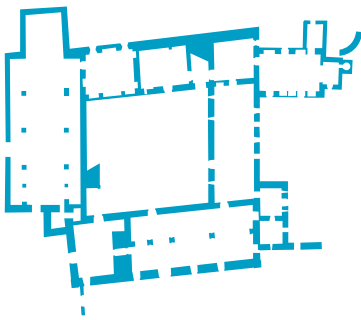




34.

**MONASTERY**  
OF SAINT  
ANDREW  
OF ANCEDE



Lugar do Mosteiro  
Ancede  
Baião



41° 6' 7.26" N  
8° 3' 25.05" W



+351 918 116 488



Sunday  
11 am



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



Public Interest  
Monument, 2013



P. 25



P. 25



Yes

The Church dedicated to the apostle Saint Andrew headed an extensive religious and spiritual, but also economic, heritage. The land charter, from 1141, defined the boundaries of a considerable area of influence from which the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine ran an important humanisation work. But their area of influence was established way beyond the monastic fence and the “couto” [a type of Portuguese administrative division] itself. Adding up the acquisition of real estate assets and of certain rights along the Douro valley, the monks knew, early on, how to take advantage of the exploitation of natural resources and, especially, of the handling of techniques to create an important trading post based on the production and export of wine and on the administration of the leases owed to them due to the ownership of a considerable number of properties. Maybe this is the reason why the legend behind the explanation of the name “Ancede” and the hypothetical transfer of the monastic core - which would have initially been installed in Ermelo -, seem even less likely. Vox populi says that King Afonso Henriques (r. 1143-1185), the first king of Portugal, authorised the relocation of the monks



based on a complaint they made: “havam sede” [they were thirsty] because the hamlet of Ermelo was scarce in water. “Pois se hão sede” [Well, if you are thirsty] - replied the monarch - “mudem-se” [just move]. There are very few traces from the medieval period. The most significant element is the late Romanesque rosette that is preserved on the back wall of the monastic Church’s chancel. We should add to it the medieval walls of the chevet’s north and south elevations, which are evidences of what the Romanesque Church looked like before the arrival of the Dominicans. The rest of the Church’s body, the Monastery and the monastic premises are already a result of the artistic movements developed between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The medieval Church was destroyed shortly after the arrival of the Dominicans, in 1559, and only the chevet remained. In 1689, the monastic church and the parish church became one; it now stands in the shape of a large, three-nave building.

Although the Monastery of Ancede was a prosperous institution almost since its foundation until its extinction in 1834, there are two particularly remarkable periods in the building’s history: the turn of the Middle Ages to the Modern Period (15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) and the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The former is reflected in a rapprochement of the priors to the city of Porto, taking advantage of the fact that the city close to sell the wine and other products through Ancede. Indeed, the monks knew how to take advantage of their privileged location close to the river Douro from early on. By controlling the traffic of the vessels that went up and down the river, they became the owners of a coveted economic monopoly. Certain citizens who were displeased with this competition tried several times to hinder the Monastery’s progress and business at the mouth of the river Douro. Despite the enmities created by the priors during their rise, the growth of Ancede continued marking the regional economic scenario.





This prosperity was not hampered by the change in the ruling order, even though Ancede ceased to be an autonomous institution because it was integrated in the assets of the convent of Saint Dominic of Lisbon, in order to ensure royal support. The extensive assets of this institution from the Douro region began being managed from Lisbon by the Dominicans. The archive's records shows that the arrival of the Dominicans gave rise to a period of reforms. In one of the several 18<sup>th</sup>-century inventories we find a list of the countless works and purchases of movable assets that were made during that period. Among all these works, the most important was the construction of the Chapel of Our Lord of Good Deliverance, which was built in the large churchyard. It is a small temple with an octagonal plan built in 1731 that gives expression to a somewhat extravagant Baroque programme. In the nave, six altarpieces

built like small stages show scenes from the Life of Mary and the Childhood of Christ, from the Annunciation to the Presentation in the Temple. The small, free-standing wooden figures are arranged in proscenia with scenarios, giving expression to a true *theatrum sacrum*. The main altarpiece, which was also designed according to the National Baroque style, proceeds with scenes from the Passion of Christ; so, the chancel is a display of the Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries that end with the Assumption and the Coronation of the Virgin. The first six steps of the Passion are shown in small boxes similar to the small stages found in the nave. Among all the scenes, we highlight the deposition of Christ found in the central ground-level box; it is a valuable polychrome clay composition that, despite being a representation of a lying Christ taken down from the Cross, allows us, due to the composition



of the figures that surround Him, to establish similarities with the moment of the Last Supper, when the Saviour is, simultaneously, the communion and food table that leads to Salvation.

Returning to the Church, we should highlight the (incomplete) series of paintings that also evokes the Stations of the Cross and the Passion of Christ, which was made during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the Baroque sculpture collection made between the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and is scattered across the Church and the sacristy. We draw particular attention to the piece of furniture and the corresponding reliquaries manufactured for the sacristy, representing several martyrs, as well as male and female saints. These are 18<sup>th</sup>-century pieces. Within the reliquary cat-

egory, we should also highlight the holy head of Ancede. A silver casing without decorations hides part of a human skull that supposedly belongs to an old canon regular from Ermelo who, during his life and after his death, would heal rabies. He was worshipped in one of the Church's collateral altars to which men and women from all over the region flocked on May 1<sup>st</sup> in search of cure or relief.

We should also highlight the important processional cross offered by one of the abbots in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The monastic ensemble was emptied of its human capital in 1834, being acquired in the following year by José Henriques Soares (1785-1853) - who later became the Baron of Ancede -, an important tradesman and Liberal politician.

## INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE OF VINEYARDS AND WINE

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At the Monastery of Ancede, you can also visit the Interpretative Centre of Vineyards and Wine, where you may discover the renovated spaces of the old barns, cellar, wine presses and estate. The estate is still fully operational, and produces "Vinho Verde" [slightly sparkling white or red wine from Northern Portugal] (from the "Avesso" grape variety), fruit and vegetables.

