
Igreja da Graça - Santarém

ABOUT



Photo: José Manuel

The Igreja da Graça dates from the 14th century (1380) and its construction was the result of the determination shown by D. Afonso Telo de Menezes, the first Count of Ourém, who decided to found an Augustinian monastery in the town. This church reveals the splendour of the flamboyant Gothic style, following the architectural and decorative innovations that were dictated by the Monastery of Batalha.

The façade is one of the most interesting aspects of this church. It is harmoniously marked by an elegant doorway of archivolts surmounted by an ogee arch, which was a very common feature of the flamboyant Gothic style, and surrounded by a finely decorated frame that fills the whole space of the church's central body. Higher up is an impressive rose-window of great quality, said to have been made from a single block of stone, revealing the stylistic maturity of the artists.

One of the particular features of this church is the change in level in relation to the outside. By descending a few steps, we gain access to the spacious three-naved interior, divided by large columns. The chancel, a little lower down still, is covered by a groin vault of pointed arches and decorated with high windows that illuminate the altar. The illumination is completed by the rose-window and the various smaller windows running along the main body of the church, revealing a perfect understanding of the Gothic structure.

In the south transept (to the Epistle side) is the joint tomb of D. Pedro de Menezes, the grandson of the founder, and D. Beatriz Coutinho, his wife. Their sculptures are lying hand in hand, in the manner of the tombs at the Monastery of Batalha. A faithful servant of D. João I, he was Governor of Ceuta between 1415 and 1437, the first Count of Vila Real and the second Count of Viana do Alentejo. In the flamboyant decoration of his tomb, we can see his device represented on several occasions: an olive branch and the word "Aleo" in an allusion to the pride of this warrior, who helped in the conquest of Ceuta (in 1415).

Opposite the altar, in the south apsidal chapel, we can find the funerary stone of Pedro Álvares Cabral, with a simple Gothic inscription.

Contacts

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Timetable

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday: 9.30am-12.30pm / 2pm-5.30pm; Thursday and Friday: 10am-12.30pm / 2pm-5.30pm; Closed Monday and Holidays.

Accessibility