

## THE LIVES OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS CHRIST

John the Baptist was the son of Zachary, a priest, and Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary, mother of Jesus. He was a prophet and the precursor of the Messiah. He symbolizes penance and the baptism, the act that cleanses us of all sin. His life is depicted in panels of azulejos of the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries at the **Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição**, now the **Regional Museum of Beja**. Valentim de Almeida is the author of the 1741 panels.

The core of Christian life lies in Jesus Christ, the son of God, the one who figures in all the works of art and in the words uttered by the believers. Beja has three sets of panels that describe the most important moments of His life: they can be found in the **Cathedral**, in the **Capela de Nossa Senhora do Rosário** and in the **Igreja dos Prazeres**, here with works by Gabriel del Barco. These are Baroque panels dating back to 1693 and to the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.



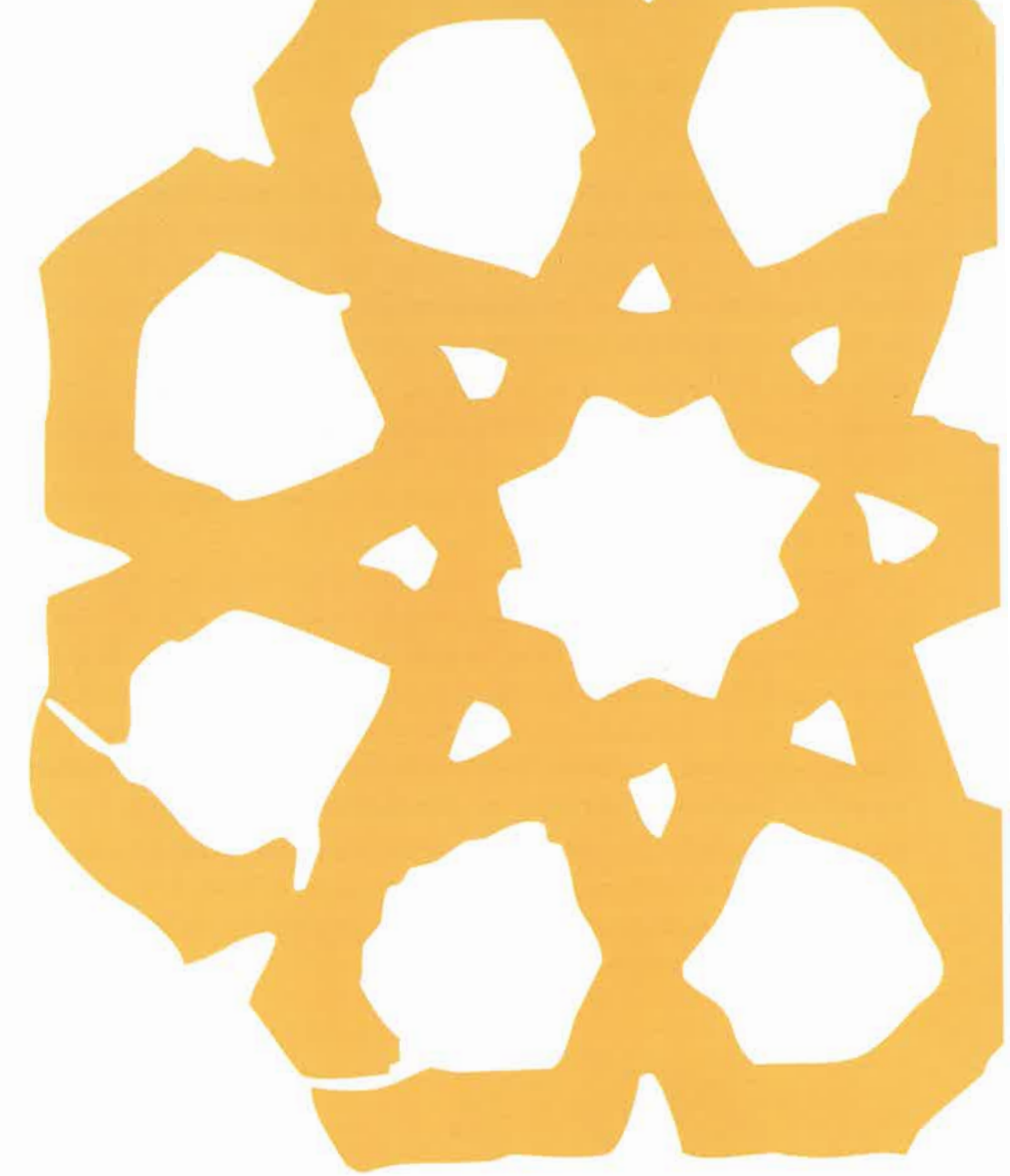
Birth of Saint John the Baptist. Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição. Valentim de Almeida, 1741.

Mary nursing baby Jesus, Our Lady of the Milk. Gabriel del Barco, 1693.

The Last Supper, detail. Cathedral, XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.



Annunciation, Saint John the Baptist. Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição. Valentim de Almeida, 1741.



## The Art of the Azulejos of Beja XV<sup>th</sup> to XX<sup>th</sup> Centuries



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## THE HISTORY OF THE AZULEJO OF BEJA

In 1457, Infante Fernando, first Duke of Beja, and his wife, Infanta Brites, ordered the construction of their palace and later of the Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição; painted ceramic tile work imported from Manises, Spain, was used for the first time, thereby starting off in Portugal interior decoration with azulejos, so much in fashion in the Islamic world, and a new architectural style, the Manuelino-Mudejar.

At the end of XV<sup>th</sup> century and in the following century, Beja received also imported azulejos from Seville in the *corda seca* and *aresta* techniques from the workshops of Fernán Martínez Guijarro and Niculoso Pisano. To this day we can marvel at the magnificent Chapter Room of the Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, currently the Regional Museum of Beja.

Until the XX<sup>th</sup> century, Beja never ceased to decorate its interiors and exteriors with the glow and colour of the glazing of azulejos. Beja is a living museum of the art of this material, considered by art historians as Portugal's foremost Art. We can wander through the streets and churches of this city – Igreja dos Prazeres, Igreja do Pé da Cruz, Igreja da Misericórdia, the cathedral, Igreja de Santa Maria, Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Ermida de Santo André, Capela de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Hospital da Misericórdia – and some houses of the city with exquisite panels of azulejos.

The history of the life of Saint John the Baptist and that of Jesus Christ are represented magnificently in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century panels of the Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição and in the cathedral. Let us walk through the city and take in the time reflected in the Art of the Azulejos of Beja.

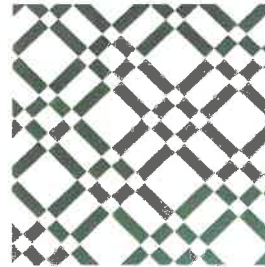


Rococo panel of the Visit of Mary to Isabel. Capela de N. Sra. do Rosário. XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.

Art Nouveau panel. 1920. Rua Cap. João Francisco de Sousa.



Panels of azulejos in the *aresta* style, from Seville, by Niculoso Pisano. Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, 1506.



Chequered pattern or *enxaquetado* azulejos, XVI<sup>th</sup> century. Convento de Nossa Senhora da Conceição.



Carpet azulejos, XVII<sup>th</sup> century. Igreja da Misericórdia, Renaissance period.



Historicist panel of azulejos, by Jorge Colaço. Public garden, 1940.

## BEJA



- recommended itinerary
- XV<sup>th</sup> and XVI<sup>th</sup> centuries - Museum
- XVII<sup>th</sup> century - Igreja do Pé da Cruz|Igreja da Misericórdia
- XVIII<sup>th</sup> century - Igreja dos Prazeres|Sé|Hospital da Misericórdia|Igreja da Santa Maria|Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário
- XX<sup>th</sup> century - Facades