

## MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE MEDIEVAL PORTUGUESE MONASTERIES. SELECTION OF CRITERIA AND AN EXPERIMENTAL DATABASE FOR THE STUDY OF THE INITIALS AND THE PALETTE OF COLOURS.

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This research project is the result of a previous study, which was focused on two dated manuscripts from the Lorvão monastery - *Book of Birds* (Lorvão 5 - 1183/84) and *Lorvão Apocalypse* (Lorvão 43 - 1189). From the outset, this first project was marked by an interdisciplinary approach, given the integration of one team from the Art History field and another from the Conservation and Restoration area. Both teams studied other manuscripts from the same provenience, from XII century and the first quarter of XIII century, belonging to the Benedictine and Cistercian periods. The documents analysed stood out for the richness of its chromatic palette, which enabled the researchers to identify two distinct groups.

The current study aims at establishing links between the Portuguese monasteries production - Lorvão, Santa Cruz de Coimbra, Alcobaça - and the international context. However, the varied range of colours, their mixtures and effects led the research teams to limit the sum of manuscripts from the monasteries of Santa Cruz and Alcobaça, so as to allow a thorough study from the Art History point of view and a laboratorial analysis by the Conservation and Restoration team. This methodology proved to be effective in determining the colours' denomination and its state of conservation. Furthermore, it was also possible, through the study of the stylistic characteristics and of the diversity of application of colours, to come up with new information about the palette applied by each *scriptorium* and to point out the most common combinations of colours. The relationships among the manuscripts were established as well. Another main concern was brought up by this project - the state of degradation found for some colours and the methods to overcome such problem, when detected. Given that, this research focused on identifying the colour or the group of colours that were more susceptible to degradation and its relationship with the illuminator's recipe.

Finally, the creation of a database integrating the results of the artistic and chemical analysis became a fundamental tool to share the information gathered by the researchers. The next step will be to make this database accessible online, in order to support effectively the study of the palette of the Portuguese illuminated manuscripts from XII century and the first quarter of XIII century.

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