

THE CHURCH CHOIR GLAZING OF BATALHA, PORTUGAL: COMMISSION, PROGRAMME, FUNCTION, AUTHORSHIP, MODELS AND WORK ORGANIZATION (1514-1531)

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The church choir glazing of the monastery of Batalha is part of the material reform undertaken by King Manuel I in this Dominican house during the late years of the 15th and the first two decades of the 16th century. It was supposed to serve the spiritual reform wished by the King and determined by the General Chapter of the Order of the Preachers in 1501 through which the community of this royal foundation would join the Observant branch of the Order. The choice made early in his reign to be buried in this monastery along with the illustrious ancestors of the dynasty of Avis originated an artistic programme of which the most outstanding evidence is the redesign of the funerary chapel started by his grandfather, King Duarte. Changes in the royal prestige policy caused this project to slow down by 1515 which never came to an end. However the choir glazing behind which stands the funerary chapel (whose narthex should have been connected to the immediately adjacent church side chapels) enjoyed completion. Even so it had a troubled fortune on account of its former designer's death in 1518. He was the panel and glass painter Francisco Henriques.

This paper focuses on the definite contribution of Henriques to the contamination of Portuguese glass painting by the achievements of panel painting for monumental altarpieces. His role in other commissions such as the ones for the church of the royal monastery of St. Francis in Évora, the position and respectability attained among his peers and in the court of King Manuel I explain the success of such achievements that is still to be felt in the completion of the church choir programme of Batalha by subsequent painters. Although in a limited way what still remains *in situ* that can be assigned to Francisco Henriques also provides an idea of the way team work was organized under a major master painter. The results of material and technological research on glass-paint samples from church choir panels, including composition characterization and comparison with coeval materials, will be interpreted in the frame of this study.