

# The Coimbra See and its Chancery in Medieval Times

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## Abstract

This article seeks to resume the main conclusions of the author's Ph.D. thesis on the Coimbra See as an institution and a chancery from 1080 to 1318. The institutional approach, examining the evolution of the history of the diocese and its bishops, the organisation of the chapter and the government of the diocese, establishes a context for the study of the cathedral chancery, seeking to discover not only the charters produced at that writing office and their composition, writing and practices of validation, but also the human side of the scribes who worked there.

## Keywords

Portugal, Medieval History, Diplomatic history, Palaeography, Sigillography, Cathedral, Bishop, Chapter, Chancery

## Resumo

*Este artigo resume as principais conclusões da tese de doutoramento da autora, na qual é analisada a Sé de Coimbra enquanto instituição e chancelaria, desde 1080 a 1318. A Sé é estudada do ponto de vista institucional, abordando-se a evolução da história da diocese e dos seus bispos, a organização do cabido e o governo da diocese. Esta análise contextualiza o estudo da chancelaria da catedral, que procura conhecer não apenas os actos escritos nela produzidos e as práticas de redacção, escrita e validação seguidas nesse centro de produção documental, mas também o quadro humano dos escribas que nele trabalhavam.*

## Palavras-chave

*Portugal; História Medieval; Diplomática; Paleografia; Sigilografia; Catedral; Bispo; Cabido; Chancelaria*

The purpose of this article is to present the main conclusions of my Ph.D. thesis entitled *The Coimbra See: the institution and the chancery (1080-1318)*, which was defended at Coimbra University in July 2005. This work should be understood as part of a fresh approach to diplomatic history, no longer being limited to the determination of true from false (*veri ac falsi discrimen*) that originally defined its purpose, but interested instead in more complex and wide-ranging approaches, among them the production of written acts. These new paths laid out for the study of diplomatic history have also been followed in Portugal, where a growing number of works have appeared since the early 1990s regarding

the various writing offices, from the royal chancery to the public notary's office. As far as ecclesiastic chanceries are concerned, a Ph.D. thesis was presented in 1998 on the chancery of Braga Cathedral until the mid-13th century<sup>1</sup>, and in 2000 another dissertation seeking the same academic degree provided further knowledge about the writing office of the Santa Cruz de Coimbra monastery, from its origins until the 14th century<sup>2</sup>. The time has now come for this study of the Coimbra See's chancery to be made the subject of a Ph.D., from the diocese's restoration in c. 1080 to 1318, the year in which the last of the bishops included in this analysis died.

However, as the above title is intended to show, this dissertation is not limited to the study of the Coimbra See's chancery. In the first part, I have tried to make up for the absence of any precise and up-to-date monograph on the Coimbra diocese by conducting an institutional approach to the subject that allows me to contextualise the diplomatic analysis. In it, I briefly describe the evolution of the history of the diocese: the bishops that presided over it; the organisation of its chapter; and some of the main aspects of the episcopal government revealed by the documentation.

Located in the centre of Portugal, on the banks of the Mondego river and a little over 40km (25 miles) from the coast, Coimbra was known as Aeminium in Roman times. It received its new name in the High Middle Ages from Conimbriga, an urban centre located some 17km (10 miles) to the south and the seat of a diocese that already existed in the 6th century but that had probably been founded much earlier. In c. 580, the bishopric was transferred to Aeminium, since its geographical situation allowed for a better defence against the threat of invasion, and the city then took its name from the episcopal seat. This name was changed to Coimbra in the 9th century, by which time the city had been under Muslim rule since c. 715, interrupted by a brief period of Christian control for a little over 100 years, from 878 to 987, with its definitive reconquest taking place only in 1064.

The period that followed the city's recapture by the Christians, lasting until the mid-12th century, was marked by the extensive reorganisation of its political, administrative and ecclesiastical structures. The rule of the city and of the extensive territory under its dominion was given to the Mozarab Count Sesnando, a man well trusted by the King of Leon, Fernando Magno. Since Mozarabism played a key role in this region, the first bishop chosen was a Mozarab, Paterno, a former prelate of Tortosa, who was unable to travel to his new diocese directly upon receiving the invitation addressed to him after the Reconquest by the monarch and Count Sesnando, but who was already residing there in 1080 and remained in office until his death, in c. 1087. It was Paterno who took the first steps towards integrating Coimbra into the Christian peninsular world of that time, even though full integration was not to be achieved until Mozarabism was left behind and the Gregorian reform triumphed at the bishopric. In fact, the secular local traditions were in conflict with the papal policy of asserting the Roman church's hegemony over Western Christendom by standardising liturgical practices. The pontifical policy was seconded by that of the Hispanic emperor Afonso VI, who had family ties with St. Hugh of Cluny, favoured the Gregorian

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<sup>1</sup> Cunha, *A chancelaria arquiépiscopal de Braga*, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Gomes, *In limine conscriptionis. Documentos, chancelaria e cultura no mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra: séculos XII a XIV*, 2000.

reform and supported its leading actor in the Iberian Peninsula, Bernardo, the archbishop of Toledo (1086-1124†). After the death of Sesnando and the assimilation of the territory of Coimbra into the County of Portugal (after Afonso VI had handed the responsibility for its government to his son-in-law Henry of Burgundy), the monarch's main concern was to combine forces with the Catholic hierarchy in order to eradicate Mozarabism. To achieve this aim, political agents of French origin and prelates were chosen who had adopted the Gregorian reform and the Roman liturgy. Two of them, Maurício Burdino (bishop from 1099 to 1108) and Bernardo (who headed the diocese from 1128 to 1146), were among the group of Frankish clergymen that surrounded Bernardo of Toledo. The other two heads of the diocese during this period were of local origin, but they nonetheless adhered to the Roman cause: Crescónio (1092-1098†), generally identified as a monk from Arouca who became the abbot of a Benedictine monastery in Tui; and Gonçalo Pais (1109-1127†), son of an important noble family, who introduced the Roman rites into the liturgy and imposed the necessary chapter reforms to transform Coimbra into a cathedral governed according to the dictates of the Holy See.

This first period of the diocese's history was followed by a second one that lasted until the first few decades of the 13th century and was marked by continuous confrontations and rivalries between the cathedral and the Augustinian monastery of Santa Cruz. The monastery had been founded in c. 1130 on the outskirts of the city, and was supported by Prince Afonso Henriques, who had in the meantime taken charge of the County of Portugal. Almost immediately a tense relationship developed between the monastery and the see, since the monastery had been founded by clergymen who had abandoned the cathedral chapter to join the new institution and consequently the Crucians tried to evade the episcopal authority. During this period, five bishops succeeded each other at the Conimbriga See: João Anaia (1148-1155), Miguel Salomão (1162-1176), Bermudo (1178-1182†), Martinho Gonçalves (1183-1191†) and Pedro Soares (1192-1232), recruited either from among the members of the see's chapter or from among the canons of the Crucian monastery. The latter bishop in particular was a tireless defender of the interests of his cathedral, fighting for the recognition and strengthening of episcopal authority over all other powers, strongly influenced by the ideas of the Fourth Lateran Council that he had attended in 1215.

During a third period, there followed a series of strained relationships between royal authority (duly established in the meantime, since Portugal had been recognised as an independent kingdom in 1179) and ecclesiastic authority, resulting in a number of interventions being made in the selection of the prelates by both the monarchy and the papacy, since both parties sought to control the episcopacy and used the cathedral sees to promote and reward trustworthy clergymen. I now briefly present the prelates of this period and describe the way in which they were appointed to their office. The first bishop, Tibúrcio (1234-1246) was appointed directly by the Pope when the chapter's support was split between two candidates; his successor, Domingos, whose brief episcopacy ran for two short months in 1247, was chosen by the canonical college, as was Egas Fafes (1247-1267), who was very close to the court of Dom Afonso III and was later appointed by the Pope to the archbishopric of Compostela. With the throne having been left empty in curia, the Holy Pontiff chose the new bishop, Mateus (1268-1279), who until then had been

head of another Portuguese diocese, Viseu, and was at that time in the papal curia following a number of differences with the king. Mateus remained absent from his diocese throughout and was never even accepted by the chapter; he eventually returned to his previous office, and the Pope chose as his successor Aymeric d'Ébrard (1279-1295†), a Frenchman from Quercy. The prelate that followed, Pedro Martins (1296-1301†), was a former chancellor of Dom Dinis and thus the first clergyman close to the king to ascend to the throne of the Coimbra See. Although responsibility for his compromise election had been delegated by the chapter to three ecclesiastics, it is unlikely that the monarch would not have influenced it in some way, since we know from complaints lodged with the Pope by the clergy that he usually pressurised cathedral chapters into electing the candidates that he supported. Certainly, the same must have happened when the king's chancellor Estêvão Eanes Brochardo (1303-1318†) was chosen for the see, following after Fernando (1302-1303†), a prelate of Castilian origin appointed by the Pope after an inconclusive runoff election between two influential candidates who were both very close to the Portuguese crown.

These were the bishops who governed the diocese in the period that I am analysing, helped by a chapter that, over the course of these centuries, evolved in a very similar fashion to the canonical formations of most Hispanic cathedrals of the time.

Upon its establishment shortly after the restoration of the diocese, the Coimbra chapter was organised according to the precepts approved at the mid-11th century peninsular councils of Coiança and Compostela, recommending a communitarian lifestyle for the bishop and the members of the canonical college. The chapter was then composed by some ten members, with a prior being chosen from among them to take care of the various aspects of the canons' community life. It is known that by this time there was already a school at Coimbra cathedral, in anticipation of the recommendations of the III Lateran Council, convened in 1179.

However, in the first few decades of the 12th century, a separation was introduced between prelate and chapter. In c. 1116-1117, when bishop Gonçalo conducted a chapter reform seeking, as previously indicated, to bring the canonical organisation closer to the Gregorian dictates, membership of the chapter was set to 30, and a patrimonial division was established between the chapter and the prelate, following the usual principle of attributing two-thirds of the estate to the episcopal *mensa* and the remainder to the chapter. It is also known that the chapter was already autonomous enough to manage its own property well before the mid-12th century.

Simultaneously, there was a progressive secularisation of the canons' life. The prebend system was established around the 1170s, with the number of prebendaries peaking at 40 under bishop Martinho Gonçalves in 1187 or 1188. In the meantime, the reforms that the archbishop of Braga João Peculiar (1138-1175†) introduced into his cathedral between 1145 and 1165, not only led to the definitive division of property between that prelate and the Braga canonical chapter, but also, despite anticipating the continuation of community life, sped up the process of the chapter's secularisation. The Braga restructuring served as the model for all other Portuguese chapters, including that of Coimbra, which was reformed along the same lines under Pedro Soares (1192-1232).

The secularisation of the life of the chapter was definitively determined, in Coimbra as in several other Iberian cathedrals, by the statutory reform undertaken by papal envoy

Jean d'Abbeville, in 1229. The statutes with which he endowed the chapter remained in force generally until the 15th century; these statutes maintained the pre-existing 40 prebends, defined the number of dignitaries and their respective roles, and established a system of fines and the compulsory distribution of the liturgical service amongst the several members of the canonical college. From then on, the Coimbra chapter included eight dignitaries, listed here in decreasing importance:

- Dean – the oldest of the dignitaries, present since the chapter's foundation, designated in olden times by the title prior. The word "dean" only began to be used from 1184 onwards. The dean presided over the chapter, represented it and was responsible for its discipline, whilst also managing the chapter's assets. Entitled to three prebends if a canon, otherwise only to two.
- *Precentor* – documented in Coimbra since 1129. This figure was referred to explicitly in the statutes bestowed by Jean d'Abbeville as being responsible for the choir, chapter discipline and liturgical ceremonies. Received two prebends if a canon, forfeiting one if not.
- *Magister scholarum* – as already stated, there is evidence of a school being linked to the see ever since the chapter's foundation; however, the *magister scholarum* was not named as a dignitary before 1183, and the 1229 statutes assigned him the task of teaching grammar. Was entitled to two prebends, under the same terms as the *precentor*.
- Treasurer – also documented since 1183, although the office may have existed since 1162, the year in which there was mention of a sacristan, this being another possible title for this dignitary. He was in charge of sacred vessels and vestments, holy apparel and holy oils, as well the lighting of the church, incense and the tolling of the cathedral bell. Like the *precentor* and the *magister scholarum*, he also received two prebends.
- Archdeacons – the bishop's co-workers in the administration of the diocese. These were first documented in Coimbra in 1091, initially having a number that it has proved hard to establish, due to the scarcity of documents, but numbering four from the early years of the 12th century onwards. Each archdeacon was in charge of one of the four archdeaconries into which the bishopric was divided, and received one prebend.

Of the remaining prebends, one was set aside for the cathedral's *scriptorium* and another for its *fabrica*, leaving 25 prebends for the canons. Adding these to the eight dignitaries, a total of 33 chapter members is obtained, making this quite a large canonical body. However, the make-up of the chapter was to be altered with the introduction of new beneficiaries: portionaries, choir clergy and bachelors. Portionaries had been noted at least since 1232, and numbered six in total, all of them priests. They received half of the portion allotted to canons, had no voice within the chapter and could not participate in the elections for a new prelate. The choir clergy, also referred to for the first time in 1232, numbered twelve and seemed to have had as their main duties helping in the cathedral choir service and participating in intercessory prayer services for the dead. Little is known about the

bachelors, their number, or the reason for this designation, which was probably due to their academic degree; they are mentioned in documents as early as the mid-13th century.

To conclude the first part of my survey, I also tried to analyse the concrete actions of the prelates, by collecting data about the make-up of the episcopal bureaucracy and the ecclesiastical administration of diocesan territory (namely concerning the appointment of new parish priests, the consecration of churches, the fulfilment of diocesan synods and visits, and the granting of sacred orders), as well as about the performance of the episcopal court. The court was first organised in the early 13th century; initially being just a court used for trying cases under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, it gradually became a court responsible for the full government of the diocese, which, together with the bishop and the chapter also granted documents written by the cathedral's chancery.

It is the study of the chancery, i.e. the organ or service "charged with the composition, writing and validation of acts (...) ordered by the authority above it"<sup>3</sup> – in this case, Coimbra cathedral – that, as previously stated, constitutes the subject of the second part of my thesis.

In order to study this subject, I analysed 506 documents, selected in accordance with strict and precise criteria, which allowed for the inclusion in the corpus exclusively of acts granted by the bishops, the chapter or the episcopal court and which were known not to have been executed either by a public notary or at writing offices other than that of the cathedral. This set of documents is made up mostly of originals (72%), which were written preferentially in Latin (85%). As far as the typology of such documents is concerned, which was established according to their content, charters granted on court matters (36.17%) and economic matters (31.03%) predominated throughout the corpus, though the latter declined in number as time went by, not only in favour of the former, but also in favour of documents dealing with the ecclesiastic administration of the bishopric, which make up 18.38% of the total. Besides these, 12.85% deal with subjects of a varied nature, and the remaining 1.58% are either statutory rules or deal with the organisation of the chapter.

As for the granters of such documents, 48.52% of the charters studied were ordered by the prelates, either on their own or together with the chapter or other personages or institutions. Although almost non-existent at the end of the 11th century, episcopal documents were in the majority during the 12th and 13th centuries, their numbers falling significantly in the 18 years of the 14th century that I also studied. This fall was mainly due to an increase in the written production from the court, which did not previously exist as a charter-granting court, but developed gradually thereafter to reach an overall percentage of 23.08% in the corpus. Finally, I mention the documentation of the chapter, i.e. all of the papers that survived from the 11th century and represent 28.40% of the total.

I have tried to compare the annual average documentary production of the see's chancery with that of other medieval cathedrals<sup>4</sup>. Although the figures available relate to

<sup>3</sup> Cárcel Orti, *Vocabulaire international de la Diplomatie*, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> These are the Portuguese cathedrals of Braga, Lamego and Viseu; the English cathedrals of Canterbury, London, Worcester, Norwich, Hereford, Coventry and Lichfield, Lincoln, Winchester, Bath and Wells, York, and Exeter; the cathedral of Tournai, in modern-day Belgium; Arras, Toul, Metz and Strasbourg in France; Münster and Halberstadt in Germany; Burgos in Spain; and the Hungarian cathedrals (data in Cunha, *A chancelaria arquiépiscopal de Braga*, 2004: 130 and 145; Gomes, *In limine conscriptionis*.

diverse chronologies and were obtained by differing methods depending on the institution supplying them, I believe that the comparative exercise is indeed profitable. Firstly, it enables us to note the great inequality between the production of each chancery; secondly, it demonstrates that the yearly average of 2.18 documents issued by the Coimbra See is well above 43% of the remaining averages (two documents a year at the most), while none of the chanceries with higher documentary outputs than Coimbra ever exceeded 4.44 charters per year (with one single exception). If I had not restricted the selection criteria of the corpus documents, and had also included charters addressed to the cathedral and drawn up by individual canons at another writing centre, the production of the Coimbra See would reach an even higher annual average — around 4.03 documents, which is higher than the score of 62.5% registered by other cathedrals. As fallible as they may be, these figures allow us to conclude that the see's chancery shows an average production that is well within the average — or maybe amongst the highest — of the time, both abroad and in Portugal.

The analysis of the evolution in the number of documents produced also enabled me to note that the chancery's written activity developed in accordance with the different moments in the history of the cathedral. Let us now look at this aspect through a couple of significant examples.

The late 11th century when, as I have said, the diocese's ecclesiastical structures were restored and reorganised, bequeathed us with a scanty number of documents, most of which were probably subject to forgery in the early decades of the 12th century, to favour the interests either of those prelates who defended Romanist ideals or those members of the chapter that were still controlled by Mozarabic elements and therefore reacted in this way to the reforms undertaken by the bishops. In the early 12th century, the sharp rise in the production of charters should be directly associated with the zeal of the French bishop Maurício Burdino (1099-1108), one of the mainstays behind the successful implantation of the Gregorian reform in the diocese. In the second half of that same century, the cutback in the number of charters follows the see's loss of influence during the briefly noted conflicts with the monastery of Santa Cruz. This situation was reversed under bishop Pedro Soares (1192-1232), and the chancery's written output recovered strongly, following the strengthening of the episcopal authority under this prelate and his organisation of the episcopal court as a granter of charters. There was then a visible and constant growth in the activity of the chancery during the 13th century, although this was regulated by fluctuations that can be explained through concrete events in the history of the diocese. For instance, the non-existence of any documents dated between February and April 1247, a period during which Domingos headed the bishopric, can only be explained in the context of the civil war that was raging at that time and forced the chapter to abandon Coimbra and seek refuge from the wrath of Dom Sancho II in nearby Montemor-o-Velho, since the see's bishop

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*Documentos, chancelaria e cultura no mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra*, 2000: I, 858-860; Guerra, *Os diplomas privados em Portugal dos séculos IX a XII. Gestos e atitudes de rotina dos seus autores materiais*, 2003: 31; Haidacher, *Die Diplomatie der Bischofsurkunde vor 1250*, 1995: 159-177, 432; Parisse, *Les chartes des évêques de Metz au XIIe siècle. Étude diplomatique et paléographique*. 1976: 273; Pycke, *Le chapitre cathédral Notre-Dame de Tournai de la fin du XIe à la fin du XIIIe siècle. Son organisation, sa vie, ses membres*, 1986: 14).

Tibúrcio actively supported Prince Afonso's claim to the throne. Another interruption in the chancery's production of documents took place during the episcopacy of Mateus (1268-1279), the absentee bishop whom the chapter refused to recognise as a prelate and who didn't leave us with a single charter. In contrast, long and remarkable episcopacies such as those of Egas Fafes (1247-1267), Aymeric d'Ébrard (1279-1295†) and Estêvão Eanes (1303-1318†) were highpoints in the production of charters. However, the highest annual average production was recorded under Fernando (1302-1303†), the leader of a diocesan administration that was far too short for him to have left an enduring impression on the history of the see.

Just as Benoît-Michel Tock confirmed in his study of Arras<sup>5</sup>, this analysis led me to conclude that the chancery of the Coimbra See served the designs of episcopal politics, and that writing was a solid, supportive base for the prelates, who made growing use of it. The most significant — and also the least common — case is that of Estêvão Eanes Brochardo (1303-1318†). Absent from the diocese for long periods of time, Brochardo used writing as a way to rule, and thus opened an avenue of communication by letter with the officials of the chapter and the episcopal vicars, who supplied his intelligence and executed his orders.

The chancery had on its roster a body of officials, exact knowledge of whom is made difficult by the absence of any subscriptions left by the material authors of the documents in almost three quarters of the charters making up the corpus. Since, however, it is made up of a large majority of originals, I have been able to identify 71 scribes through a comparison of the handwriting.

I use the word "scribes" and not chancellors or *dictatores*. In fact, the word "chancellor" was not used in this chancery, and there are no signs of any division of labour between the composition and the actual writing of the charters. The existing data refers only to those people who, when subscribing their name to the documents, identified their action through the verbal forms *notavit*, *notuit*, *scripsit* or *conscripsit*.

This data allow us to clearly perceive two different periods in the structuring of the chancery's human staff. Until 1230, there seems to have been an incipient organisation, which essentially made use of the infrequent work performed by members of the chapter or of the episcopal household, or by other clergymen who were not connected to the service. From that decade onwards, on the contrary, there was a group of scribes who generally had lengthier careers and, as a rule, wrote a large number of documents. This group used designations that revealed their connection to the see's writing: between 1232 and 1285, they called themselves the bishop's, the chapter's or the see's *tabelliones* or *notarii*, and frequently used specific notarial signs to authenticate the charters they drew up, similar to the royal public notaries that Dom Afonso II appointed from 1210 onwards. The last of these scribes, João Eanes, used his sign and the title of *tabellio* until 1285; from then on, no official in the chancery (not even João Eanes himself, who continued writing until 1299) employed such a validation process, and all identified scribes used the title of *scriptores jurati* of the bishop's court.

It is certainly no coincidence that the *episcopal notarii*, in Coimbra just as in Braga and Viseu, first appeared around this same time, during the reign of Dom Sancho II, when

<sup>5</sup> Tock, *Une chancellerie épiscopale au XIIIe siècle. Le cas d'Arras*, 1991.



the royal public notary's office created in the previous reign had all but disappeared. It is highly probable that the ecclesiastical authorities would have taken advantage of this disappearance to assume for themselves the right to set up their own public notaries<sup>6</sup>. However, such a right was to be claimed exclusively for the king's notaries after Dom Afonso III's rise to the throne and his consolidation of the public notary's office. This is made clear in a letter sent by the monarch to the officials of the Coimbra municipality in April 1277. Echoing a complaint made by the see's chapter and vicar that the municipal authorities prevented their notaries from recording any ecclesiastical matters in writing, the king's answer allowed them to maintain two scribes in their service, as long as they did not call themselves public notaries or seek to authenticate their documents by any sort of notarial sign.

The denomination *scriptores jurati* that had now come into force already existed but had seldom been used. From 1280 onwards, it was, as I said, applied to practically every scribe known by name who worked mainly for the episcopal court, although they could also do so for the bishop or the chapter. Furthermore, these *scriptores* almost systematically only subscribed their name to those charters drawn up for episcopal audiences, just as the *notarii* of the previous decades had done. The subscription of documents was less usual in episcopal and capitular acts, and, as a rule, was omitted from the time of the episcopacy of Pedro Soares (1192-1232). I believe this "notarial" subscription of documents was an unnecessary way of validating the charters granted by the bishop and the chapter, especially from the moment when the use of the seal became widespread, at the turn of the 12th to the 13th century, i.e. at precisely the same time as the anonymity of the material authors was imposed. The prelate's or the chapter's seals were enough in themselves to guarantee their authenticity, so the name of the actual scribe was not important. With the court, it was a different situation: the scribes intervened more fully, as demonstrated by the highly notifiatory style used in the charters issued by this court, thereby conferring upon the scribes the central role in the graphic rendering of the cases tried by the episcopal vicars; the subscription of such documents was therefore necessary to lend authenticity to the text.

Occasionally recruited clergymen, *notarii episcopi* and *scriptores jurati* were therefore, along with a large number of anonymous scribes whose names are unknown to us, responsible for executing the charters that issued from the see's chancery throughout the centuries studied. They did not do this without models, as is indicated by the repetition of structures and forms in many charters; the existence of any particular formula used for their composition is, however, unknown. My thorough clause-by-clause analysis of the diplomatic content of the charters retained in the corpus points to the existence of a larger vocabulary and greater formulaic variety until the end of the 12th century, followed by a tendency to simplify and standardise vocabulary, as indeed happened generally in every chancery at that time.

The texts were created in this way and then written on parchments that have survived the centuries in generally good condition. Although their sizes vary, their formats, almost always regular, are mostly *cartae non transversae*, meaning that they were written in lines parallel to the parchment's longer side. This format predominated especially during the

<sup>6</sup> Nogueira, *Tabelionado e instrumento público em Portugal. Gênesis e implantação (1212-1279)*. 1996: I, 188.

12th century, being gradually replaced in the following century by the *cartae transversae*. This evolution coincided with that generally seen in most Portuguese private charters, but runs contrary to the one found in the French and German territories<sup>7</sup>.

The script used on the parchments followed the graphic precepts of each era studied. In the late 11th and early 12th century, Visigothic script predominated, already influenced by the Caroline script that was to follow this from 1130 until the end of the 12th century, showing a growing influence of the Gothic style of handwriting that was to prevail afterwards. The scripts of this period are very close to their contemporary book hands; document hands followed with the 13th century, and, from 1250-1260 onwards, the cursive Gothic script that would be used in all subsequent charters became commonplace.

In the transition from the 12th to the 13th century, under bishop Pedro Soares, changes took place in the process used for the validation of documents: subscriptions, until then the favourite mode of authentication, were replaced in an almost systematic manner by pendent seals. Although bishop Miguel Salomão would have been the first to use a seal in the Coimbra See, in 1162, this form of validation only truly became widespread after Pedro Soares' episcopacy, during which the first chapter seal emerged. Thereafter, the chapter started authenticating the documents it granted with the seals of its presiding judges and vicars; only in 1283 did the court earn a seal of its own. In all, there exist seals on 77% of the charters in the corpus, and in over half of these cases, the seal was in fact the only form of validation used — numbers that clearly demonstrate the importance that seals acquired in this chancery, and justify the special attention that I have given to their study in my thesis.

All the Coimbra bishops chose the usual format of the double ogive for their seals. Most of them carried, as was usual at the time, an image of the prelate exhibiting the garments and insignia pertaining to his eminence, carrying the crozier in his left hand and raising his right hand in the gesture of blessing. Another type of figuration emerged in the second half of the 13th century, following a model then frequently used across the Pyrenees, presenting devotional scenes divided into several sections, similar to Gothic retables, and placing the image of the praying bishop in the lower part of the seal. This type of devotionally-themed seal was introduced not only into Coimbra, but, apparently, into the country as well, by Aymeric d'Ébrard (1279-1295†), who was also the first to use the counter-seal. Although his example was followed by several contemporary bishops in other Portuguese dioceses, only another foreign prelate, Fernando (1302-1303†), used these new sigillographic forms in Coimbra, as the two local bishops that followed him both preferred to use the traditional figuration, without a counter-seal. It is also important to mention bishop Pedro Soares' innovative early 13th-century seal; at a time when episcopal seals were still rather recent in Portugal, this seal dispensed with the representation of the prelate in a hieratic position in preference for a devotional scene: the Annunciation to the Virgin.

As for the chapter, it used a series of different seals throughout the first half of the 13th century, all of them shaped like a double ogive and featuring the same figurative motif: Our Lady, the cathedral's patron, almost always sitting, with the Baby Jesus in her lap. Around 1250, and until the end of the period studied, a new seal, very similar to the model previously described, prevailed, representing the Virgin and Child. The same theme

<sup>7</sup> Guerra, *Os diplomas privados em Portugal dos séculos IX a XII. Gestos e atitudes de rotina dos seus autores materiais*, 2003: 110-111; Guyotjeannin, Pycke, Tock, *Diplomatique médiévale* 1993: 65.

was used in the early 14th century for a new chapter seal, rather more richly adorned in keeping with the Gothic style, but this was used to authenticate only a mere handful of documents before the previous seal, which had symbolised the see's chapter for so long, was reinstated.

The documents granted by the episcopal court were sealed with the matrices of the episcopal judges and vicars who presided over it until 1283. That date marks the first known instance of the personal seal created for the court by bishop Aymeric d'Ébrard, following the usual practices of the French episcopal courts.

After validation, the document was ready to be published and run its course. Thus ended the work of the chancery that had produced it, since the recording of those charters that had been executed was not a common practice at the Coimbra See. Thus ends my thesis too, whose main conclusions I have tried to summarise in this article. This is a thesis that seeks to contribute to our knowledge of the dioceses, the secular clergy and episcopal diplomatic history, uniting, in one study, two areas of research to which medievalists have been paying closer attention and which can indeed complement each other, as this approach seeks to prove. If it is not possible to understand the workings and the evolution of an episcopal chancery without understanding the history of the institution it served, the study of a cathedral is also enriched and finds new possibilities for analysis when associated with a diplomatic analysis of the *acta* it produced.

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