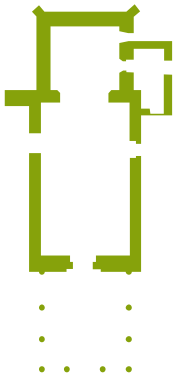




17.

**CHAPEL**  
OF OUR  
LADY  
OF VALE



-  Largo Vitorino Leão  
Ramos, Cête  
Paredes

---

-  41° 10' 33.067" N  
8° 20' 58.035" W

---

-  +351 918 116 488

---

-  Saturday  
7 pm

---

-  Lady of Vale  
8<sup>th</sup> September

---

-  Public Interest Building  
1950

---

-  P. 25

---

-  P. 25

---

-  i x

The location of this Chapel, amidst an inviting landscape where a stream runs on an open and flat valley - currently occupied by arable lands and vineyards - explains the invocation of Our Lady of Vale [Our Lady of the Valley], thus showing how much its foundation is associated with the population's agricultural interests.

The Chapel features a rectangular nave and a square chevet, connected by the triumphal arch. The nave's roof is made of wood while the chevet's, which is currently also made of wood, was initially designed to feature a groin vault. The remaining ribs are supported by Manueline [style also known as Portuguese late Gothic, which develops during the reign of King Manuel I (k. 1495-1521)] corbels.

Externally, the buttresses placed on the chevet's corners, as well as the chevet's square plan, show a building method typical of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and of the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The opening that leads to the sacristy has a frame which may also be dated back to the Manueline period.

The porch that is placed against the main façade belongs to a later period, although the presence of corbels on an upper level of the same façade may suggest the



existence of an older porch. The presence of the pulpit outside the chapel should be understood within the context of pilgrimages, since the great influx of devotees forced celebrations to be held outdoors. Both the outdoor pulpit and porch are quite common in this kind of devotional chapels.

The portal's composition and sculptures show how the resistance of Romanesque motifs lasted for such a long time; this is one of the most interesting features of this Chapel, when we analyse it within the context of the religious architecture of the Sousa basin.



## THE CHAPELS

---

The motivation for the construction of small chapels is usually associated not only with the practice of an eremitical way of life, but also, and more importantly, to devotion and to the holy routes. Located in remote places, these hermitages or chapels usually stand on the limits of the parishes, operating as devotional centres for the surrounding population. The most popular festivities and pilgrimages, where we find the most expressive and remarkable experiences of popular religiosity are experienced, not in cathedrals or parish churches, but, systematically, in hermitages, chapels or sanctuaries. No one better than Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida understood and studied these devotional practices and their relationship with the location of shrines and chapels: "The reasons why chapels are preferred to parish churches for religious experiences associated with pilgrimages and promises must be powerful, and are surely multiple and complex. This occurs certainly not because chapels can respond better to new devotions given that, while it is not easy to change the parish's patron saint, it is not difficult to add a lateral altar in the parish church, as the practice clearly shows. There are a series of reasons associated with the landscape features of the place where the chapel is located, which is chosen because it is a pleasant, dominant or unusual space. It is no coincidence that we systematically find chapels in the most breath-taking or delightful places".

---



## THE MURAL PAINTING

---

On the chevet's front wall there are still remaining traces of the mural painting that originally flanked the entire area of the niche where the image of the patron saint is displayed.

We are still able to see the depictions of *musician angels*. The remaining painting suggests the presence of a high-quality workshop, considering the two-dimensional appearance of the figures and the design of the angels' faces.

The traces of the depiction of an *angel* on the south wall (walled-up arch) of Church of Pombeiro (Felgueiras) (p. 30), are also similar to those of the Chapel of Vale, as well as the pictorial program of the Church of Vila Verde (p. 49), also in Felgueiras.

The authorship of the program from this Chapel may therefore be ascribed to the workshop of the painter Arnaus, and it was probably painted between 1530 and 1540. Arnaus was the most interesting of the known fresco painters from the Portuguese Renaissance, mastering artistic effects of great technical virtuosity.

