

## The awakening of the Manueline Foral charters

*The awakening of the Manueline Foral charters: science and technology insights into the masterpiece* is a three year project (2011-2014) financed by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia carried on by a multidisciplinary team including experts from Centro de Física Atômica da Universidade de Lisboa (CFAUL), Instituto dos Museus e Conservação – laboratório José de Figueiredo (IMC) and Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT).

A Foral charter was a royal document in Portugal and its former empire, whose purpose was to regulate the juridical relation between a master, such as the king, and a collective entity, such as a village. In the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, King D. Manuel I of Portugal promoted a large restructuration of the historical written memory of the realm. Within this restructure, Foral charters produced since the 12<sup>th</sup> century – were copied into renewed codices in the contemporary language and adjusted to the present community rules. This was one of the most ambitious works carried out by D. Manuel for whom the esthetic of the charters was as important as the message they carried in. In this context they were written on parchment in gothic style characters and illuminated with precious ornaments such as the coat of arms and the armillary sphere used to express the authority of the realm. These Foral charters became known as Manueline foral charters and represent

the most important written heritage of the Portuguese Art in the Renaissance. With this project, a systematic analytical (physical and chemical), paleographic and codicological study of Manueline foral charters will be performed by applying methodologies that will enable the identification of materials (pigments, dyes, fillers, binders, inks, parchment) and methods used by the scribes and artisans. The major outbreak is the thorough analytical study of around fifty charters by non-destructive techniques either in situ (energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence analysis, diffuse reflectance, optical microscopy) or by micro-sampling (X-ray diffraction, Raman and Fourier transform infrared analysis). This way, the already fragile pieces, won't have to leave the controlled environment of the archive where they are kept nowadays. Transcription and high resolution digital color photographic documentation of all the foral charters will be made, to enable online access, and preventing further

damages to this heritage. Whenever necessary, the foral charters, whose state of deterioration would not recommend their manipulation, will be restored beforehand. The project will invite other research teams working on related subjects to participate in workshops where results on the Manueline foral charters will be also divulged. Information regarding the project will be available in <http://manuelin.cii.fc.ul.pt/ForaisManuelinos>. Coordination team: Ana Isabel Seruya (CFAUL) and Maria Luísa Carvalho (CFAUL) Other team members: Marta Manso (CFAUL), Sofia Pessanha (CFAUL), Agnès Le Gac (DCR/FCT-UNL and CFAUL), Mário Costa (CFAUL), Isabel Cabaço (CFAUL), Marcel Besnard (CFAUL), António Candeias (IMC), Filipa Roldão, José Manuel Garcia (CML), Teresa Figueiredo (ANTT), Sónia Domingos (ANTT), Ariana Webb (ANTT). ●

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FIG. CHARTER OF SINTRA, 1514