

The lost azulejo panel of the Church of Santo André, near Graça, in Lisbon

Alexandre Pais¹, Victor Filipe², João Manuel Mimoso³, Maria de Lurdes Esteves¹, Maria José Sequeira⁴ and Ana Margarida Cardoso⁵

¹ *Museu Nacional do Azulejo, Lisbon, Portugal, apais@mmaz.dgpc.pt,*

² *Uniarq - Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal*

³ *Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia Civil, Lisbon, Portugal*

⁴ *Direção-Geral do Património Cultural, Departamento dos Bens Culturais, Portugal*

⁵ *Laboratório HERCULES, Universidade de Évora, Évora, Portugal*

SUMMARY

The so called *Painel de Nossa Senhora da Vida* (Panel of Our Lady of Life), once situated in a chapel in the now demolished *Igreja de Santo André* (Saint Andrew) near the *Igreja da Graça* in Lisbon, numbers among the earliest known references to azulejos from the 16th century in Portuguese architecture. The church had a main chapel and four small side chapels. One of the two on the south side was dedicated to *Our Lady of Life*. The azulejo panel of the chapel of *Our Lady of Life* was removed circa 1845 when it was decided to demolish the church, while a second panel located in front was abandoned due to a lack of resources to remove and preserve both.

During the current year (2018) an archaeological excavation discovered elements of the demolished Church of Saint Andrew among which were five fragments of figurative majolica azulejos, maybe remains of the lost panel.

This article describes the newly found fragments and discusses the analytical results of a study made on them, comparing them to the *Igreja da Graça* azulejos by João de Góis.

Of royal patronage, the gothic *Igreja de Santo André* was built between 1334 and 1340 by Ayres Martins and his wife Maria Esteves after a land donation by the king and queen of Portugal. The church had a main chapel and four small side chapels. The two chapels on the south side were dedicated to *Santo Ambrósio* and *Nossa Senhora da Vida* (Our Lady of Life), while on the north side to *Nossa Senhora da Conceição* and to the *Almas* (All Souls), this added during the reign of king *João V* (after 1712). The azulejo panel of the chapel of *Nossa Senhora da Vida* was removed circa 1845 when it was decided to demolish the church, and it can now be admired at the *Museu Nacional do Azulejo*.

The man who acted to save the *Nossa Senhora da Vida* panel before the demolition, left a note stating that there was a second panel in front. He also mentioned a cartouche in the chapel bearing the date “1580” but, being able to conserve only one, he abandoned the one that he considered to be of a lesser value [1].

During an archaeological excavation held during 2018 at a building in *Travessa do Açougue*, where it is still possible to see the remains of the main chapel of the former church, other elements of the building were discovered including part of a ceramic floor and five fragments of majolica azulejos, seemingly from a historiated panel. Three of the fragments are illustrated in figure 1. A hypothesis is that these fragments are remainders of the other, now lost, azulejo panel known to have existed in the same church.

The three fragments illustrated in figure 1 were sampled and the samples embedded in resin before polishing for observation and analysis by scanning-electron microscopy coupled with energy-dispersive spectrometry (SEM-EDS). The SEM-EDS observations and analyses were made at the HERCULES Laboratory in Évora using a HITACHI 3700N SEM coupled to a

BRUKER XFlash 5010 EDS. Figure 2 depicts a back-scattered image of a section of one of the samples, showing both the glaze and its interface with the biscuit.

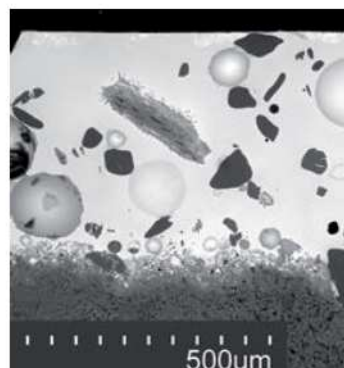


Figure 1 a, b, c (left to right) – Azulejo fragments found during an archaeological prospection in the grounds of the demolished Igreja de Santo André, from which samples Az331/02, Az331/03 and Az331/05 were taken

Figure 2 – Backscattered SEM image of the glaze and glaze-biscuit interface of sample Az331/02

The microscopic morphology and the composition of both glazes and biscuits are consistent between samples, strongly suggesting that all were indeed once part of the same panel. The interface outgrowth of neoformed crystals seen in figure 2 also suggests that the tiles were fired in a cycle including a very long cooling period [2]. A comparison with a similar image from a section of one of the azulejos from the panels at Igreja da Graça signed by João de Góis [3] shows a very similar morphology, both of the inclusions and of the interface. That similitude may well derive from the fact that both were produced within the same technological circle, however the composition of the biscuits is considerably different and at this moment we cannot even assert whether the panel from which these fragments stem was manufactured in Lisbon.

Key-words: Renaissance majolica; Portuguese azulejos; Santo André church in Lisbon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Communication produced as an outcome of Project **FCT-AzuRe** - Estudos no Azulejo Português para Candidatura a Património da Humanidade (PTDC/EPH-PAT/5096/2014) funded by FCT, the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. LNEC Research Project 0202/111/19747.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- ¹ GUIMARÃES, Ribeiro - *SUMMARIO DE VARIA HISTORIA. Narrativas, lendas, biographias, descrições de templos e monumentos, estatísticas, costumes civis, políticos e religiosos de outras eras*, Rolland & Semiond, Lisboa, 1872, pps. 103-111.
- ² MIMOSO, J-M. et al. – *Multi-analytical study of the azulejos from Igreja da Graça in Lisbon, signed by João de Góis*, in Proc. Int. Conf. Glazed Ceramics in Cultural Heritage (GlazeArt2018), LNEC, Lisbon.
- ³ MOLERA, J. et al. - *Interactions between Clay Bodies and Lead Glazes*, Journal of the American Ceramic Society, May 2001, Vol. 84, Nr 5, pps. 1120-1128.