. 129. O.G. [Official Gazette] *Series I*. 226 (77-09-29) 2390-2396.

## CHRONOLOGY

950: according to Domingos Moreira, the toponym "Jacenti de Tamecha" is already mentioned;

1258: Abbess Margarida is a witness in the royal inquiries of King Afonso III;

1623: the Church doesn't have a tabernacle;

1719, May 6<sup>th</sup>: Paulino Cabral, the future abbot of Jazente and an Arcadian writer is born in São Pedro de Lomba;

1726: Francisco Craesbeeck mentions that the Church doesn't have a tabernacle and, at the time, it is an abbey of the ordinary of Porto, whose abbot was Bernardo Vieira de Macedo;

1752: Paulino Cabral enters into service at the parish of Jazente;

1789: Paulino Cabral, the writer and abbot of Jazente, dies in Amarante;

1930-1960: works are carried out on the Church's interior and structure;

2010: the Church of Jazente becomes part of the Route of the Romanesque;

2013-2014: general conservation, protection and enhancement of the Church, under the scope of the Route of the Romanesque;

2014-2015: general conservation of the Church at the level of vestments, woodwork ceilings and doors, and remodelling of the religious celebration area.

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