

**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT NICHOLAS  
OF CANAVESES

**CHURCH**  
OF SAINT MARY  
OF SOBRETÂMEGA

MARCO DE CANAVESES

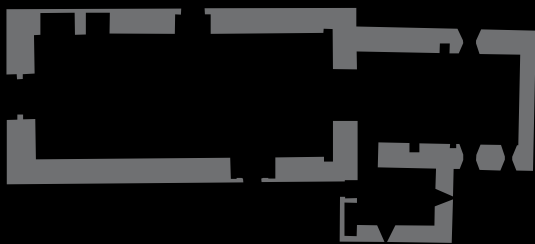
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Church of Saint Nicholas. Plan.



Church of Sobretâmega. Plan.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

As mentioned in the article “Sobre-Tâmega”, published in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira*, while referring the town of Canaveses, “the history of both portions of this settlement, as we may well understand since its origin is not different in this or that section, just because they are separated by a river, is one and inseparable in its parts” (Correia et al., 1963: 425-431). In fact, despite the Tâmega standing as a river barrier, the unilinear plan of the town of Canaveses could not be truncated by this natural element that man has turned into his own advantage, both as frontier or passage. So, the circumstances behind the emergence and development of this settlement, built between two parishes, were a river whose northeast-southwest flow crossed an important west-east human circulation channel. The intersection of the two gave rise to a village – a fact that was actually the necessary stimulus behind the appearance of countless human settlements and, at a macro-scale, of most civilizations.

The position of the mother Churches of both settlements: Canaveses and its extension along the right bank of Sobretâmega corroborate the importance of this road by opening the façades of its temples towards it. However, before the consolidation of Christianity, this location was already one of the penetration channels connecting the west coast of the peninsula to its interior, a human path fostered by the great Romanisation work.

Although most authors mention the Caldas de Canaveses as the most important reason for the existence of a road, the truth is that the status of “Tongobriga” seems to justify this. The size of this *civitas*, which saw its apogee in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., seems enough to justify the existence of a branch or a main road, despite the fact that the outline of this road is still not in accurately known (Almeida: 1968). However, the old bridge of Canaveses was surely an intermediate point that stood for a long time as the main crossing element over the river Tâmega.

Local historiography, always willing to praise the town’s qualities, could not fail to emphasise the connection of Mafalda to the crossing and to Sobretâmega, yet hesitating between the first queen of Portugal, from the House of Savoy (1125-1157) and her granddaughter, the blessed Mafalda from Arouca (c. 1200-1256). According to traditions, eagerly conveyed by monographs, the former had ordered the construction of the bridge of Canaveses, providing São Nicolau with a hospital and an inn to support the poor and travellers. The article “Sobre-Tâmega” in the *Grande enciclopédia portuguesa e brasileira* develops this issue, highlighting that, long before princess Mafalda, the Gascois family already had full control over the region. Supposedly, Egas Moniz was succeeded as landlord of the “honra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Canaveses by his daughter Urraca Viegas, the governess or chambermaid of the blessed Mafalda. If we associate this fact to the circumstance that this region was closer and more familiar to her than to her grandmother, a foreign queen, the homonymy issue seems to be solved. The entry’s author further says: “the abbot of the church of Saint Peter of Canaveses, Gonçalo Mendes, a juror, when asked about the ownership of that church, answered that it had belonged to queen Mafalda: “it was Queen Mafalda” who, considering what has been said, was undoubtedly the daughter of Sancho I who had died two years before (...)” (Correia et al.,

1963: 425-431). Considered responsible for the foundation of the Church of Abragão (Penafiel), located nearby, or for the transfer from the old chapel of Saint Peter to the new Church of Saint Mary “sobre-o-Tâmega”, the blessed Mafalda was seen by the first historian as more than a mentor of bridges: she took on the role of a true regent, while replacing the king or the major wealthy landlords in terms of territory planning in those locations where, as proven by her will, she actually had little manorial interests.

Regarding the change from Saint Peter<sup>1</sup> to Saint Mary, it is most likely associated with the decay of the first invocation in favour of the Marian devotion, which the archetypical legend about the miraculous finding of an image in the river course filled with prestige. As in so many other cases, the decline of a chapel resulted in the favouring of a different new church, either because the patron saint did not inspire devotion, or because the elites gave additional attention to other invocations and, consequently, to the building sheltering them. The tax of 20 “libras” [former Portuguese currency unit] intended to be a contribution for the Crusades was surely still collected and charged to the church of Saint Peter. It is referred to as “Canaveses”, but under the jurisdiction of the “terra” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Penafiel, which undoubtedly confirms it as the predecessor of Sobretâmega. The same source does not mention Saint Nicholas in the set of Churches on the “terra” of Benviver, which proves the late foundation (after 1320) of both filial Churches (Almeida & Peres, 1971: 95-96). As it also discards the intervention of any of the royal Mafaldas.

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Although the river did not separate the unilinear urban settlement, it answered before different administrative contexts. During the Middle Ages, Sobretâmega, on the right bank, was under the (civil) influence of the “terra” and “julgado” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] of Portocarreiro, and Saint Nicholas of Canaveses, thus being spiritually and ecclesiastically subject to the mother church of Fornos and forming a municipal centre. The authors were not always able to disentangle this jurisdictional network and simplify what in fact becomes complex when examined in the light of the existing administrative grid<sup>2</sup>. There were deep changes until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from which we should highlight the temporal nature of the “beetria” [a type of Portuguese administrative division].

This type of boundary is translated into a privilege which allowed specific residents to choose their lord. In short, it was an elective “honra”. As referred by A. de Almeida Fernandes while mentioning another Portuguese “beetria” – Britiande (Lamego) – the word “is of Spanish origin: from the Latin word Benefactoria, which in Portuguese would be “benfeitoria”: a protection” (Fernandes, 1997: 272). In Britiande, as in Canaveses, the population placed itself under the protection of Pedro, the bastard son of King Dinis (k. 1279-1325) in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This situation lingered – although the election process was corrupted by direct interventions from the king – until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the royal power finally determined its extinction, despite the insistence of the population that, in 1550, had handed the management of the “beetria” over to the Duke of Bragança.

<sup>1</sup> The invocation was still preserved in 1623, associated with a local chapel (Cunha, 1623: 422).

<sup>2</sup> We refer the reader to the cartographic reading of the evolution and transformation of the territory that was appropriately contextualised by the maps published in Rosas & Sottomayor-Pizarro (2009: 86-89).

The town, despite its scarce population, managed to achieve an importance that was still significant enough to accommodate the presence of a royal delegation in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, either due to the memory of the previous kings who had honoured it with their legacies, or because it was a passage between the Douro and Minho regions. The truth is that here, in the town of Canaveses, peace was declared between father and son, Afonso IV (k. 1325-1357) and Pedro I (k. 1357-1367), on August 5<sup>th</sup> 1355 (Pina & Lopes, 1653: 71-72).

Both sides of the river shared the same interests and the fact that there was a river in the middle was not considered an obstacle. It was divided into two administrative districts until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and from 1406 onwards they both became part of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region. The toll tax was not charged to people who lived in the term which, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was still composed by the two parishes, ruled by an ordinary and orphan's judge and by the corresponding municipal organs, some of which confirmed by the managers of the inn and the hospital, others by the King (Costa, 1706-1712: 135). Saint Nicholas had a tabernacle but was a filial curacy of Fornos<sup>3</sup>, and Sobretâmega, was abbey<sup>4</sup>.



Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas. General view of the Churches and the surrounding landscape.

<sup>3</sup> We should highlight Francisco Craesbeeck's (1992: 175) comment on this issue; while referring the mother church of Fornos, which had most certainly been founded in an earlier period: "it does not feature a sacarium, nor does its small size and isolated location allow it to; however it is attached to the church of Saint Nicholas of the town of Canaveses", a sign of the relevance that this branch had gained for being in a busy route, as opposed to the location of Fornos.

<sup>4</sup> One of the four ecclesiastical districts into which the bishopric of Porto was divided (in order to make its management and visits easier) was called Sobretâmega (Costa, 1706-1712: 354).

## The bridge of Canaveses

“Five leagues to Vendaval [after Amarante] violently flows the river Tâmega fiercely under the bridge that Queen Mafalda had commissioned for the Village of Canaveses, so majestic, that is of greatest fame in Portugal, due to its height and length, and also due to the architecture of the work, entirely topped with crowned battlements, which opened the passage for most part of upstream Douro and the Kingdom of Castilla (...)” (Costa, 1706-1712: 107); this is how Father António Carvalho da Costa describes the ancient crossing over the Tâmega in Canaveses in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. In one go, the clergyman highlights the structure’s monumentality and, therefore, its importance, as well as its role within the road network of northern Portugal. In fact, its relevance was associated with the fact that it ensured the transition between the coastal area and the inner Douro region, thus supplementing the east-west penetration along the river. Despite normally associated with a pious origin, we cannot ignore its importance within the political context of the nation’s early centuries.

Since it was not a new structure, but rather a reconstruction carried out in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the bridge of Canaveses was heiress of the Roman crossing from which it inherited part of the foundations and the model, reused by the master stonemasons who built it. In 1948, this possibility was actually raised by António Monteiro in an article that, using the demolition of the Medieval bridge as a starting point, analyses the Classical reminiscences of its foundations. The author asserted, with photographic evidence, that when the bridge was demolished there was still a combination of part of the Roman structure with the Medieval work. Furthermore, we often forget that the modest budgets, the shortage of workforce and the lack of suitable techniques or instruments for the transportation of stone caused significant constraints in this kind of constructions. The strategies of reusing older structures and taking advantage of rocky outcrops were often used by Medieval builders. A recently designed graphic reconstruction gives the Roman crossing a monumental look: nearly 10 arches helped crossing the river in a particularly wide point of the Tâmega basin (Dias, 2009: 37-80). However, the photographic records available show that the Medieval bridge featured only five spans<sup>5</sup>.



Bridge of Canaveses (missing) (Marco de Canaveses).  
Downstream view. Source: IHRU archive.



Bridge of Canaveses (missing) (Marco de Canaveses).  
Central arches. Source: IHRU archive.

<sup>5</sup> On the dimensions of the bridge, please read Monteiro (1948b: 26-39). The author quotes the measures collected by Francisco Craesbeeck and the memoirists of 1758.

António Monteiro, based on comparisons and conjectures, asserts that this bridge was part of “via Tamacana” (a word considered by some people as the origin of the toponym Canaveses), placing its construction between the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian (98-138 A.D.) – coinciding with Tongobriga’s building apogee<sup>6</sup>. It is natural that the decline of this *civitas* was followed by that of the bridge, subject to periods of intense war, when crossings always suffer serious mutilations.

It is, therefore, likely for the bridge’s location, placed on a transition axis between valleys (Tâmega and brook Juncal), to be considered by the Roman engineers as a privileged crossing site, thus avoiding the steep slopes and taking advantage of the contour lines of those natural corridors. Many authors define Roman itineraries across territories considered absolutely unsuitable for the construction of roads, i.e., paths that would allow the regular circulation of vehicles. Besides, and regarding the Roman road that crossed the Tâmega close to Canaveses, while it seems certain that it headed towards the Atlantic coast until intersecting in one of the main roads between “Cale” and “Bracara”, the path it followed after Tongobriga finds less consensus among the authors. Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida suggests a path that ran along the fracture of the Juncal brook until Ribadouro: “it crossed a place that was meaningfully called Porto Antigo and then it went up the Montemuro mountain range and down across Castro Daire until Viseu” (Almeida, 1968)<sup>7</sup>. More recently, other authors “diverted” the path of this section to the existing municipality of Baião, making it zigzag across Soalhães, Grilo and Ancede (Dias, 2009: 61-63).

The men from the Middle Ages reused road sections and materials but did not deploy all efforts to preserve the old Roman roads that, in the meantime, had been devastated by the Barbaric and Muslim raids. But all of them had the same underlying idea: that nature had provided communication channels – the valleys – that served to displace people and goods, both through parallel tracks or walkways and by the water course itself, when it allowed navigation. Nevertheless, it is natural for a millenarian crossing site to be kept and restored (even for symbolic reasons) for the use of new generations to come. However, the human paths were modified according to the new landscape, the new human settlements and, of course, trade, whose centres both for the extraction of raw material and manufacture activities had substantially changed since the Romanisation.

Despite being impossible to establish, with certainty, the date of its reconstruction – which some ascribe, as we have seen, to Mafalda of Savoy and others to the blessed Mafalda of Arouca –, the in-depth building works intended to restore the old Roman crossing were most likely coeval of the latter. In fact, although tradition shields itself in the possibility that this may be a royal work commissioned by the first queen, there is no document to prove it – namely the will of the queen itself, which Francisco Craesbeeck says he transcribed from the papers found at the inn of Canaveses, dating back to the era of 1203. Faced with the eccentricity of the date, Francisco Craesbeeck accepts this strangeness and does not even try to justify the unjustifiable: “which seems to be a remarkable

<sup>6</sup> Although the author was not aware of the size and importance of Tongobriga, which still had not been subject to archaeological surveys yet, and considered it as an essential connection road to the thermal facilities of Canaveses and Aregos (Monteiro, 1948a: 50-64).

<sup>7</sup> We refer to the impossibility of a connection to the south of the Douro in the entry on the Bridge of Panchorra (Resende), considering the geographic characteristics of the Montemuro mountain: vast marshy lands and steep slopes. Please read also Resende (2011), the chapter regarding roads (section 3.2.2.).



mistake, because the Queen died in 1157, which corresponds to the era of 1195". Did it not strike the author that he might have been dealing with an apocryphal or with a gross change of dates, much to the taste of the contenders who, centuries later, came to claim rights and assets under the cover of glorious feats? So, who was interested in the construction of the bridge of Canaveses?

The local lay and ecclesiastical lords, at a regional level, and the king, at a national level, in a country under construction, were naturally aware of the need to ensure fast communications for their agents and even for commercial development.

The creation of the myth of the commission and construction of the bridge of Canaveses by the wife of the first king of Portugal entails several considerations on pious legacies and political needs. Afonso Henriques (k. 1143-1185) left a specific donation for the bridge over the Douro which was never built and was then associated with an aura of legends<sup>8</sup>. But the idea underlying its construction (similar to, we believe, Canaveses) is more political than compassionate: providing a kingdom under construction with roads that allowed the circulation of men and goods in order to fuel the war against the Infidel and, at the same time, stimulate the economy<sup>9</sup>.

Despite the fact that the bridge of Canaveses cannot be ascribed with certainty to any of the two queens, it was surely a work intended to play a specific role: channelling the commercial traffic that flowed on a parallel to the Douro (on the north bank). With all the major works that needed maintenance and constant repairs, the bishops of Porto were still making donations in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a mix of piety and political affairs, or the need to maintain the spiritual and temporal control over their diocese (Monteiro, 1948a: 63)<sup>10</sup>. It is likely for its construction, which began still during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, to expand over the following centuries, despite the rejection of António Monteiro, who compares the Medieval crossing of Canaveses with the Roman bridge of Chaves and the short period allocated for its construction: for this 18-arch structure, "just" 19 years would have been enough.

So, we stand before a late Romanesque construction, whose nature is revealed by the facts reviewed above and by the analysis of the remaining visual documents related to the structure itself: although most of the arches are round, one of the central spans is already broken, probably revealing the "end" of a work that had been started many centuries before. Not even the fact that there was an inn reveals the bridge's antiquity, but only the frequency and intensity of the traffic that once circulated here, even before the Roman crossing was reused<sup>11</sup>.

Although in terms of paths and roads there is a complexity that does not always allow a linear systematisation of their evolution, because we have no information on the pre-existing scenario that would help us to explain the development (and direction) of the human circulation channels, the fact is that the bridge of Canaveses, more than a local work or an individual intervention, duly framed within a short period of time, was a larger and temporally more dilated project that allowed creating an urban centre divided into two parishes, which were also a reflection of that extemporaneity.

8 On this crossing, please read what we wrote in the entry on the Bridge of Veiga (Lousada).

9 In fact, we have already highlighted the strategic importance of this bridge within a regional context (Soeiro, 2009: 187).

10 The author integrated these donations in a "second restoration".

11 Inns, hospitals and leper houses were not necessarily located close to bridges, but in areas with heavy road and river traffic, as the geographically close cases of Aregos and Moledo.

## THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS OF CANAVESES

Originally located close to the Medieval bridge of Canaveses, between two old accesses on the left bank of the Tâmega, to the north of the river, the Church of Saint Nicholas is geographically very close to the Church of Sobretâmega, located on the opposite bank. Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida, a scholar who focused on the deep relationship between the Romanesque buildings and the territory they were part of, advocated that only the importance of the old road mentioned above could explain the location of these Churches, only separated by the river (Almeida, 1986: 97).

It is curious that these Churches are architecturally very similar and present an identical chronology which fits into a late Romanesque Period, characterised by a persistence (or resistance) of Romanesque shapes in a period that historiography already identifies as Gothic. A chronology as late as this is rather common in the churches of the Tâmega and Douro basin. We may recall the case of Escamarão (Cinfães). So, the Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses shows a late aesthetic nature and was surely built after 1320.

Thus, it is a small temple composed of a single nave and a rectangular chancel, but with wooden roofs. It is very closed in on itself and the north façade is only illuminated by a very narrow crevice. On the opposite façade, in the nave, there is a large rectangular window framed by a broken arch suggesting the existence of a primitive access door. The chancel features larger rectangular windows, surely from a later period.

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Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas. Aerial view.



Church of Saint Nicholas. General view.



Church of Saint Nicholas. North façade. Nave. Portal.



Church of Saint Nicholas. West façade.

But it is in terms of the composition of the main and north portals that we find the most obvious legacies of the Church's late chronology, proven by the absence of columns and capitals. The north portal, with its flat tympanum surrounded by a broken archivolt, is completely embedded in the thickness of the wall itself. Above this portal there is a tomb stone with an inscription quite difficult to read. The main portal is more elaborate and composed of two broken archivolts with sharp edges. The tympanum, also flat, is supported by corbels without any decorations.

In the Romanesque Period, the bell towers could be free-standing elements placed on the side or in front of the church, they could flank one or both façades, or they could even be built above the main façade. In Saint Nicholas, the bell tower is placed above the protruding cornice and surmounted by a cross, while topping the façade and emphasising its verticality. Below it, the wear of the ashlar on the façade's wall shows the constant ringing of the bell that kept the time of God and the time of men, celebrated joys, lamented sorrows and warned of imminent dangers.

The Church's interior is dominated by granite walls. The elements that characterise it tell us of several campaigns carried out after the Middle Ages. First of all, we highlight the triumphal arch whose profile reveals a composition of an already Classicist flavour, showing well-faceted isodomic ashlar with similar dimensions and protruding panels on the intradorsum. A plain impost stands out as a decorative element. The arch of the baptistery, which keeps a granite font with an octagonal bowl and a faceted leg, shows a similar structure. In a frame, on the Gospel side, there is an inscription alluding to the sacrament administered by Saint John the Baptist: IUANUASACRAMENTORIUM (Basto, 2006b).

The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries are represented in Saint Nicholas by two suggestive elements: a tomb chest and a mural painting. In 1726, Francisco Craesbeek (1992: 374), in his work



Church of Saint Nicholas.  
West façade. Bell tower.



Church of Saint Nicholas. General interior view from the nave.

called *Memórias ressuscitadas...*, states that “on the epistle side, in front of the transverse door on the gospel side, there is a raised arch and, inside it, a very well-crafted tomb with the following inscription”: S[EPULTUR]A. DE. ALVARO. DE CARVALHO. E. DE. /SEUS. [H] ERD[EIR]OS. FALESEO. NO ANO. DE. 1565 [THIS IS THE GRAVE OF ALVARO DE CARVALHO AND HIS HEIRS. DECEASED IN 1565].



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave. South wall. Tomb.

Placed in an opening carved in the thickness of the wall that also frames the large rectangular window surmounted by a broken arch, which we have identified on the outside, this stone tomb with gabled lid shows this inscription on its front face, surrounded by a Classical frame.

According to Francisco Craesbeeck (1992: 374), this was not the only tomb that existed inside the Church, “which served as matrix for the town of Canavezes”. As he explains, “there are thirty tomb stones with inscriptions (some of which rather worn out) in the church’s body, divided into five rows”<sup>12</sup>.

We should also highlight the mural painting from the Church of Saint Nicholas. Fernando de Pamplona (1977a: 3) was the first person to study this painting, discovered in 1973 during an intervention to electrify the Church, to which we shall refer further ahead. Several authors have been examining them since then. Once again, it is based on the proposals made by Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 436-440) and Paula Bessa (2008: 213-218) that we shall analyse the remaining traces of frescoes found on the walls of the triumphal arch and the nave.

Despite some reservations, these authors identify three different campaigns in this Church, although they were all carried out over the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or even during the previous century.

The state of repair of the mural painting fragments makes it hard for the observer to understand them. Let us start by the painting on the nave. On the Gospel side there is a depiction of *Saint Anthony the Great* that surely corresponds to the oldest campaign; he is identified by the attributes with which he is normally represented (the book and staff he is holding in his hands and the pig at his feet, with a bell hanging from a collar). There are still the remains of an inscription – “[...] [e]sta obra mandou fazer [...]” [this work was commissioned] (Bessa, 2008: 214) – and other decorative details. As the inscription proves, without providing any further information, we are standing before a private commission. In this mural painting section, we can identify several overlapping paint layers. Various similarities have been identified between the remaining traces found here and the ones of Valadares (Baía), which date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century), meaning it is possible for this campaign to have been carried out still during the last quarter of that century (Bessa, 2008: 214). Agreeing with the proposal that had been previously made by Joaquim Inácio Caetano (2011), Luís Urbano Afonso suggests the possibility that this campaign may have been carried out by the same master who worked in the Churches of Gatão (Amarante), Santa Eulália of Arnoso (Famalicão) or Covas do Barroso (Boticas), among others (2009: 438-439). There are several stylistic features that justify this proximity, from which we highlight the pattern of the reddish tapestry that works as a background for the depiction of *Saint Anthony the Great*, with irregular cloud-shaped quatrefoils.

According to Luís Urbano Afonso (2009: 437), on the wall above the triumphal arch, also on the Gospel side, there are traces of this older campaign, considering that the characteristic reddish pattern of the tapestry that worked as a background for the depiction of *Saint Anthony the Great* is also found in this area of the Church, under a later iconographic depiction. On the same side, but on the wall of the nave, there are also some remaining fragments of an *Annuncia-*



Chapel of Saint Lazarus.  
Sepulchral headstones.



Church of Saint Nicholas.  
Nave. North wall.  
Mural painting.  
*Saint Anthony the Great*.

<sup>12</sup> The author identifies each of the inscriptions by rows, from the Gospel side to the Epistle side (Craesbeeck, 1992: 375). Several tombstones with inscriptions that had once belonged to the Church’s pavement, as well as a funerary stela, were placed in the porch of the chapel of Saint Lazarus (Basto, 2006: 2).



Church of Saint Nicholas. Triumphal arch. Wall on the Gospel side. Mural painting. Fragment of an *Annunciation*.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave. North wall. Mural painting. Fragments of a flying angel and a kneeling figure placing its hands in a praying gesture.



Church of Vila Verde (Felgueiras). Nave. North and south walls. Mural painting. *Quatrefoils*.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave. South wall. Mural painting. Fragment of an *Annunciation*.

tion: a flying angel and a kneeling figure placing its hands in a praying gesture seem to suggest such a scene (Bessa, 2008: 214).

Paula Bessa (2008: 215) noticed the good design of this representation and considered that, for showing similarities with those of other workshops – from which we highlight the first one of Saint Mammes of Vila Verde (Felgueiras), in terms of the model of the quatrefoils painted here –, was carried out after 1507, because the paintings of Vila Verde were commissioned by João de Melo, whose abbacy in Pombeiro (Felgueiras) is documented between 1507 and 1525<sup>13</sup>.

On the south side of the nave's wall, we see a representation of *Saint Catherine* (Bessa, 2008: 216). It seems that both figures were framed by an architectural space and the Saint from Alexandria is next to an upright sword with straight guards and a notched wheel whose outlines are marked by direct incisions (Afonso, 2009: 437). The inscription, still partly legible – [D] EVAÇÃO DE M[ARIA]. RIBE[IRO?] DE G[ONÇAL]O MADEIRA [DEVOTION OF MARIA RIBEIRO DE GONÇALO MADEIRA] (Bessa, 2008: 216) –, seems to indicate that this panel, of devotional nature, might have been the result of a commission made by Maria Ribeiro and Gonçalo Madeira, although Fernando de Pamplona suggested it was associated with the name of the painting's author (Pamplona, 1777b: 37).

To Paula Bessa, the treatment given to the figure of *Saint Catherine* suggests a chronology from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, despite not hinting a Mannerist taste (Bessa, 2008: 216). On the other hand, based on the drawing, Luís Urbano Afonso places its design around 1600 (Afonso, 2009: 437). Besides, if the name of the devoted commissioner is that of Maria Ribeiro, who was born in 1598 and got married in this temple (Sanhudo, 1989: 9, 15), the chronology of the painting actually gets closer to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*Saint Catherine* is wearing a crown. Curiously enough, and because what we can fully appreciate today was not known in 1977, it was even believed that this “crowned female head” was a “depiction of Mafalda, given the close relationship between Afonso Henriques's wife and Canaveses” (Pamplona, 1977a: 3). As we have already seen, Mafalda of Savoy, the first queen of Portugal and not the daughter of King Sancho I, was the one who was actually more associated with the history of this region.

In an area closer to the triumphal arch we see the traces of a *Holy Benedictine abbot*, because besides wearing a black habit, he has a book and a crosier (Afonso, 2009: 437). In this wall of the nave we also see traces of an *Annunciation* on an overlapped layer. A small phylactery with the inscription “AVE” (Afonso, 2009: 437) appears from behind a small standing angel with a staff. We are also able to identify a dove above the Virgin (?) who has an open book by Her side (Bessa, 2008: 217). We are certainly before a painting from a later period, perhaps from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, considering the type of border depicted, whose composition is based on a straight outline with acanthus leaves rolled around it (Bessa, 2008: 217).

Although there are sources telling us that there were several altarpieces in this Church, the truth is that, today, only the main altarpiece remains. According to Francisco Craesbeeck,

13 For further information on the mural painting of Saint Mammes of Vila Verde (Felgueiras) please read, in addition to the above mentioned authors, Botelho (2010: 62).



EVACIÃO DE M<sup>A</sup> RIBE

DEG<sup>O</sup> MADEIRA



in 1726, in addition to this altarpiece, “which is gilded, it features, on the gospel side, Saint Nicholas and, on the epistle side, Saint Sebastian, with two collateral altarpieces, also gilded; on the one on the gospel side there is Saint Lucy; and on the one on the epistle side an old image of Our Lady of the Rosary, made of very well-upholstered gilded wood”.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Nave and collateral altarpieces, before the intervention carried out by the DGEMN (1977). Source: IHRU archive.

These altarpieces, disassembled when the plaster that coated the Church's interior was removed and the fragments of mural paintings we have just analysed were discovered, were probably Mannerist considering the insertion of painting in their structure (which was more visible in the collateral altarpiece on the Gospel side) and also the strength that the Classical architectural elements have in their definition. These are currently stored inside the Chapel of Saint Lazarus. The main altarpiece, National Style [1690-1725] woodwork, focuses its structure on the Eucharistic throne and, in its lateral axes, it features the panels that still accommodate the figures of Saint Nicholas and Saint Sebastian (Rodrigues, 2009)<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> The author alludes to the doctorate paid by the Canaveses Town Council in 1717.

In terms of imagery we should highlight the 15<sup>th</sup>-century image of Saint Lucy (c. 1450), made of polychrome limestone and executed in the workshops from the Mondego region<sup>15</sup>. This may be the image referred by Francisco Craesbeeck in 1726, although the chronicler did not record its material or mention its shape or antiquity. We would like to recall that the mobility of the images often constraints their long-term relationship with the building.



Church of Saint Nicholas. Chancel. Main altarpiece.

<sup>15</sup> We highlight an image of Saint Agatha at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga [National Museum of Ancient Art] which is artistically similar. It was part of the exhibition *A espada e o deserto* [The sword and the desert], 2002 (Carvalho, Porfírio & Carvalho, 2002: 23).

## The chapel of Saint Lazarus and the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage

Close to the Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses there are still two structures whose existence expresses the importance of the place as a traffic channel. We are referring to the cross dedicated to the Lord of the Good Passage and to the chapel of Saint Lazarus.

Unfortunately, the deep changes the location was subject to, mainly the shift of both structures from their original position, or the replacement of the original pavement marking the path of the Medieval corridor (perhaps built over the Roman road), do not allow us to perceive what the space looked like to a someone who would walk down from Fornos to the bridge of Canaveses. First he would find the inn from which only ruins remain together with the chapel of the Holy Spirit; then he would see the Church of Saint Nicholas, on his right, and finally the chapel of Saint Lazarus and its porch, located close to the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage and protected by a small construction or temple.

The chapel of Saint Lazarus is an 18<sup>th</sup>-century building, but it may be a reconstruction of an older building. In the Middle Ages, the worship of Saint Lazarus was associated with lepers and beggars because, in a curious fusion of the figures of Lazarus from the parables and the bishop from Marseille (from which the worship spread across Europe), it recalled the miracle of the resurrection performed by Christ. It was assumed that, through Saint Lazarus, the Saviour performed other prodigies, so that sanctified leper was invoked in lazar houses or sanctuaries located outside the urban fabric (like in the case of Lamego) or close to roads travelled by lepers, beggars and other outcasts, like in the case of Canaveses.

Furthermore, the small town's devotional pantheon, located close to the bridge, is, in its whole, a call to charity, assistance and physical salvation. From the patron saint himself – Saint Nicholas of Bari, who, due to his hagiography and the miracles he performed during his life, is often associated with travellers and with those who ask for shelter and food<sup>16</sup> –, to the invocation of the Holy Spirit – whose name was given to the chapel located next to the inn and expresses the double meaning of receiving spiritual and physical nourishment –, including the crucified Lord – who was invoked for a good passage in a place that was always prone to the dangers of transience.

The small temple dedicated to this devotion is a typical 18<sup>th</sup>-century structure, a period in which the Christological invocations with specific vocatives (of the Afflicted, of Support, of the Good Fortune, etc.) invaded the margins of the paths as a memory of a prodigy or of the wish for salvation. A porch-like structure with three openings shows the devotees a granite image of



Chapel of Saint Lazarus.



Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage.

16 Saint Nicholas of Bari, a 4<sup>th</sup>-century bishop and confessor, is one of the most famous thaumaturgies and hagiotherapists of Eastern and Western Churches. As patron saint, he is associated with sailors and travelers and, during his life, he is said to have performed a series of miracles that determined the importance he achieved after his death. One of them – associated with an inn and, therefore, with travelers – was the resurrection of three young students who had been chopped into pieces by an innkeeper. Saint Nicholas was responsible for several charitable actions, giving dowries to maidens or bread to those who needed to be fed, thus asserting himself as a saint particularly associated with welfare activities in the Middle Ages (Sousa, 1955).

crucified Christ with traces of polychromy, repainted by several artisans in order to emphasise the dramatic strength of the scene. The small temple faced the bridge's entrance or exit (depending on where the traveller was coming from) and was located close to a few houses, demolished as part of an urban intervention carried out after the construction of the Torrão dam.

### THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY OF SOBRETÂMEGA

**B**eing characterised by the late nature of its Romanesque lines, the Church of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega was built on a hilltop on the right bank of the Tâmega, close to the submerged Medieval bridge of Canaveses. With a similar structure to that of the Church of Saint Nicholas, this building is another good example of the resistance of typical Romanesque building solutions well into the Gothic period; it was built already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (surely after 1320), as proven by the absence of columns and capitals on the portals, which in turn are carved into the thickness of the walls, and by the square shape of the plain modillions.

With a very simple structure free from any decorative flare, the Church of Sobretâmega is composed of a single nave headed by a rectangular apse; both volumes are topped with wooden roofs. The presence of two corbels halfway up the main façade tells us that its portal, composed of two broken archivolts and including a flat tympanum resting on corbels decorated with semi-spheres, was protected by a porch-like structure.

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Church of Sobretâmega. General view.



Church of Sobretâmega. North façade and bell tower.

The free-standing bell tower, placed to the north of the chancel and parallel to it, is composed of a wall surmounted by a round-arched double belfry with a straight cornice; it is also topped by pinnacles and a cross. The access to the belfry is made through a west-facing door. Between the chancel and the belfry we find the sacristy.

Sobriety prevails on Sobretâmega's external exposed granite walls; the Church is closed in on itself and only occasionally marked by narrow crevices that illuminate its interior, which is also quite sober. The whitewashed wall faces are interrupted by the granite frames of the doors and windows. Sobretâmega's interior does not tell us of the Romanesque Period, but rather of the Modern Period. The arrangement of the triumphal arch, rather high, proves it so. This is a round arch resting on pilasters and whose intradorsum is decorated with protruding panels.

In an inspection carried out on October 24<sup>th</sup> 1656 there was an order to replace the panelled altarpiece with the image of Christ found on the chancel arch of Sobretâmega by a new one (Brandão, 1984: 329-330). That work was the parishioners' responsibility, as specified by the inspector. On October 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year it was already being manufactured and the inspector knew that "since he had commissioned it and it was his fault that it was not finished, he suspended the penalty imposed and ordered it to be finished".

A few years later there was an order to renovate the painting of the altarpiece of the chapel of the Stigmata, located "under the collateral altar of the church of Sobretâmega" (Brandão, 1984: 423, 880). In September 1674, the inspector provides the builder with specific guidelines: "whiten and renovate the altarpiece's painting, which are all urgently needed works" (Brandão, 1984: 423). Given that this recommendation was not followed, in the inspection carried out on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1699 the inspector determined that this chapel "was much in need of an altarpiece, a frontal, towels, of a roof renovation and of the internal whitewash of the



Church of Sobretâmega. General interior view from the nave.

aforementioned Chapel, whose construction is the responsibility of Reverend João Moreira, rector of Soza”.

As far as we could ascertain, the main altarpiece was one of the main concerns of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century inspectors. On May 11<sup>th</sup> 1689, the inspector deemed that, “since the altarpiece of the main altar was very old, orders were given to build a new and Modern one and, together with it, there was the commission for a full-body image of the patron saint, which was placed in a niche next to the sacrarium, on the same altarpiece, because it should not be where it is now” (Brandão, 1984: 671). Although the inspector’s guidelines are very clear, the truth is that at the time of the inspection carried out on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1702, these still had not been met, so there was an order for their implementation within a six-month period (Brandão, 1984: 131-132). But the Church would still have to wait. During the inspection carried out on September 8<sup>th</sup> of the following year, the parish priest received a new order to “commission an altarpiece for the chancel because it was necessary... to remove the [image of the Patron Saint]” (Brandão, 1984: 131-132).

We assume that only then the order to replace the main altarpiece with a new and more Modern piece was abided by. In 1726, Francisco Craesbeeck says that although the Church’s chancel is very “old”, it features “a stepped plinth that is very well gilded” (Craesbeeck, 1992: 372). The National Baroque [style which develops during the reign of King João V (k. 1706-1750)]



Church of Sobretãmega. Chancel. Main altarpiece.



Church of Sobretãmega. Chancel. Main altarpiece on the Gospel side. Sculpture. Saint Mary.

main altarpiece houses an opulent Eucharistic throne in the middle (Rodrigues, 2009). Provided with a tabernacle, it features consoles to display images on the lateral registers, where we currently see a Virgin and Child and Saint Joseph, one on each side and both holding the Child. The image of a standing “Saint Mary” holding the Infant Jesus on her left hand is a polychrome limestone sculpture emerging from the Medieval Period while showing signs of the Renaissance’s naturalism in its design. The stiffness of the faces and the bodies themselves, as well as the design of the Virgin’s rigid hands, with long and slender fingers, are already announcing the delicateness of the Gothic style that tried to free itself from the hieratism that marked sculpture until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. So, we believe this to be a sculptural work from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and that it might be the symbolic and miraculous depiction of Saint Mary that caused the change of the Church’s patron saint.

In 1758 this Church had five altars (Capela, Matos & Borralheiro, 2009: 407): “the main altar, with its golden tribune, where we find the Blessed Sacrament with its brotherhood. It features two other collateral ones, the one on the Gospel side, of Saint Blaise, where we find the brotherhood of the God Child. And on the Epistle side, the one of Our Lady of the Rosary. On the same side, in the church’s body, it features another altar with the image of the Crucified Lord. On the Gospel side, in the body of that same church, there is another chapel with an altar, known as the altar of the Stigmata, whose construction is the responsibility of House of Telha, in the parish of Vila Boa de Quires, which manages it”.

## SAINT NICHOLAS AND SOBRETÂMEGA IN THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD: THE ENSEMBLE'S VALUE

Regarding the most recent centuries, these Churches should be studied together. There are several reasons for this. In addition to the history that quite obviously connects these two buildings, as we have already seen, we should also bring up their geographic specificities. This is why, on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1970, the *Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior e das Belas-Artes* [General Directorate for Higher Education and Fine Arts] mentions the proposal for the classification – as a Public Interest Building – of the “ensemble comprising the churches of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas, as well as the Chapel and the Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage, located in the municipality of Marco de Canaveses, together with the definition of its protection zone”<sup>17</sup>.

However, Decree no. 516, issued in the *Governmental Gazette* of November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1971, only classifies the “ensemble comprising the churches of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas”. The reason behind the exclusion of the bridge of Canaveses – a key element for the understanding of these two Churches – from this ensemble is quite clear.

In April 1940 we find the first facts that led to the demolition of the primitive bridge by the *Junta Autónoma das Estradas* (JAE) [Portuguese Road Authority]. In April that year we have the information that this bridge, classified as a National Monument, “was in need of several repair and cleaning works, especially with regard to the parapets and the merlons, which have disappeared in some areas; they probably fell into the River as a result of the circulation of some kind of heavy vehicles”<sup>18</sup>. Despite the protests that broke out at the time<sup>19</sup>, it was decided to rebuild the bridge “and to broaden it in order to allow the normal circulation of two cars; however, its current shape should be entirely preserved together with the crenellated parapet that characterises it and the now walled-up primitive arches should be reopened”<sup>20</sup>. It was argued that the decision to rebuild the bridge found its justification in the fact that it needed to be adjusted “to its true function, thus enabling it to make the current circulation easier”<sup>21</sup>. Although it has been regarded as being of strictly Medieval origin, we find that even before its demolition it was noted that this bridge “is not Medieval unlike what has generally been assumed. Of the Medieval bridge, only one of the small arches and the foundation of one of the large arches remains”<sup>22</sup>. The surveys conducted at the time also clarified that its structure “rests on masonry works from an older bridge, which was possibly Roman according to the elements that were found”<sup>23</sup> and as we have already seen.

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17 *Ofício da Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior e das Belas-Artes*, 9 de dezembro de 1970 [SIPA.TXT.01494351] PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0029 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt) [N.º IPA PT011307230014]. [N.º IPA PT011307230014].

18 *Ofício n.º 156*, 27 de abril de 1940 [SIPA.TXT.01494351]. PT DGEMN:DSID-001/013-1836. *Idem*.

19 Please read, by way of example, *Missiva de Francisco de Oliveira Pereira*, 27 de abril de 1941 [SIPA.TXT.00627804]. *Idem*.

20 *Ofício n.º 1620*, s.d. [1940] [SIPA.TXT.00627809]. *Idem*.

21 *Idem*.

22 *Comunicação n.º 108*, 15 de março de 1943 [SIPA.TXT.00627815]. *Idem*.

23 *Idem*.



Therefore, in 1944 the JAE demolished this bridge and rebuilt a new and similar bridge, but “wider and a few meters downstream from the old one” so, on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1947, architect Baltazar de Castro drew a proposal to the Director General for National Monuments, Henrique Gomes da Silva, regarding the elimination of the bridge from the “List of Public Properties part of the National Artistic Heritage, because it no longer existed as a National Monument”<sup>24</sup>. This aspect clearly justifies the non-inclusion of the “Medieval” bridge in the classification of the ensemble, of which we only find reports nearly 30 years later, within the context of the company Energias de Portugal (EDP)’s project for the *Tâmega hydroelectric power station at Torrão* and the “possible interference of its reservoir with the Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage [and not of the Good Journey] and with the Chapel of Saint Lazarus, both located next to the National Road no. 211, close to the intersection with the Bridge over the River Tâmega, in the parish of São Nicolau, municipality of Marco de Canaveses”<sup>25</sup>. At the time there were plans to raise the bridge’s platform (and not its complete submersion, as it in fact occurred) and for the possible shift of the buildings that were part of the ensemble under study. Despite the “local interest” of the cross of the Good Journey and the small chapel of Saint Lazarus it was deemed important that “they were protected in order to ensure their preservation”<sup>26</sup>.

The DGEMN – Direção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for Buildings and National Monuments]’s services were called to supervise this process by the EDP and, despite considering that “the ensemble comprising the two churches of St. Nicholas of Canaveses and Saint Mary of Sobre Tâmega, the chapel of Saint Lazarus and the Cross of the Lord of the Good Passage, all classified as Buildings of Public Interest, together with the river Tâmega, its banks and the crenellated bridge of Canaveses (a poor imitation of the fortified Romanesque bridge that once existed there...)” had an “unusual interest”, the fact that “other topics were more important and that this undertaking had to be implemented”<sup>27</sup>



Torrão dam. View of the reservoir.

24 Ofício n.º 5601, Baltazar de Castro, 15 de dezembro de 1947 [SIPA.TXT.00627818 and SIPA.TXT.00627819]. Idem.

25 Ofício n.º 731, 30 de junho de 1970 [SIPA.TXT.00627822 and SIPA.TXT.0062723]. Idem.

26 Ofício n.º 2120, 3 de julho de 1970 [SIPA.TXT.00627824]. Idem.

27 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM N 2521. Igreja de S. Nicolau. Marco de Canaveses (May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1930). S2/E47/P.6 Cx.0048, Ofício 08308, 10 de março de 1981.

were eventually accepted. At the time, there were plans to move the chapel and the cross to a location that was as close as possible to the original one, and to consolidate the supporting walls of the two Churches. As we can see, the aspects discussed here and this issue are still extremely topical. Although we should consider, “as a general principle, that moving classified buildings from their original location is not acceptable, due to the relationship they have with their surroundings and because they are indeed landmarks associated with collective memory”, in this specific case it was decided to completely relocate the chapel and cross, “whose submersion would be inevitable”<sup>28</sup>.

## THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS: CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

Following the classification, the parish priest of Canaveses, José da Silva Dias, contacted DGEMN’s services asking them to promote “the renovation of the electrical installation and the sound amplification” in the Church of Saint Nicholas, according to its style<sup>29</sup>. The specifications and quote for the electrical installation to be implemented in this Church date from July 17<sup>th</sup> 1973. At first sight, this intervention would not be worth mentioning here, were it not for the fact that it resulted in the discovery of the mural painting in the Church of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses.

A report published years later explains how the discovery occurred: “considering that the church is officially «property of public interest», the parish priest requested an authorisation to the Direção dos Monumentos Nacionais [General Directorate for National Monuments] to carry out the work; that institution sent a technician who drew the line that the stonemason should follow and then left. The fact is that, on that day, the parish priest had to go to Porto, so the stonemason, a man without enough knowledge to deal with the unforeseen, did his destructive work as best he could, ignoring the discovery” (Pamplona, 1977a: 3). But when his conscience spoke louder, the narrator continues, “he went to the parish priest’s house and warned one of his relatives about what had happened”.

Although the “completion of the improvements to the electrical installation”<sup>30</sup> was awarded in September 1973, the truth is that in 1977 the relevant authorities still had not taken any appropriate measures to protect the recently discovered frescoes (Pamplona, 1977a: 3). However, with the existence of just a few visible fragments and assuming that under the stucco there were large compositions, it was argued that “only qualified technicians should undertake the delicate task of revealing the compositions, as well as consolidating, cleaning and anchoring them”<sup>31</sup>.

28 Idem, Parecer do Instituto Português do Património Cultural, 8 de janeiro de 1982.

29 Dias, José da Silva – Missiva, 24 de março de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.01493043]. PT DGEMN: DSARH-010/139-0016 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307210024].

30 PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0016, SIPA.TXT.01493075 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307210024].

31 [S.a.] – Canaveses: terra milenária que guarda preciosos frescos: tarefa para técnicos qualificados. *O Comércio do Porto*. (January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1977) 22.

So, still in 1977, the José de Figueiredo Institute included that task “in the programme of interventions to be implemented”<sup>32</sup>, which began between May 16<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup> that year<sup>33</sup>. However, they concluded that the water infiltration issues in the Church – both due to rainwater and to the fact that part of the area stretches close to the building’s façade<sup>34</sup> – were hampering the progress of the conservation of the frescoes. So, there was a decision to carry out building works in order to stop this problem. These works were included in the DGEMN’s work plan for 1978<sup>35</sup>.

Regarding the 1990’s, we have reports on the conduction of several conservation works in the building, encompassing different areas. Some of them were carried out by the parish itself, namely a few works related to the internal walls and the nave’s pavement<sup>36</sup>. At the time there were efforts to proceed with the restoration of the main altarpiece’s woodwork<sup>37</sup>.

Under the scope of its integration into the Route of the Romanesque in 2012, the Church of Saint Nicholas was subject to protection, preservation and valuation works. The project was developed with the aim of renovating the roofs and preserving the external walls (Malheiro, 2010: 16-19). For the future, there are plans to intervene in the mural paintings found in the Church, the chapel of Saint Lazarus and the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage, for which there a preservation and restoration project (Pestana, 2010) has already been developed, as well as in the altarpiece of the chapel of Saint Lazarus (Duarte, 2010).

## THE CHURCH OF SOBRETÂMEGA: CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS

There are very few news about interventions carried out in the Church of Sobretâmega after its classification in 1971. That is justified, not only by the late nature of its classification, but also by the above mentioned controversy surrounding the project for the *Tâmega hydroelectric power station at Torrão*, with obvious consequences for the ensemble Saint Nicholas/Sobretâmega and its corresponding Protection Zone.

We only found information regarding the following year: “it was found that there was a luminous cross composed of a box placed above the Romanesque granite cross on the main façade, as well as two loudspeakers placed on the crown of one of the angles of the belfry’s bell openings”, thus disrupting the ensemble’s appearance<sup>38</sup>. Besides, there was an iron pole attached to the main façade supporting the electrical power lines for the aforementioned cross. It

32 Ofício da Direção-Geral do Património Cultural, [fevereiro de 1977] [SIPA.TXT.01493081]. PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0016 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307210024].

33 Ofício do Instituto de José de Figueiredo, 23 de maio de 1977 [SIPA.TXT.01493089]. Idem.

34 Idem, SIPA.TXT.01493097 and SIPA.TXT.01493098.

35 Idem, SIPA.TXT.01493107 to SIPA.TXT.01493116.

36 IRHU/Arquivo ex-DGEMN/DREM N 2521. Igreja de S. Nicolau. Marco de Canaveses (May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1930). S2/E47/P.6 Cx.0048, Informação de 93-02-11.

37 Idem.

38 Ofício n.º 666, 28 de junho de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.01494356]. PT DGEMN:DSARH-010/139-0029 [Online]. Available at [www: <URL: http://www.monumentos.pt>](http://www.monumentos.pt). [N.º IPA PT011307230014].

was immediately removed. Although the speakers were still in place in December that year, the truth is that the cross had already been removed<sup>39</sup>. In the 1990's, similar to what happened in Saint Nicholas, there were plans for several conservation works related to the building and its immediate surroundings. These were later implemented (Basto, 2006a).

In 2012, the Church of Sobretâmega became part of the Route of the Romanesque. [MLB / NR]

<sup>39</sup> Comunicação n.º 4445, 13 de dezembro de 1972 [SIPA.TXT.01494362]. Idem.

## CHRONOLOGY

12<sup>th</sup> century: beginning of the reconstruction of the bridge of Canaveses;

14<sup>th</sup> century (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter): the Churches of Saint Nicholas of Canaveses and Saint Mary of Sobretâmega were only built from this period onwards.

1355, August 5<sup>th</sup>: peace was declared between the King Afonso IV and his son Pedro I in the town of Canaveses;

15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century (transition): mural painting campaigns in the Church of Saint Nicholas;

1565: date engraved on the tomb of Álvaro de Carvalho and his heirs;

1656/57: replacement of the panel-shaped altarpiece with the image of Christ in the chancel arch's altarpiece;

1674: decision to renovate the painting of the altarpiece of the chapel of the Stigmata;

1699: new decision to renovate the altarpiece of the chapel of the Stigmata, together with several interventions in the chapel itself;

1944: demolition of the bridge rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which was reconstructed a little farther downstream;

1971 (November 22<sup>nd</sup>): classification of the ensemble composed by the Churches of Saint Mary of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas as having a "Public Interest";

1973: discovery of mural painting section in the Church of Saint Nicholas;

1977 (May 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>): the José de Figueiredo Institute included the frescoes of Saint Nicholas in the programme of interventions that should be carried out that year;

1980s: submersion of the bridge of Canaveses (rebuilt in 1944) and displacement of the chapel of Saint Lazarus and of the cross of the Lord of the Good Passage;

1990s: several conservation works were carried out in the Churches of Saint Nicholas and Sobretâmega, under the DGEMN's supervision;

2010: the Churches of Sobretâmega and Saint Nicholas of Canavese became part of the Route of the Romanesque;

2013-2014: renovation of the roofs and preservation of the external walls of the Church of Saint Nicholas.

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