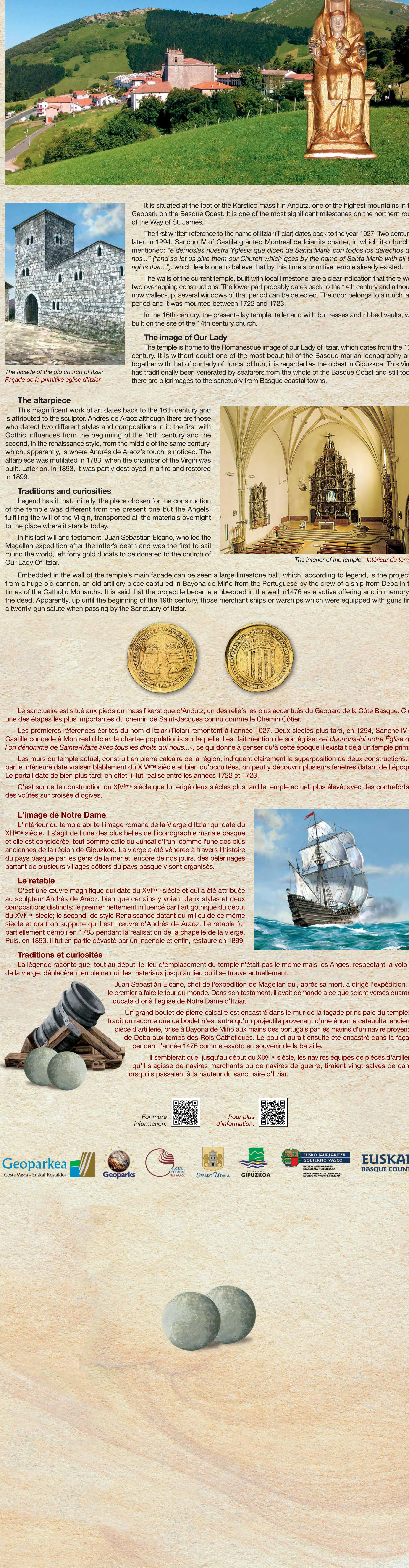


# THE SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY OF ITZIAR

## SANCTUAIRE DE NOTRE DAME D'ITZIAR



It is situated at the foot of the Kárstico massif in Andutz, one of the highest mountains in the Geopark on the Basque Coast. It is one of the most significant milestones on the northern route of the Way of St. James.

The first written reference to the name of Itziar (Ticiar) dates back to the year 1027. Two centuries later, in 1294, Sancho IV of Castile granted Montreal de Iciar its charter, in which its church is mentioned: "e demoslos nostra Yglesia que dicen de Santa María con todos los derechos que nos..." ("and so let us give them our Church which goes by the name of Santa María with all the rights that..."), which leads one to believe that by this time a primitive temple already existed. The walls of the current temple, built with local limestone, are a clear indication that there were two overlapping constructions. The lower part probably dates back to the 14th century and although now walled-up, several windows of that period can be detected. The door belongs to a much later period and it was mounted between 1722 and 1723.

In the 16th century, the present-day temple, taller and with buttresses and ribbed vaults, was built on the site of the 14th century church.

### The image of Our Lady

The temple is home to the Romanesque image of our Lady of Itziar, which dates from the 13th century. It is without doubt one of the most beautiful of the Basque Marian iconography and, together with that of our lady of Juncal of Irún, it is regarded as the oldest in Gipuzkoa. This Virgin has traditionally been venerated by seafarers from the whole of the Basque Coast and still today there are pilgrimages to the sanctuary from Basque coastal towns.

### The altarpiece

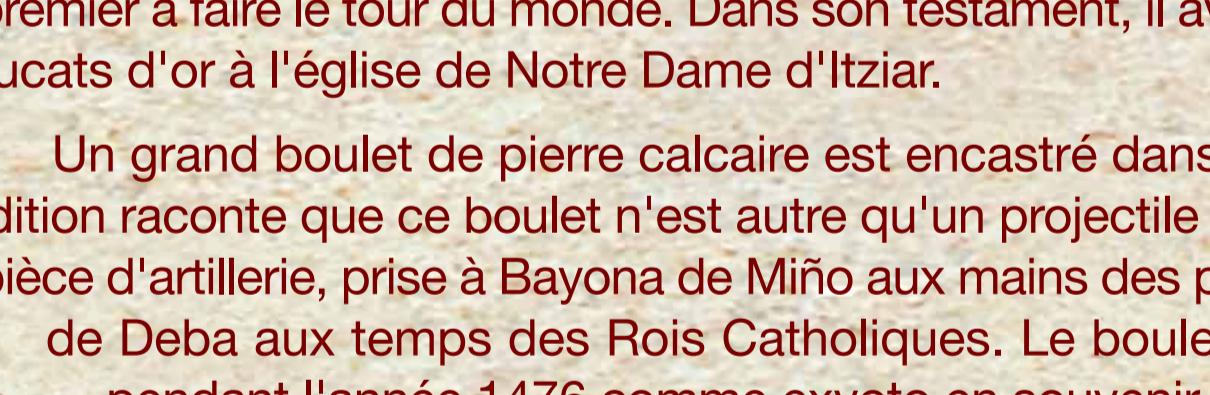
This magnificent work of art dates back to the 16th century and is attributed to the sculptor, Andrés de Araoz although there are those who detect two different styles and compositions in it: the first with Gothic influences from the beginning of the 16th century and the second, in the renaissance style, from the middle of the same century, which, apparently, is where Andrés de Araoz's touch is noticed. The altarpiece was mutilated in 1783, when the chamber of the Virgin was built. Later on, in 1893, it was partly destroyed in a fire and restored in 1899.

### Traditions and curiosities

Legend has it that, initially, the place chosen for the construction of the temple was different from the present one but the Angels, fulfilling the will of the Virgin, transported all the materials overnight to the place where it stands today.

In his last will and testament, Juan Sebastián Elcano, who led the Magellan expedition after the latter's death and was the first to sail round the world, left forty gold ducats to be donated to the church of Our Lady Of Itziar.

Embedded in the wall of the temple's main facade can be seen a large limestone ball, which, according to legend, is the projectile from a huge old cannon, an old artillery piece captured in Bayona de Miño from the Portuguese by the crew of a ship from Deba in the times of the Catholic Monarchs. It is said that the projectile became embedded in the wall in 1476 as a votive offering and in memory of the deed. Apparently, up until the beginning of the 19th century, those merchant ships or warships which were equipped with guns fired a twenty-gun salute when passing by the Sanctuary of Itziar.



Le sanctuaire est situé aux pieds du massif karstique d'Andutz, un des reliefs les plus accentués du Géoparc de la Côte Basque. C'est une des étapes les plus importantes du chemin de Saint-Jacques connu comme le Chemin Côtier.

Les premières références écrites du nom d'Itziar (Ticiar) remontent à l'année 1027. Deux siècles plus tard, en 1294, Sanche IV de Castille concède à Montreal d'Iciar, la chartae populationis sur laquelle il est fait mention de son église: «et donnons-lui notre Église que l'on dénomme de Sainte-Marie avec tous les droits qui nous...», ce qui donne à penser qu'à cette époque il existait déjà un temple primitif.

Les murs du temple actuel, construit en pierre calcaire de la région, indiquent clairement la superposition de deux constructions. La partie inférieure date vraisemblablement du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle et bien qu'occultées, on peut y découvrir plusieurs fenêtres datant de l'époque. Le portail date de bien plus tard; en effet, il fut réalisé entre les années 1722 et 1723.

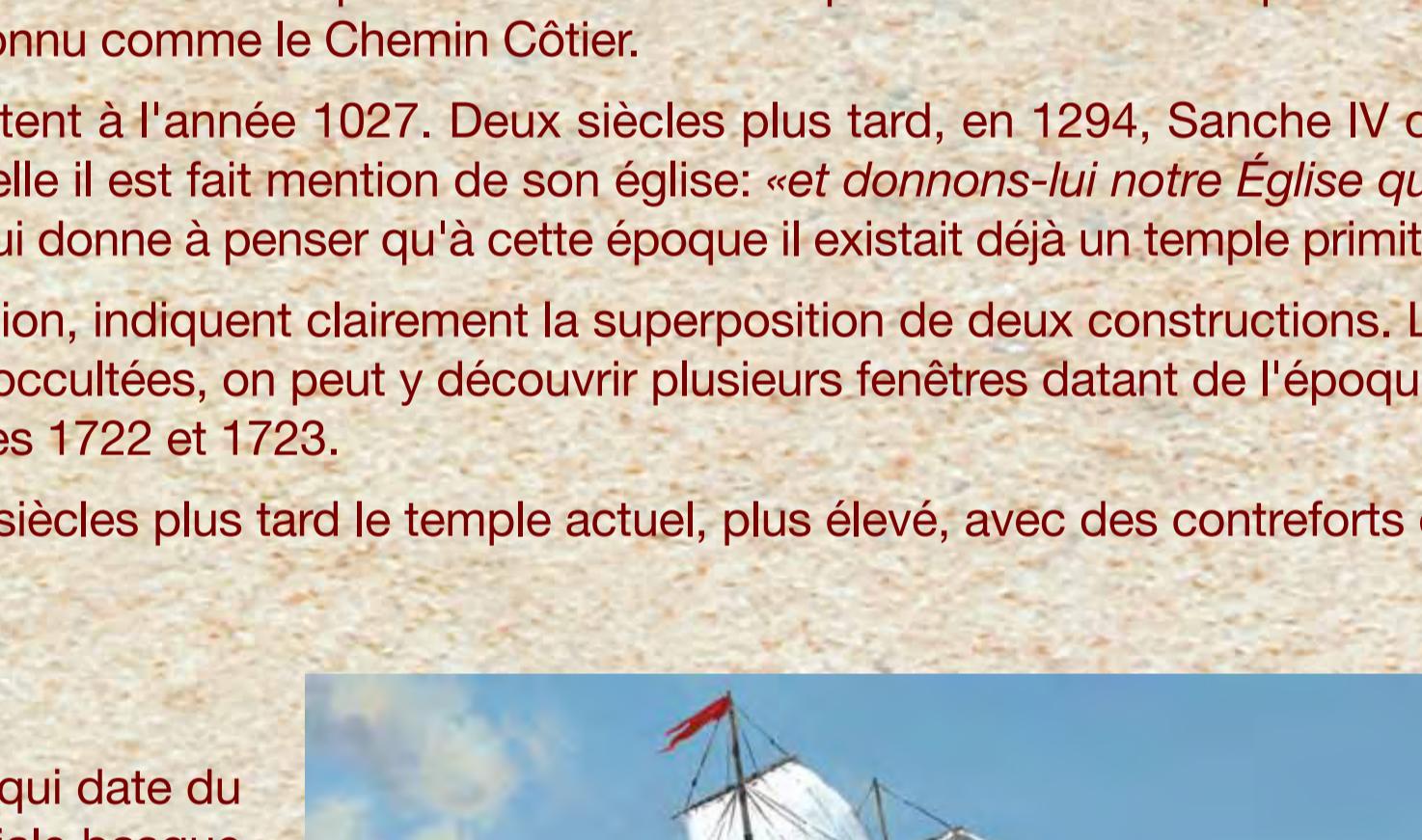
C'est sur cette construction du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle que fut érigé deux siècles plus tard le temple actuel, plus élevé, avec des contreforts et des voûtes sur croisée d'ogives.

### L'image de Notre Dame

L'intérieur du temple abrite l'image romane de la Vierge d'Itziar qui date du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il s'agit de l'une des plus belles de l'iconographie mariale basque et elle est considérée, tout comme celle du Juncal d'Irun, comme l'une des plus anciennes de la région de Gipuzkoa. La vierge a été vénérée à travers l'histoire du pays basque par les gens de la mer et, encore de nos jours, des pèlerinages partant de plusieurs villages côtiers du pays basque y sont organisés.

### Le retable

C'est une œuvre magnifique qui date du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et qui a été attribuée au sculpteur Andrés de Araoz, bien que certains y voient deux styles et deux compositions distincts: le premier nettement influencé par l'art gothique du début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle; le second, de style Renaissance datant du milieu de ce même siècle et dont on suppose qu'il est l'œuvre d'Andrés de Araoz. Le retable fut partiellement démolie en 1783 pendant la réalisation de la chapelle de la vierge. Puis, en 1893, il fut en partie dévasté par un incendie et enfin, restauré en 1899.



The interior of the temple - Intérieur du temple



For more information:



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