Cataloguing Baroque azulejos frames. A project in progress
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ABSTRACT
Just like azulejo decorations, azulejo frames must be regarded in context, that is, in their original location, in articulation with the surrounding architecture and other art forms. Whether in the form of bars, borders, friezes and mouldings (rectilinear or sinuous), frames constitute key-elements in the organisation of these complex decorative systems. They are therefore well worth cataloguing and studying, both individually and on a wider level, highlighting their integration with the surrounding space. Only such a global understanding, focused on the dialogue between different artistic modes of expression, can help grasp the Baroque concept of artistic totality, typical of Portuguese art from the late 17th century to the first decades of the 18th century.

The main goal of the ongoing research project – cataloguing Baroque azulejo frames – is to create a database of frames from the Baroque period, systematising the existing knowledge with the hope of being able to answer, or at least to shed some light, in the near future, on several issues concerning the manufacture of azulejos in Lisbon workshops, the commissions and the articulation between artistic interventions. The present communication will discuss the chosen methodology, as well as the options underlying the catalogue setup, with the aim of assessing the benefits that this kind of systematisation can offer to the study of azulejos and the decorative systems they are part of.

Rosário Salema de Carvalho is a researcher and executive coordinator of Az – Azulejo Research Network [ARTIS – Instituto de História da Arte, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Lisboa] and coordinates the projects related to tile studies and inventory, in collaboration with National Museum of Azulejo and also with the company “Sistemas do Futuro”, for the development of a database for azulejo inventory. She has been doing research on heritage, especially in the area of Portuguese azulejo, and wrote several articles. Her PhD dissertation in History of Art was dedicated to one of the most significant periods of the history of Portuguese tiles, including the so called Masters’ Cycle (1675-1725). Presently her main research focus on frames of azulejo panels, in collaboration with the National Museum of Azulejo.