

# THE COLOUR IN THE ROMANESQUE PORTUGUESE ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

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The two interdisciplinary projects (*POCTI /EAT33782/2000* and *POCTI/EAT/65445/2006*) that brought together the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences' History of Art departments and the UNL Faculty of Sciences and Technology's Department of Conservation and Restoration enabled them to reach interesting conclusions about studies of the colour of Portuguese manuscript illumination.

The studies, started on manuscripts of the S. Mamede do Lorvão monasteries and continued on those of the Santa Cruz de Coimbra and Santa Maria de Alcobaça monasteries, enabled the researchers to clarify some aspects of the use of certain colours and also to understand their dominant systems in the Portuguese monastic universe.

The knowledge of the interchange with the peoples that crossed the peninsula, like the circulation of arts and techniques within the sphere of international Romanesque, allowed us to detect and understand better the evolution and co-existence of a process where drawing was given the primacy over colour by the white monks of Lorvão and Santa Cruz, with that coming from Burgundy through the Cistercians of Claraval that the white monks of Alcobaça adapted according to the materials available and local tradition. It was probably through this way that the monk *Theophilus's* treatise *Das Diversas Artes* was known in Portuguese scriptoria.

Technical artistic analyses were combined in the study of manuscript illumination and appraised this artistic manifestation, revealing the excellence of the pigments used as well as the originality of some of the ligands, which is in keeping with the quality of drawing and the artistic form adopted in ornamental motifs or in figurative scenes.

The palette predominantly comprising reds, blues, greens and yellows at Lorvão and Santa Cruz applied primarily on the backgrounds (with pride of place going to motifs drawn in sepia) was replaced by a varied palette and with a range of multiple tones at Alcobaça. *Grenat* perhaps evoking purple, greens especially bottle green with strong symbolic connections with the Islamic world (the composition of which is still being studied), orange and red are superposed on the traditional palette in the Iberian peninsula. Now and then there are colours little used, like brown and grey.

These aspects of the study of colour open up others, which we view as fundamental and will be developed in later studies, particularly those connected with symbology and meaning in the cultural and artistic context of the scriptorium and in the type of book in which the illumination is inserted.

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