

Digital Diplomats 2022: From Digital to Distant Diplomats? (Graz, 28–30 September 2022)

Paper proposal

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Title:

The electronic edition of Portuguese municipal charters (12th – 15th centuries): challenges on Diplomats and Digital Humanities

Summary:

The Kingdom of Portugal was formed in the 12th-13th centuries, by establishing its borders, defining ruling powers and securing the social-economic stabilization of its inhabitants. This construction included written pacts that secured long-duration legal relationships. Kings, on one hand, and both secular and ecclesiastical lords, on the other hand, put in writing rules governing both their relationship with the communities and the relations among the inhabitants, namely their rights and duties in what concerns politics, taxation, justice and economic activity, for instance. Such written charters were called *forais*. The *iForal* project - *Portuguese municipal charters in the Middle Ages: an historical and linguistic approach in the digital era* (PTDC/HAR-HIS/5065/2020) – aims to develop an electronic critical edition of Portuguese municipal charters granted by the kings until 1279, as well as their copies and vernacular versions produced until the end of the 15th century. The edition will also contain a glossary for the vocabulary of Latin and Portuguese texts. Additionally, an automatic transcription new tool for process medieval Portuguese language will be developed. The project is guided by a key driver, i.e. an interdisciplinary approach, from History, Linguistics and Digital Humanities. In fact, History and Linguistics will provide researchers with the conceptual and methodological tools required, while Digital Humanities ensure the key instruments for maximizing the potential of the results and rendering their research and dissemination effective. Diplomats is a central discipline to this research project. Municipal charters present particular internal and external characteristics with interest for experts on Diplomats matters. Some topics can be mentioned on this: i) very few original documents have been preserved to the present time, especially those granted by the first kings of Portugal until around the middle of the 13th century; one knows them by documents of confirmation made by subsequent kings and also by other documents made in the royal and municipal chancelleries and also by public notaries who rewrote the original document; ii) it is unknown whether the text of these charters had already been forged in the communities and how it circulated between them and the royal chancellery; the process of documentary production may have been more complex than is known, with more people involved; iii) Some municipal charters became models for several communities, establishing true genealogies of charters; there are three major models of *forais*, and two of them are part of a geographically broader genealogy, since they derive from an Iberian tradition (Castilian and Leonian); iv) the logic behind the attribution of a specific charter to a community is unknown, although political, economic and even geographical reasons may be given; the tradition of these

charters is complex, with several copies and even translations. This paper intends to discuss how digital tools can promote a reflection and effective answers about these and other topics of Diplomatics, especially on the following issue: how to make visible and intelligible to the user the textual complexity of this corpus. We will present the procedures and the solutions adopted in the case of the *iForal* project.

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Short biographical information on authors:

Filipa Roldão

Filipa Roldão has completed a B.A. in History (2003) and a Master in Palaeography and Diplomatics (2007) at the University of Lisbon. In 2011, she has completed a Ph.D. (2011) on Medieval History at the same institution with a thesis entitled «A memória da cidade. Administração urbana e práticas de escrita em Évora (1415-1536)». In 2012, she was granted a post-doctoral fellowship by the Foundation for Science and Technology, entitled «Cities of the Kingdom. Cities of Asia: models and practices of municipal administration (16th and 17th centuries). From Évora to Cochim and Macao». She is now PhD Researcher at the Centre for History of the University of Lisbon (since 2019). She was/is member of the research team of three national projects funded by Foundation for Science and Technology: *The awakening of the Manuelin foral charters: science and technology insights into the masterpiece* (2011-2014); *Meet the Judge. Justice and Communities in a transitional period. 1481-1580* (2012-2015); *Think big on small frontier towns: Alto Alentejo and Alta Extremadura Leonesa. 13th - 16th centuries* (2021-2024). Currently, she is the principal Investigator of "iForal. Portuguese municipal charters in the Middle Ages: an historical and linguistic approach in the digital era" (PTDC/HAR- HIS/5065/2020)

Joana Serafim

Joana Serafim is graduated in Classical Languages and Literatures from Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa and completed a PhD in Literature at Universidade de Aveiro (2009) with the thesis *Portuguese Translations of Cicero's Pro Archia* (2009). She has taught at different higher education institutions, and is currently Professor of Portuguese Language and Literature in Portuguese at the University of Zurich and Director of the Cátedra Carlos de Oliveira. Joana Serafim is integrated researcher of the Philology group of Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa since 2009 and her main research area concerns Textual Criticism (Latin and

Portuguese medieval texts). She is co-investigator in the project "Portuguese municipal charters in the Middle Ages: an historical and linguistic approach in the digital era" (project funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia: PTDC/HAR- HIS/5065/2020).

João Paulo Silvestre

João Paulo Silvestre studied Classics and Portuguese at the University of Aveiro, where he obtained his PhD in Linguistics. He wrote his thesis on the early modern Portuguese lexicography (18th century) focusing on the crosslinguistic contact. He developed his post-doctoral research at the University of Lisbon on the history of Portuguese linguistics, where he also taught lexicology, morphology, and lexicography. He currently works at the University of Aveiro. He participated in two corpus-related research projects : "Lexicographic Corpus of Portuguese" and " Dicionário de Regionalismos e Arcaísmos".