

The *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of Grijó (1449–1452): A Multidisciplinary Study of a Late Medieval Monastic Cartulary¹

O *Livro Preto* do Mosteiro de Grijó (1449–1452): Estudo Multidisciplinar de um Cartulário Monástico Tardo-Medieval

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ABSTRACT

The *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of São Salvador de Grijó, compiled between 1449 and 1452 at the initiative of Prior João Álvares and produced within the framework of the *Desembargo Régio* under the supervision of Fernão Lopes, reflects the adaptive strategies of medieval monastic communities in response to political and legal uncertainty. Commissioned by royal charter of King Afonso V, the codex gathers 43 documents (1122–1434) from the royal archive with the aim of reaffirming the monastery's rights and patrimony

¹ This study was conducted as part of the doctoral seminar *New Perspectives in Medieval History I*, under the supervision of Professor João Gouveia Monteiro of the University of Coimbra, to whom we express our sincere gratitude for his insightful comments and the kindness with which he supported us throughout the process. We also extend our thanks to Professor Luís Carlos Amaral of the University of Porto for his valuable bibliographical suggestions and potential analytical insights. We also wish to express our gratitude to the reviewers for their thoughtful suggestions, which substantially enhanced the quality and rigor of this article.

following the Battle of Alfarrobeira. This study analyses the cartulary through two principal axes: the historical context and motivations behind its compilation, and its diplomatic, palaeographic, and codicological features. The *Livro Preto* thus emerges as an instrument of legitimisation and resistance, asserting the identity and autonomy of the Augustinian community within the political and ecclesiastical landscape of late medieval Portugal.

KEYWORDS: *Livro Preto*; Monastery of Grijó; Diplomatics; Palaeography; Codicology.

RESUMO

O *Livro Preto* do Mosteiro de São Salvador de Grijó, compilado entre 1449 e 1452 por iniciativa do Prior João Álvares e elaborado no Desembargo Régio sob a supervisão de Fernão Lopes, reflete as estratégias de adaptação das comunidades monásticas medievais face à incerteza política e jurídica. Mandado elaborar por carta régia de D. Afonso V, o códice reúne 43 documentos (1122–1434) provenientes do arquivo régio, com o intuito de reafirmar os direitos e o património do mosteiro na sequência da Batalha de Alfarrobeira. O presente estudo analisa o cartulário a partir de dois eixos principais: o enquadramento histórico e as motivações da sua compilação, e as suas características diplomáticas, paleográficas e codicológicas. O *Livro Preto* revela-se, assim, como um instrumento de legitimação e resistência, afirmando a identidade e autonomia da comunidade agostinha no contexto político e eclesástico da Baixa Idade Média portuguesa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Livro Preto*; Mosteiro de Grijó; Diplomática; Paleografia; Codicologia.

The *Livro Preto*: Introduction and Historiographical Context

The *Livro Preto*² of the Monastery of São Salvador de Grijó stands out for the quantity, antiquity, and significance of the documents transcribed within it, and is regarded as one of the most important cartularies³ originating from

² Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo [Lisboa]. *Mosteiro de Salvador de Grijó*, liv. 49. Hereafter, this source will be referred to as *LP*.

³ According to Arthur Giry and the *Vocabulaire International de Diplomatique*, it is important to note that a *cartulary* (from the Latin *c(h)artularium*) denotes a compilation of copies of documents produced by an individual or collective institution. These compilations gather —either in full

the archive of the Grijó monastic community, comparable in relevance to the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary. This codex, originally part of the institution's *archivum*, was later transferred to the registry of the Civil Government of Porto before being incorporated into the National Archive of the Torre do Tombo (ANTT), where it remains to this day.

The designation *Livro Preto* ("Black Book"), as with the homonymous cartulary of the Chapter of Coimbra Cathedral (Costa & Rodrigues, 1999), derives from the original colour of its binding, which, according to tradition, was black. Although seemingly a secondary detail, this confers upon the codex a distinct visual identity, situating it within the Portuguese medieval tradition of chromatic codification applied to various cartularies⁴.

The study of this manuscript forms part of a historiographical tradition tracing back to the pioneering work of Jorge de Alarcão. In 1957, as part of his undergraduate thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Coimbra, Jorge de Alarcão developed the study entitled *A Propriedade Rural do Mosteiro de Grijó em Meados do Século XIV e sua Administração* (Alarcão, 1957). This work, based primarily on two codices produced in the monastic *scriptorium* —*Tombo do Prior D. Afonso Esteves* and *Livro das Campainhas*— was crucial for analysing the monastery's estate management. While the former remains unpublished, the latter was edited and published in 1986, in collaboration with Luís Carlos Amaral (Alarcão & Amaral, 1986).

The edition of the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary by Robert Durand in 1971 marked a decisive turning point in studies on the Monastery of Grijó (Durand, 1971)⁵. This exhaustive work constitutes a complete edition and study of around 300 documents dated between the 10th and 13th centuries, establishing the first

or in abstract— charters relating to property and rights, as well as documents concerning its own institutional history or the administration of the assets. The *Vocabulaire International de la Diplomatie* further observes that these documentary collections may, although only rarely, take forms other than codices, including rolls; notable examples in the Portuguese context are the surviving rolls preserved the Cathedral of Coimbra. What characterises a cartulary, therefore, is that it is created (or commissioned) by an agent —individual or institutional— who has a direct interest in assembling such a compilation, even when the work of compilation is carried out by another authority or produced in a *scriptorium* other than that of the commissioning entity. See Giry (1965, pp. 27-29) and *Vocabulaire International de la Diplomatie* (1994, n.º 74, pp. 35-36). About the rolls from the Cathedral of Coimbra, see Gomes (2007, pp. 394-401).

⁴ Alongside the *Livro Preto* of Coimbra Cathedral Chapter, the *Livro Verde* of the University of Coimbra and the *Livro Vermelho* are also noteworthy. However, chromatic designation was not universal; certain cartularies acquired their names from particular visual or iconographic characteristics, such as the *Livro das Campainhas*, *Livro dos Pregos* and *Livros das Cadeias*. About these codices see Rodrigues & Veloso (1992); Serra (1793, pp. 391-354); Alarcão & Amaral (1986); Viegas & Gomes (2016); Neves (2023, pp. 231-254) and Cunha (2010, pp. 277-292).

⁵ Hereafter, this work will be referred to as *BF*.

systematic investigation into the early history of the monastic community. It significantly expanded scholarly knowledge of the *cenobium* and reinforced its relevance within both national and international historiographical contexts, sparking interest among a new generation of medievalists. Among these are Luís Carlos Amaral and José Augusto de Sottomayor Pizarro, whose master's dissertations, presented in 1987, were later published in 1994 and 1995 respectively, substantially enriching the historiography of the Grijó monastic community (Amaral, 1994; Pizarro, 1995).

The *Livro Preto* is the last of the four medieval codices produced by the monastic community of Grijó, following the *Tombo do Prior D. Afonso Esteves*, *Livro das Campainhas*, and *Baio-Ferrado*, the latter being the oldest. Although it shares with the earlier codices the purpose of preserving the juridical and patrimonial memory of the institution, the *Livro Preto* is distinguished by its origin. Its compilation did not take place in the monastery's *scriptorium* but in the *Desembargo Régio*⁶, under the supervision of Fernão Lopes, at the request of the Grijó prior João Álvares, in 1449 (*LP*, fl. 1). This new production context reveals a transformation in the monastic community's documentary strategies, demonstrating its adaptability to the legal and political demands of the late medieval period, following the regency during King Afonso V's reign.

Despite the historical and documentary significance of this cartulary, Portuguese historiography has devoted it relatively little attention. In 1934, João Martins da Silva Marques presented a paper at a session of the *Instituto Português de Arqueologia, História e Etnografia* entitled *O Livro Preto de Grijó – Uma certidão passada por Fernão Lopes em 1452* (Madahil, 1936, p. 197). Three years later, António Baião briefly referred to the *Livro Preto* in an article published in *Anais das Bibliotecas e Arquivos de Portugal*, situating the codex among certificates issued by the *Desembargo Régio* and authenticated by the autograph signature of Fernão Lopes (1937, pp. 111–112).

Although the *Livro Preto* has been cited in various 20th-century studies—where it was occasionally used as a documentary source⁷—no systematic and comprehensive study has been entirely devoted to it. The lack of

⁶ The *Desembargo Régio* was the highest royal judicial authority in the Kingdom of Portugal during the late medieval period. Established to oversee and administer justice on behalf of the monarch, it functioned as the Supreme Court, adjudicating legal disputes and supervising the administration of royal justice. It also played an important role in the regulation and authentication of official documents and royal charters, acting as a central institution in the governance and legal framework of the kingdom during the 15th century. See Homem (1990).

⁷ Reuter (1938); Azevedo (1940–1942, hereafter referred to as *DR*); *BF*; Azevedo, Costa & Pereira (1979); Andrade, Krus & Mattoso (1989); Costa (1993); Amaral (1994); Pizarro (1995); and Fernandes (2011).

in-depth analysis of its contents, production context, and role within the institutional memory of the Monastery of Grijó reveals a significant historiographical gap. This has begun to be partially addressed by Ana Catarina Ferreira Soares's master's dissertation, which highlighted the central role of the monastery's archive in safeguarding institutional memory throughout the Middle Ages, particularly through the collection, organisation, and preservation of royal charters (Soares, 2023).

In this regard, it is essential to approach the *Livro Preto* with a renewed methodological framework—one that moves beyond traditional interpretations focused solely on the literal value of the transcribed documents. From the second half of the 20th century, the development of the so-called “new archaeology of the text” has consolidated a perspective viewing cartularies as discursive constructions, endowed with intentionality and embedded in specific institutional and memorial logics. This approach prioritises understanding them as deliberate constructions with internal coherence, shaped by particular objectives within broader institutional legitimisation strategies⁸. Of particular importance is analysing the rationale behind the selection of compiled documents—understood not merely as an archival act but as a conscious process defining memory, identity, and institutional authority (Ramírez Vaquero & Herreros Lopetegui, 2013, pp. 14–15).

Notable examples applying this methodology include recent studies of the *Liber Testamentorum* of the Monastery of São Salvador de Paço de Sousa (Lopes & Silva, 2016), the *Livro de Mumadona* of the Monastery of Guimarães (Amaral, 2016), and the new critical edition of the *Censual* of the Chapter of Porto (Silva, 2024). Within this theoretical and heuristic framework, this article proposes an introductory analysis of the *Livro Preto*, aiming both to recognise its historical significance and to understand the documentary practices that guided its compilation within the context of the Monastery of Grijó.

The cartulary compiled within the *Desembargo Régio*, comprising 43 copies of documents dated between 1122 and 1434—together with one undated charter and the opening and closing records dating the work between 1449 and 1452—calls for an analysis that integrates the Monastery's institutional context with the logic of compilation and underlying documentary practices. This article therefore constitutes an introductory approach to a broader ongoing study focused on the full transcription, critical analysis, and edition of the *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of Grijó. This initial contribution seeks to move beyond a purely formal or diplomatic reading of the codex and to situate it

⁸ On this concept, see Amaral (2016, p. XII, note 4).

within a broader institutional and documentary framework. It aims to highlight the historical and juridical dynamics shaping its production and reception, offering a rigorous, well-founded contribution to understanding the cartulary's role in preserving the institutional memory of the Monastery of Grijó.

1. The Institutional Trajectory of the Monastery of Grijó: Foundation, Reform and Crisis (10th-14th Centuries)

Those travelling through northern Portugal to the parish of Grijó in Vila Nova de Gaia are immediately struck by the grandeur of the Church of São Salvador de Grijó. This monument, predating the foundation of the Kingdom of Portugal, reflects the complex religious and social dynamics that shaped the region. Its history, intertwined with key Iberian events, offers valuable insights into medieval Portuguese religious, political, and cultural developments.

The monastery's legacy is recorded in the 12th-century *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary, compiled by the monastic community itself, which traces its foundation back to 922 (*BF*, pp. 125–126). Established by two brothers, it belonged to the tradition of small familial monastic communities, characteristic of Iberian monasticism before the Cluniac reform (Amaral, 1994, p. 33; Mattoso, 2002, pp. 115–122). The church, dedicated to Saint Savior, housed a double community with recruitment limited to the founders' descendants (*BF*, p. XXIII; Mattoso, 2002, p. 131).

During the 10th century, despite Christian advances under Ordoño II of León, the Galician-Portuguese region endured intense conflict with Muslim forces. Abd al-Rahman III's caliphate restored internal order and expanded northward, culminating in Almanzor's 987 conquest of Coimbra, which forced Christian retreat to the Douro valley, restoring earlier Asturian borders (Lévi-Provençal, 1999, vol. II, pp. 33–47; Alarcão, 2019, pp. 17–22; Barroca, 2003, pp. 27–28).

The absence of documentary references to the monastery following 922 can reasonably be attributed to this period of instability. The scarcity of records persists into the 11th century, with only 3 charters preserved in the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary during its first three quarters (*BF*, pp. 149, 161, 249)⁹. None of these documents mention the Monastery of Grijó, underscoring the limited evidence concerning its activity during this time (*BF*, pp. XXIII–XXIV).

⁹ On the surviving sources for Santa Maria in the 9th and 10th centuries, see Andrade, Krus & Mattoso (1989, pp. 29–32).

After a prolonged scarcity of records, more substantial documentation appears in 1075, when Soeiro Fromarigues acquired several properties in Grijó, including a basilica dedicated to São Salvador (*BF*, p. 141). Although this does not confirm the continued existence of a monastic community, it marks the first known link between the site and a notable noble lineage. As Robert Durand suggests, the monastery may have been reduced to a modest parish church (*BF*, p. XXIV). Soeiro Fromarigues' intervention had lasting consequences, particularly in consolidating the monastery's patrimony. His donation of 3th October 1093, which included agricultural estates, laid the economic foundation of the institution (*BF*, pp. 136–137).

Beyond property endowments, Soeiro Fromarigues played a key role in the monastery's religious and political affirmation. Likely due to his efforts in rebuilding the church and his prestige, Bishop Crescónio of Coimbra consecrated the church (*BF*, p. 198; Costa & Rodrigues, 1999, pp. 130–134). This act not only legitimised the monastic institution in ecclesiastical terms but also enhanced its religious stature within the region (*BF*, pp. 136–137; Morujão, 2010, pp. 88–89).

After the death of Soeiro Fromarigues, his wife Elvira Nunes and their son Nuno Soares—who Count Pedro described as the “restorer of the monastery” (Ruas, 1949, pp. 361–373; Mattoso, 1980, p. 65)—continued his legacy. This new generation strengthened ties with the political elite, particularly with Countess Teresa and her son, Afonso Henriques, who would later become the first monarch of Portugal (*BF*, pp. XXIV–XXVII; Amaral, 1994, pp. 169–170). Their patronage secured significant privileges for the monastery, including exemption charters granted to Grijó (1122), Brito (1139), and Tarouquela (1142) (*DR*, vol. 1, pp. 104–105, 203–205, 241–242).

This growing proximity to political power proved decisive in fostering a significant internal transformation within the monastery. Following the foundation of the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra in 1131 (Martins, 2003; Gomes, 2007; Neves, 2024), several religious communities adopted the Rule of St Augustine (Gomes, 2007, pp. 80–84, 159–161; Mattoso, 1992, pp. 109–115). As part of this wider reform movement, between 1132 and 1135, São Salvador de Grijó restructured its communal life and adopted the Augustinian model. The numerous charters preserved in the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary attest to this transition, with the term *canonice* appearing in the documentary formulae and, notably, an 1134 charter referencing St Augustine for the first time (*BF*, pp. XXVIII–XXX; Gomes, 2007, p. 160).

The convergence of all these actions created the political and economic conditions necessary for the consolidation of the Monastery of Grijó, enabling

its continued development throughout the 11th and 12th centuries (BF, pp. XXXI–XXXVII; Costa, 1993, pp. 10–37; Amorim, 1997, pp. 45–52). The granting of royal privileges and the support of the patronal family ensures the material resources essential to monastic life, as well as an increasing degree of autonomy from episcopal authorities. This combination of factors not only consolidated the Monastery of São Salvador de Grijó as one of the most important religious institutions in the region but also conferred upon it a leading role in the economic and social organisation of the territory. As Luís Carlos Amaral aptly observes, by the mid-14th century, the Monastery of Grijó had established itself as a true monastic lordship, becoming an unavoidable reference within the regional ecclesiastical landscape (Amaral, 1994, p. 171).

The religious and material growth and consolidation of the Monastery were significantly undermined throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, largely due to the hereditary transmission of patronage rights, which substantially extended the influence of the founding family (Pizarro, 1995, pp. 98–103). Founded under the aegis of an aristocratic lineage, the monastery remained over time under the tutelage of lords who drew benefits of both a financial and honorific nature from it (Alarcão, 1964, pp. 116–117). Beyond the prestige associated with the patronage of a monastery, the appropriation of a significant portion of its revenues gradually weakened the economic stability of the institution, which in turn directly compromised the religious life of the community (Amaral, 1994, p. 171).

This internal fragility was further aggravated by the broader context of crisis that affected the kingdom during the second half of the 14th century. The demographic, economic, and agrarian downturn that struck Portugal during this period compounded the challenges already facing the monastery, prompting a more assertive institutional response¹⁰. In 1361, at the Cortes of Elvas, representatives of the clergy denounced to the monarch the abuses perpetrated by local nobles, who disregarded established agreements and illicitly appropriated the incomes of various ecclesiastical institutions (Marques & Dias, 1986, pp. 23–24).

Four years later, at the request of the prior of the Monastery of Grijó, King Pedro I issued a royal provision aimed at protecting the monastery's assets against theft and abuses committed by nobles and other individuals (Marques, 1984, pp. 476–477). This measure sought to reinforce the authority of the monastery and to mitigate the persistent threats to its patrimonial integrity. As part of this

¹⁰ According to Jorge de Alarcão, the *Tombo do Prior D. Afonso* suggests financial difficulties at the Monastery of Grijó in the 14th century, recording just 11 canons and 4 lay brothers in 1364 (1964, p. 116).

strategy to defend its rights, the monastic community of Grijó initiated an inquiry process to clarify the rents and rights associated with the heirs of Soeiro Fromarigues, requesting that the Crown assume the role of arbiter in the dispute (Amaral, 1994, pp. 172–174; Alarcão, 1964, pp. 118–119). To ensure the enforcement and supervision of the decisions reached, Jurio Geraldês¹¹, the *corregedor* of the Beira region, was appointed (Alarcão & Amaral, 1986, p. 13).

In response to this petition, on 29th June 1365, as recorded in the *Livro das Campainhas*, a new regulatory framework was established concerning the payments due to the local nobility. The document stipulated that the privileges previously granted to the patrons would henceforth be replaced by exclusively pecuniary payments, thereby abolishing the traditional obligations of lodging and provisioning (Alarcão & Amaral, 1986, pp. 11–15).

This reformist effort culminated in the completion of the inquiry and the issuance of formal rulings, marking the beginning of a new chapter for the Monastery of Grijó. The monastic institution was no longer subordinated to a patronal family but instead established a relationship based on specific financial obligations with the descendants of that lineage. This shift consolidated Grijó's status as a lordship of lands and incomes, enabling it to exercise more structured and effective authority over those who maintained ties with the institution (Amaral, 1994, p. 172).

Although the resolutions contained in the *Livro das Campainhas* sought to address the monastery's grievances, its relationship with the local nobility remained characterised by hostility. During the Cortes held in Porto in 1372, issues were raised concerning the rights of patronage. In response, King Fernando I declared that such matters should be addressed in accordance with the provisions previously established by his predecessors (Marques, 1990, vol. 1, p. 119). The following year, the canons of the Monastery of Grijó once again appealed to the Portuguese monarch, claiming that certain nobles were unlawfully usurping rights over the monastery's property and asserting privileges and prerogatives to which they were not entitled. In response, the king authorised the judges of Porto to act as mediators in the disputes, instructing them to base their decisions on legally recognised rights as recorded in the relevant royal documents (*LP*, fl. 4).

In spite of royal intervention, conflicts between the nobility and the monastic community persisted, reflecting the complex dynamics of power

¹¹ Available information on Jurio Geraldês is scarce. It is recorded that he died on 30th January 1381 and was buried in the church of Vila Boa do Bispo (Barroca, 1987, pp. 461–463; 2000, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 1878–1886).

and the enduring tensions between the parties involved. During the reign of King João I, the prior of the Monastery of Grijó repeatedly sought royal confirmation of the institution's rights as a strategy to counter ongoing abuses¹². Nevertheless, even with royal protection and the repeated confirmation of privileges, the monastery continued to suffer from seigneurial usurpation and economic hardship throughout the second half of the 14th century —circumstances that undermined its governance and institutional stability (Marques, 1968, p. 58).

In the first half of the 15th century, there are no recorded instances of further usurpations or abuses by the nobles of Grijó. Nevertheless, in 1433, King Duarte, continuing the policy of his father, reaffirmed the privileges previously granted to the monastic institution (Dias, 1998, vol. I, t. 1, p. 199) —a decision later reiterated during the regency of Pedro, Duke of Coimbra¹³. As Inês Amorim has noted, during this period the Monastery of Grijó experienced a phase of stagnation in its efforts to expand and consolidate its landed patrimony. In response, the community increasingly concentrated on the defence of its jurisdictional rights, particularly within a fragmented territorial landscape marked by the proximity of other ecclesiastical lordships whose actions could compromise Grijó's authority over estates situated at a distance from its principal holdings (Amorim, 1997, p. 45).

It is within this context of institutional vulnerability, political transition, and growing reliance on written proof that the compilation of the *Livro Preto* must be understood —an effort aimed at consolidating legal control over dispersed assets and reinforcing the historical memory of the monastery.

2. Cartularies in Times of Turmoil: The *Livro Preto* of Grijó (1449–1452)

Following the death of Prior João Anes Regadas in 1442¹⁴, João Álvares was appointed by royal decision as the first commendatory prior of Grijó. His prior experience at the head of the Monastery of São Pedro de Roriz

¹² Between 1385 and 1394, seven diplomas appear in the chancery registers of King João I, all relating to the defence of the Monastery of Grijó's privileges. These documents evidence royal intervention —often at the prior's request— against seigneurial abuses (Dias, 2005–2023, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 12–13; vol. 1, pt. 3, pp. 130, 164, 167; vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 62–63; vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 105, 129).

¹³ Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo [Lisboa]. *Chancelaria D. Afonso V*, liv. 2, fl. 35v.

¹⁴ See Costa (1993, pp. 68–71); Fernandes (2011, pp. 490–491); and Costa & Amaral (2023, pp. 333–338) about João Anes Regadas.

suggests that the Crown held his administrative competence in high regard¹⁵. According to the *Crónica do Mosteiro de Grijó*, attributed to Marcos da Cruz, he undertook immediate efforts to safeguard and systematise the monastery's assets upon assuming office (Costa & Amaral, 2023, p. 344).

In order to secure the legal protection of the Monastery of Grijó's rights and jurisdictions, João Álvares appealed to King Afonso V for the issuance of an authenticated transcript of the institution's documents, which were, at the time, kept in the *Torre do Tombo* within the castle of Lisbon¹⁶. This request, which encompassed royal charters, legal decisions, inquisitions, and official certificates, reveals a deliberate effort to consolidate legal protection. The documents were compiled and formally delivered on 18th July 1452 to Vasco Anes, canon of Grijó and legal representative of the prior, thereby constituting the documentary *corpus* now known as the *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of Grijó (*LP*, fl. 37v)¹⁷.

Although the precise date of submission remains unknown, the royal writ authorising the operation was issued on 15th June 1449. In this directive, King Afonso V instructed Fernão Lopes, Keeper of the *Torre do Tombo*, to "search for the said documents and, of those found to pertain to the said monastery, to prepare a transcript" (*LP*, fl. 1). These transcriptions were formally certified, and the *Livro Preto* itself attests to their public authenticity. The codex concludes with an approval clause, including validation by the Vice-Chancellor, the autograph of Fernão Lopes, and the seal of the *Casa dos Contos de Lisboa* —though, regrettably, the seal has not survived¹⁸. These formal elements ensured the legal authority of the codex in accordance with the procedures established by the Royal Chancery, as set forth by King João I in 1411 (Dias, 2005–2023, vol. 5, t. 1, pp. 437–438).

¹⁵ On João Álvares, see Costa (1993, pp. 71–76); Fernandes (2011, pp. 491–492); and Costa & Amaral (2023, pp. 338–350).

¹⁶ In the same year, João Álvares submitted a similar petition to obtain transcriptions of all royal charters relating to the Monastery of São Pedro de Roriz. The royal writ from King Afonso V to Fernão Lopes was issued on 12th June 1449, and the transcription was completed on 28th July 1451. The resulting register of privileges is held at the University of Coimbra Archives (AUC). See Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra [Coimbra]. *Pergaminhos*, Gaveta 25, n.º 1. For the register of privileges of São Pedro de Roriz, see Madahil (1936, pp. 184–204).

¹⁷ On Canon Vasco Anes, see Fernandes (2011, pp. 622–623).

¹⁸ The privilege register of the Monastery of São Pedro de Roriz still preserves the seal of the Casa dos Contos de Lisboa. This brown wax pendant seal is attached by a plaited blue-and-white wool cord. Although the legend is heavily damaged and largely illegible, the Portuguese royal arms with ten castles and the Cross of Avis remain clearly visible. This sigillographic element closely resembles that described by António Caetano de Sousa in the *História Genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa*. See AUC, *Pergaminhos*, Gaveta 25, n.º 1; Sousa (1738, vol. V, pp. 31–32, plate XL); Rau (1951, pp. 19–34).

The *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of Grijó was meticulously executed by the scribe Martim Vasques, whose hand remains consistent throughout the volume, both in graphic style and in the systematic use of abbreviations¹⁹. The codex is formatted in two columns, with each folio bearing a marginal autograph inscription reading *Rodericus*, likely a reference to Rui Gomes de Alvarenga, Vice-Chancellor and officer of the Court of Petitions²⁰. At the closing of the manuscript, alongside corrections made by Fernão Lopes, his signature is also present. Notably, the monastery paid 20 *reais* to the *Desembargo Régio* for the transcription, a detail that underscores both the financial burden and the institutional importance of the validation process (*LP*, fl. 38)²¹.

The *Livro Preto* thus emerged as a pivotal legal instrument for safeguarding rights conferred by successive monarchs. Its production in public form, under royal oversight, endowed the monastery with a robust juridical basis upon which to assert its claims. In this light, the 1449 petition must be contextualised within the heightened uncertainty following the Battle of Alfarrobeira, fought between 5 and 20 May of that year—a conflict that significantly destabilised the kingdom’s political landscape. As Amélia García Medina notes, the compilation of dispersed documentation was a frequent response to such periods of crisis, serving to reinforce and protect established legal entitlements and possessions (2011, p. 300)²².

From a documentary perspective, the *Livro Preto* resembles the so-called “chancery cartularies”, which, prior to the systematic registration of official acts, compiled documents that either substantiated institutional rights or served as evidence in defence against external claims (Bautier, 1993, p. 363)²³. The codex was compiled within the *Desembargo Régio* and consists of authentic copies—namely, transcripts validated by a public authority, in this case the Royal Chancery acting on behalf of the

¹⁹ Martim Vasques, besides authoring the *Livro Preto* of Grijó, also compiled the *Caderno de Privilégios* of São Pedro de Roriz, completed in 1441, and the *Livro Grande* of Porto, finalised in 1447 (see Madahil, 1936, p. 198; Reimão, 1995, p. 15).

²⁰ For Rui Gomes de Alvarenga’s political career, see Monteiro (1997, vol. 2, pp. 139–140); Freitas (2001, vol. 2, pp. 518–523); and Carvalho (2001, pp. 131–137).

²¹ Examination of the transcriptions from the Monastery of Roriz confirms that the amount paid was identical (Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra [Coimbra]. *Pergaminhos*, Gaveta 25, n.º 1, fl. 1).

²² For a parallel case, see the *Livro das Cadeias*, compiled in Braga amidst the political tensions between Archbishop Gonçalo Pereira and King Afonso IV. In the face of instability and the dispersal of essential records, the archbishop appears to have ordered the systematic gathering and transcription of documents relating to the see’s jurisdictional rights and ecclesiastical privileges, thereby producing a cartulary designed to secure and to assert those claims (Cunha, 2010, pp. 286–287).

²³ Comparable cases may be found elsewhere; for instance, Cristina Cunha (2010, p. 288) notes that the *Livro das Cadeias* from the Archdiocese of Braga can also be included in this category.

Portuguese monarch. As such, the *Livro Preto* was conceived primarily as a juridical instrument to support the monastery's position in potential legal disputes, while also contributing to the preservation of its internal institutional memory.

This rationale closely parallels the motivations underpinning the compilation of the *Livro Grande do Porto*, both codices emerging from a shared political climate and a common imperative to reaffirm property rights amid volatile circumstances. Luís Miguel Duarte argues that the urgency surrounding the latter stemmed from the instability of the regency of Duke Pedro and the broader repercussions of the Battle of Alfarrobeira (2017, pp. 80–83). Likewise, the request initiated by the canons of Grijó may be interpreted as a direct response to comparable threats in a region heavily influenced by powerful local elites (Soares, 2023, p. 78).

As a cartulary, the *Livro Preto* assumed a central role in the monastery's institutional strategy —not merely as a repository of documents, but as a legal instrument for asserting and safeguarding its prerogatives. The meticulous compilation and formal validation of its contents demonstrate a deliberate effort to secure continuity of rights and protection of assets amid uncertain times. The official petition for royal confirmation submitted in December 1450²⁴, followed by the subsequent delivery of the volume in July 1452 (*LP*, fl. 37v), further underscores the codex's strategic significance in affirming the monastery's legal standing before the Crown.

Ultimately, this process highlights the instrumental role of the *Livro Preto* not only in reaffirming the institution's autonomy, but also in safeguarding its patrimony through documented royal recognition. The continued use of the codex across generations —evidenced by numerous marginal annotations in various scripts and hands— attests to its enduring relevance as both a legal instrument and a repository of institutional memory.

3. Diplomatic Analysis

3.1. Internal Structure and Documents

The *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of Grijó is characterised by the absence of any internal divisions, presenting itself as a parchment cartulary

²⁴ Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo [Lisboa]. *Chancelaria D. Afonso V*, liv. 34, fl. 191.

comprising 43 transcriptions. To this *corpus* of documents are added the opening and closing statements, bringing the total to 45 records. According to the documentary typology proposed by Ana Catarina Soares (2023, pp. 59–60), the distribution of documents by ruling monarch, as illustrated in Chart I, reveals a greater concentration of diplomas issued during the reign of King Dinis, followed by those from the reign of Afonso II.

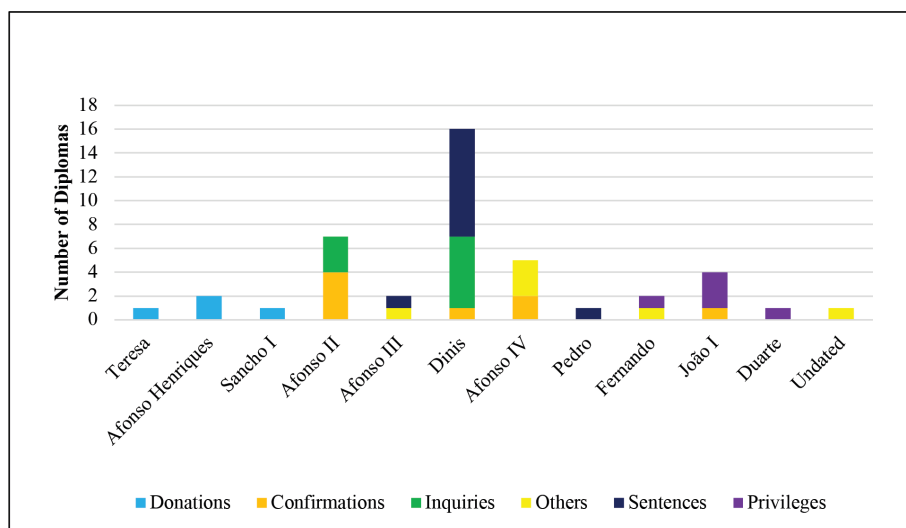


Chart 1 – Distribution of documentary typologies according to reign in the *Livro Preto*.

Source: ANTT. *Mosteiro de Salvador de Grijó*, liv. 49. Own authorship.

As Chart I demonstrates, the documentary composition of the *Livro Preto* is highly uneven across reigns, reflecting both the chronology of royal intervention and the juridical priorities that shaped the compilation of the cartulary. Judicial sentences and royal inquiries are particularly concentrated in the reign of King Dinis, highlighting the centrality of litigation and administrative clarification in the consolidation and defence of monastic rights during this period. Earlier reigns, especially those of Sancho I and Afonso II, are more strongly represented by donations and their subsequent confirmations, pointing to a documentary strategy centred on the validation and reaffirmation of foundational grants. In contrast, later reigns are represented by a more limited number of acts, predominantly privileges and isolated instruments, suggesting a selective incorporation of documents in response to specific legal or institutional concerns.

From a typological perspective, judicial sentences form the largest documentary category²⁵, followed by royal inquiries and confirmations, which together account for 62.2% of the total number of documents preserved in the codex. Although they constitute a relatively small group, all the privileges included in the collection are dated to the period between 1379 and 1434 (*LP*, fls. 4v, 26v–27, 35–36). Among the donations, particular attention should be paid to the *cartas de couto*²⁶ granted to Grijó, Brito, and Tarouquela (*LP*, fls. 2v–3v), as well as to the concession of *fossadeira*²⁷ rights by King Sancho I in 1189 (*LP*, fl. 3v). The placement of the corresponding confirmations issued by King Afonso II on the immediately following folios constitutes a deliberate documentary arrangement, reinforcing both the continuity and the legal legitimacy of these grants within the broader process of the patrimonial consolidation of the Monastery of Grijó (*LP*, fls. 1–1v, 2v–4).

The cartulary also preserves a small but heterogeneous group of records classified under the category “Others”. This group comprises two mandates (*LP*, fls. 7–7v, 26v), an order of possession (*LP*, fls. 15v–16), a land lease (*LP*, fls. 24v–25), an appointment (*LP*, fl. 4), and an undated register concerning the revenues to be collected by the *mordomo-mor*²⁸ in Gaia (*LP*, fls. 5v–7).

²⁵ With the exception of a sentence issued by Pedro I in 1357 (*LP*, fls. 4v–5v), all other sentences in the cartulary originate from royal inquiries conducted during the reigns of Afonso II and Dinis.

²⁶ A *carta de couto* is a medieval legal instrument by which a superior authority—most commonly the king, though occasionally a lay lord or an ecclesiastical authority—granted or confirmed the status of *couto* to a territory. Through this act, a territorially defined space was endowed with a set of privileges, most notably immunity from royal jurisdiction and the exclusion of royal officials from judicial and administrative intervention. Such grants generally conferred a degree of autonomous jurisdiction, often encompassing both civil and criminal competences, and in many cases recognised rights of asylum, particularly in ecclesiastical contexts. From a diplomatic perspective, the *carta de couto* constitutes either a constitutive or a confirmatory act, defining the boundaries of the *couto*, enumerating the privileges conceded, identifying the beneficiary, and establishing sanctions against infringements. These instruments were particularly common between the ninth and thirteenth centuries throughout the Iberian kingdoms and correspond, in functional and juridical terms, to the charters of immunity (*immunitates*) known in regions beyond the Pyrenees.

²⁷ The *fossadeira* was originally a fine imposed on those who failed to fulfil their obligation to attend the *fossado*, the royal military summons. Over time, it ceased to function primarily as a penalty and evolved into a commutable duty, allowing the obligation to be discharged through payment in money, services, or in kind, such as grain, bread, or meat. This shift, evident in charter evidence—particularly municipal *forais*—reflected the declining frequency of military expeditions and the reduced need for large-scale mobilisation of armed men. Both the Crown and its subjects benefited from this transformation: the former gained a more predictable source of revenue, while the latter could convert a burdensome personal duty into a fixed contribution. In this context, the donation of the *fossadeira* increasingly functioned as a fiscal privilege, generating a growing source of income for the Monastery of Grijó and integrating an earlier military obligation into the structures of medieval royal administration and finance.

²⁸ The *mordomo-mor* was a high-ranking official responsible for the administration and management of the patrimony of the king, overseeing revenues, properties, and staff, and supervising

3.2. The Documentary Selection

The selection of documents included in the *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of Grijó follows a rationale closely aligned with the strategic interests of the monastic community, which sought to consolidate and safeguard its rights and patrimony under the scrutiny of royal authority. This objective is explicitly articulated in the royal warrant issued by King Afonso V, instructing Fernão Lopes, in his capacity as keeper of the *Torre do Tombo*, to locate and transcribe all documents held in the royal archive that pertained to the monastery (*LP*, fl. 1). The documents copied into the cartulary were thus deliberately selected with the aim of legitimising donations, confirmations, rights, and properties acquired over the centuries, thereby ensuring the preservation of the community's legal and administrative memory.

The *Torre do Tombo* played a decisive role in the compilation of this cartulary. It was within this archive that records of inquiries, royal charters, and other writings concerning the Grijó community were identified, enabling the assembly of the documentary *corpus* that constitutes the *Livro Preto*. Compared with the registers of the royal chancery and the few surviving original charters, this cartulary stands out as a source of exceptional importance, as it preserves in full the contents of documents whose originals have been lost and for which only brief summaries remain.

Moreover, the *Livro Preto* enables a critical reassessment of the chronology of certain documents. A notable example is the charter of *couto* granted to Grijó by Countess Teresa. Although the original is now lost, the earliest known copy, dated to 1128, appears in the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary. However, Rui de Azevedo's analysis of the version included in the *Livro Preto* allows the document to be more precisely dated to the year 1122 (*DR*, vol. 1, pp. 104–105; vol. 2, p. 594).

As Ana Catarina Soares notes (2023, pp. 56, 101–102), the value of the *Livro Preto* is further enhanced by the impact of widespread documentary losses affecting royal archival collections, particularly as a result of administrative reforms such as the *Leitura Nova*. These reforms, which did not ensure the full transcription of earlier documents into new registers, led to the irreversible loss of numerous diplomas. Consequently, the information con-

the collection and allocation of rents and dues. In royal contexts, he could also exercise judicial and fiscal authority related to royal estates, while in monastic or cathedral settings he managed the temporal assets of the institution. In medieval England, the closest equivalents would be the Chief Steward or Seneschal, who combined administrative, financial, and occasionally judicial functions.

tained in these documents survives only in the original exemplars dispatched to their recipients, which were preserved within local archives (Homem, 1990, pp. 220–222). Equally significant is the fact that the *Livro Preto* preserved transcripts that might otherwise have been lost in the aftermath of the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. Even if the original royal charters or their registers survived the catastrophe, they may have been misplaced during the transfer of the archive from the Castle of São Jorge to the Monastery of São Bento. In this context, the *Livro Preto* plays an essential role in preserving and recovering documentary content that would otherwise have disappeared irretrievably (Ribeiro, 2003b, pp. 1401–1404).

A close analysis of the *Livro Preto* reveals that 17.7% of the transcribed diplomas have no known extant reference or *regestum* elsewhere. This highlights both the uniqueness and the historical value of the cartulary, which stands as an indispensable primary source for reconstructing the documentary heritage of the Monastery of Grijó.

The 1452 compilation reflects a careful process of documentary selection and organisation. The analysis of the general inquiries of King Dinis from 1284 and 1288, along with the respective judgments issued in 1290, shows that only those sections directly relevant to the monastery were copied into the cartulary²⁹. Parishes in which the monastery held no property were deliberately excluded, revealing a utilitarian approach tailored to the specific needs of the institution at the time of transcription by the *Desembargo Régio*. It is evident that, if the aim was to secure and defend the rights of São Salvador in potential legal disputes, including the full text of rulings concerning unrelated parishes would have been both pointless and counterproductive.

Despite the Monastery of Grijó explicitly requested from King Afonso V the gathering of documents concerning the institution, it is clear that certain diplomas were not included in the final compilation. One notable example is the donation of the hermitage of Vagos to the monastery by King Sancho I in August 1200 (Azevedo et al., 1979, pp. 206–207). Although preserved in the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary (*BF*, pp. 269–270), this charter was not transcribed into the *Livro Preto*. As noted by Rui de Azevedo and Avelino de Jesus da Costa, the original —written on a narrow strip of parchment now missing its lower portion— is physically attached to the cartulary, and its subscriptions are visibly incomplete. This original is unusual in that the monastery chose to affix it to one of the *Baio-Ferrado* folios rather than

²⁹ The inquiries and judicial sentences concern the *julgados* of Fervedo, Vila Nova de Gaia, Santa Maria da Feira, Cabanões, Figueiredo, Cambra, Rocas, and Sever do Vouga (*LP*, fls. 16v–35).

copying it, as was done with other documents³⁰. The presence of the diploma in the *Baio-Ferrado* does not explain its exclusion from the *Livro Preto*, especially since other documents, such as the *cartas de couto* of Grijó, Brito, and Tarouquela (*BF*, pp. 14–15, 17–21), were also recorded there and were nevertheless transcribed into the 15th-century codex (*LP*, fls. 1, 2–3v). The most plausible explanation lies in the likelihood that the officials of the *Desembargo Régio* were unaware of the diploma's existence at the time of the cartulary's compilation. As Azevedo and Costa have pointed out, the copy in the *Baio-Ferrado* is the only extant witness to the donation made by King Sancho I (Azevedo et al., 1979, pp. 206–207). This suggests that, between the compilation of the *Baio-Ferrado* and the elaboration of the *Livro Preto*, the royal chancery neither issued a confirmation of the donation nor maintained any subsequent record of it, particularly as King Afonso II did not confirm the act of his predecessor. Thus, the most likely explanation for the omission of Sancho I's donation from the *Livro Preto* is a combination of documentary loss and archival unawareness on the part of royal officials.

Another telling example concerns the rulings resulting from the 1290 inquiries. Although the *Livro Preto* contains a substantial number of records drawn from these inquiries, it notably omits the rulings pertaining to the *julgados*³¹ of Felgueiras and Tâmega —territories in which the monastery held property (Pizarro, 2015, pp. 82–83, 99).

3.3. Analysis of the Copies

Of the total number of diplomas transcribed in the *Livro Preto*, this analysis reveals that only eleven original documents have survived to the present day. The remainder —excluding eight authenticated copies— are preserved solely in later versions, primarily those found in royal chancery

³⁰ Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo [Lisboa]. *Mosteiro de Salvador de Grijó*, liv. 50, fl. 111v; Azevedo et al., 1979, p. 206.

³¹ In medieval Portugal, a *julgado* was a territorial unit established primarily for judicial administration. It typically encompassed several villages or parishes and served as the basic framework for the dispensation of royal justice. Each *julgado* was overseen by a judge or official appointed by the king, responsible for conducting trials and enforcing legal decisions. *Julgados* were instrumental in decentralising justice, facilitating the collection of fines and judicial dues, and are frequently documented in royal inquiries, making them a key source for the study of medieval territorial administration.

registers or in the royal inquiries compiled between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries³².

An assessment of the quality of these copies, conducted through comparison with their respective originals or with earlier versions, reveals that Martim Vasques, in his capacity as scribe of the *Desembargo Régio*, frequently introduced transcriptional errors, particularly in the case of Latin documents. In approximately 67% of the copies examined, at least one error has been identified. The most common issues include the duplication of letters (*LP*, fls. 2, 4v, 7, 12v), the omission or misreading of characters (*LP*, fls. 2v, 5v, 9, 12), and the inaccurate expansion or misinterpretation of abbreviations (*LP*, fl. 3). In some cases, personal names—recorded in abbreviated form—were rendered incorrectly (*LP*, fl. 1v).

Signs of later correction are also observable. Rather than erasing or striking through letters, the scribe frequently amended errors by overwriting them (*LP*, fl. 12v). Other interventions include dotted words (*LP*, fl. 2v), strikethroughs (*LP*, fls. 16, 18), and interlinear insertions (*LP*, fls. 3, 5). Despite these flaws, there is no evidence of deliberate simplification, which suggests a consistent intention to remain faithful to the original text.

Moreover, Martim Vasques demonstrated a clear awareness of the material limitations of the writing support, adapting his transcription to physical imperfections in the parchment, such as holes (*LP*, fl. 22, 22v). In an effort to enhance the authenticity of the authenticated copies and reinforce the credibility of the compilation, the scribe took care to reproduce key validating elements, including the *crux roborationis*, witness lists, and confirmants (*LP*, fls. 1–3v)³³.

The documentary practices and standardised diplomatic structures observed in Martim Vasques's copies are also found in other contemporary compilations, such as the *Caderno de Privilégios* of the Monastery of São Pedro de Roriz³⁴ and the *Livro Grande do Porto*, as demonstrated by Rute Reimão (1995, pp. 15–18).

³² For possible sources used in the compilation of the *Livro Preto*, see Soares (2023, pp. 59–60).

³³ The meticulous attention shown by Martim Vasquez in replicating, with the greatest possible precision, the original documents' validation marks is particularly significant. This deliberate palaeographical procedure—namely, the faithful transcription or graphic reproduction of authenticating signs such as notarial marks, subscriptions, *rotae*—can likewise be observed in other Portuguese cartularies, as evidenced in the *Livro das Cadeias*. Such practices underscore the scribes' concern with preserving not only the textual content but also the diplomatically relevant paratextual features of the exemplars (Cunha, 2010, p. 282).

³⁴ Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra [Coimbra]. *Pergaminhos*, Gaveta 25, n.º 1.

4. Palaeographic Analysis

4.1. Scribal Attribution and Uniformity

The palaeographical analysis of the cartulary, compiled within the *Desembargo Régio*, confirms that a single scribe, Martim Vasques, as stated in the closing attestation of the codex (*LP*, fl. 37v), executed the entire text. In addition to his direct involvement, the hands of Fernão Lopes and Rui Gomes de Alvarenga —Vice-Chancellor of the *Desembargo* and Petitions— are also identifiable. The latter initialled each folio, thereby ensuring the authenticity and conformity of the work³⁵.

The script model adopted throughout the codex remains broadly consistent, notwithstanding minor variations. These become especially apparent on folios where the number of written lines diverges from the average. Most folios contain 38 lines per column, though some exceed (*LP*, fls. 2, 13, 19, 28) or fall below this norm (*LP*, fls. 1, 5, 9v, 24, 37v). Such deviations affect the script's layout, revealing a tendency towards textual compression or expansion within the columns. Nonetheless, it is evident that the entire text was written in a single script type —hybrid cursive Gothic— according to the typology proposed by Albert Derolez (2006, pp. 142-156)³⁶.

4.2. Technical and Aesthetic Features

The palaeographical analysis of the *Livro Preto* reveals a deliberate concern with graphic execution, reflecting the technical and aesthetic care employed by the scribe, Martim Vasques. The codex was written primarily in sepia ink, with red ink reserved for rubrics (*LP*, fls. 1, 4v, 7, 12), initials (*LP*, fls. 1v, 2v, 7) and pilcrow (*LP*, fls. 5v-7, 8-10v).

Both rubrics and initials were added after the main text had been copied into the columns, as indicated by the spacing left for their insertion. When the space was excessive, it was filled with a red stroke (*LP*, fls. 1v, 2v, 8, 15v); when insufficient, the rubrics were adapted to fit the available area

³⁵ Rui Gomes de Alvarenga also added his rubric to every folio in the privileges of São Pedro de Roriz. See Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra [Coimbra]. *Pergaminhos*, Gaveta 25, n.º 1.

³⁶ According to Eduardo Borges Nunes (1969, pp. 32–33), the script used in the *Livro Preto* may be classified as hybrid cursive Gothic.

(LP, fls. 1v, 24v, 26v). Notably, in several folios, red ink used in the rubrics overlaps the initials, suggesting that the latter were executed at a later stage (LP, fls. 17, 21, 22v). This supports the hypothesis that the scribe followed a pre-established layout model, as argued by Maria João Oliveira e Silva in her palaeographical study of the *Livro de Mumadona* (Amaral, 2016, p. LXXXI).

A comparative analysis between the *Livro Preto* and both the *Caderno de Privilégios* of the Monastery of São Pedro de Roriz and the *Livro Grande* of Porto reveals a standardised pattern in Martim Vasques's transcriptions, demonstrating a systematic and consistent approach to documentary production.

The decorative initials, marked by a combination of thick and thin strokes as well as curved and straight lines, attest to the scribe's deliberate aesthetic concern. The most frequently ornamented letters include the initials "A" (LP, fls. 7-7v, 8), "D" (LP, fls. 1-1v, 3-3v, 21, 25, 35), "E" (LP, fls. 2v-3v, 25v) and "I" (LP, fls. 2-2v, 3v, 25). Although overall embellishment is limited, the stylisation of these initials demonstrates the scribe's ability to balance visual refinement with textual functionality. In this context, ornamentation transcends mere decoration, revealing an intent to endow the manuscript with artistic value without compromising its documentary purpose.

Martim Vasques also displayed notable technical precision in addressing flaws in the writing surface. On folios where the parchment exhibited defects—specifically holes—he skilfully rearranged the text or avoided placing words in damaged areas, thus preserving the legibility of the transcription (LP, fls. 22-22v, 26-26v). This approach highlights both his technical expertise and his commitment to the quality of the final document.

Margins also play a significant role in the codicological analysis, particularly the lateral margins, which were extensively used for later annotations. These *marginalia* include toponymic references (LP, fls. 2-2v, 6, 9, 11v, 17v, 22v), dates (LP, fls. 3, 5), references to other documents (LP, fls. 5, 28) and *maniculae* (LP, fls. 19v, 21v, 24v). Most annotations postdate the original composition of the codex and were likely added between the 18th and early 19th centuries, though a few earlier notes are also identifiable (LP, fls. 4, 18v, 23). These additions reflect the codex's continued use over several centuries and underscore its enduring relevance within the monastic community of Grijó.

The autograph signature of Rui Gomes de Alvarenga appears at the bottom margin of each folio, while at the end of each quire, the scribe included a catchword—the first word of the following folio and quire (LP, fls. 10v, 20v, 30v). Additionally, the original foliation, in Roman numerals and positioned at the upper-centre of each recto, was executed by Martim Vasques. A later foliation in Arabic numerals was likely introduced when the

codex was incorporated into either the Civil Government registry of Porto or the National Archive of the Torre do Tombo³⁷.

The punctuation system of the *Livro Preto* reveals a meticulous and consistent technical standard, aligned with contemporary scribal norms. The full stop “.” is the predominant mark, used to indicate brief pauses. In some cases, when followed by an enlarged capital letter marked with a small red stroke, the full stop signals longer pauses, typically corresponding to structural divisions within the text (*LP*, fls. 6v, 17, 22, 24, 34v). This punctuation system reflects the scribe’s concern with clarity and textual rhythm, facilitating coherent reading and supporting the document’s intended function.

5. Codicological Analysis and Custodial History

5.1. Writing Support, Ruling, and Binding

The parchment codex comprises 38 folios, arranged into four quires. The first quire comprises fls. 1–10, the second fls. 11–20, the third fls. 21–30, and the fourth and final quire fls. 31–38. All quires are quinions, except for the last, which is a quaternion. The volume includes a pair of parchment flyleaves at both the front and rear.

Material analysis reveals a clear concern with the selection of parchment of high uniformity, avoiding, where possible, hides from the extremities of the animals, which typically exhibit more imperfections. Nevertheless, some folios do show such characteristics (*LP*, fls. 3-3v, 7-8v, 11-11v, 19-19v). Additional features include holes (*LP*, fls. 21-22, 26-26v), flaws from the scraping process (*LP*, fls. 8, 9-9v, 13v, 28-28v) and staining from the colouring of the skin (*LP*, fls. 2v, 13, 21, 28v). Overall, the codex is well preserved, although some folios display water damage, which partially compromises legibility (*LP*, fls. 1, 22, 29, 35). A small tear is also visible along the lower edge of folios 1–5v.

The curling of the lower-right corners —caused by frequent handling— is evidence of sustained use (*LP*, fls. 5, 7, 10, 12, 23). This, along with the numerous *marginalia*, attests to the significance of the *Livro Preto* within the

³⁷ According to Robert Durand, the later foliation in Arabic numerals was likely added in the second half of the 18th century (*BF*, p. XIII).

monastic community of São Salvador de Grijó³⁸. Additional wear, likely caused by the deposition of wax or grease, is observable on several folios (*LP*, fls. 1v, 5v, 8, 13v, 17, 24v), further confirming the manuscript's practical use.

A small hole is present at the lower margin of every folio. Comparison with the *Caderno de Privilégios* of the Monastery of São Pedro de Roriz suggests that this hole once accommodated the tag of a pendant seal issued by the *Casa dos Contos* in Lisbon. Although the seal has not survived, its former presence is confirmed in the final attestation of the codex³⁹.

Martim Vasques undertook foliation in sepia ink, using Roman numerals centred at the top of each recto. This sequence is continuous throughout, except for fl. 38. A later foliation, in Arabic numerals and positioned in the upper-right corner, was probably added in the late 18th century⁴⁰.

Catchwords appear at the bottom of the final folio of each quire, aligned below the right-hand column (*LP*, fls. 10v, 20v, 30v). The presence of three catchwords, corresponding to the four quires, strongly suggests that the manuscript is complete, as the final quire typically lacks a catchword. The wording of each catchword exactly matches the opening of the subsequent quire, confirming the codex's structural coherence.

The folios measure approximately 400×280 mm. The written area — arranged in two columns— covers an average of 338×222 mm, yielding a ratio of approximately 1.574. Ruling was carried out with lead stylus, and both vertical and horizontal lines remain visible today (*LP*, fls. 3, 5v, 10, 13v, 18, 23v, 26, 30). Prickings in the outer margins guided the ruling process and attest to the scribe's technical precision (*LP*, fls. 14v, 18).

³⁸ In addition to the curvature of the parchment and the presence of *marginalia*, analysis of the *Crónica do Mosteiro de São Salvador de Grijó* identifies fourteen references to charters preserved in the *Livro Preto*. This clearly indicates that the 15th-century codex remained in active use and retained its significance for the monastic community at the time the chronicle was compiled, in the 17th century. See Costa & Amaral (2023, pp. 122, 134, 161–162, 165–166, 197, 219–220, 225, 242, 244, and 342).

³⁹ When Marcos da Cruz composed his *Crónica do Mosteiro de Grijó*, critically dated to around 1630, the *Livro Preto* was still held at the Monastery and retained the seal of the *Desembargo Régio*. See Costa & Amaral (2023, pp. 40–41).

⁴⁰ Robert Durand (*BF*, p. XIII), in his analysis of the *Baio-Ferrado* cartulary, notes that “la numérotation des folios est récente: on doit sans doute l’attribuer à ce Castro qui a laissé sa signature au début et à la fin du cartulaire et qui vécut probablement dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle”. Indeed, the foliation using Arabic numerals in the *Livro Preto* exhibits identical characteristics to those found in the *Baio-Ferrado*. Furthermore, folio 1 of the *Livro Preto* bears the name “Castro,” reinforcing the hypothesis that this individual was responsible for the later foliation of both cartularies. Paleographic analysis of the Arabic numerals confirms they were executed by the same hand.

The *Livro Preto* owes its name to its original binding, once covered in black-dyed leather. Over time, the dye faded to a yellowish hue, as recorded in the *Crónica do Mosteiro de São Salvador de Grijó*⁴¹. The current binding includes additional paper quires —each of six bifolia— inserted at the front and back of the volume. The restored binding consists of wooden boards measuring 425×305 mm, covered in mottled brown leather, gilt-tooled with geometric and foliate motifs. The spine, approximately 25 mm wide, is clad in leather and bears the inscription “LIVRO PRETO DE GRIJÓ” in gold capitals. The volume features eight raised double bands wrapped with thread, set at irregular intervals.

This later binding was likely produced between 1731 and 1761, during which period the monastery compiled several administrative cartularies exhibiting similar binding features. The chronological and stylistic concordance points to a standardised bookbinding practice within the Grijó community, reinforcing the hypothesis that the current binding was executed during this timeframe. The technical and material consistency observed across other contemporary codices further substantiates this attribution⁴².

5.2. Custodial History

Following its completion on 18th July 1452, the *Livro Preto* was delivered to Vasco Anes, canon of the Monastery of São Salvador de Grijó (*LP*, fl. 37v). As noted above, the codex remained in the monastic archive and was periodically consulted by the community, as attested in the *Crónica do Mosteiro de São Salvador de Grijó* (Costa & Amaral, 2023, pp. 122, 134, 161–162, 165–166, 197, 219–220, 225, 242, 244, 342).

In 1770, under the reforms of King José I, a request was submitted to Pope Clement XIV for the suppression of nine of the thirteen Portuguese houses of Canons Regular, leading to their incorporation into the Convent of Mafra (Costa, 1993, pp. 109–111). The Monastery of Grijó was among those

⁴¹ According to a marginal note in the *Crónica do Mosteiro de São Salvador de Grijó*, the *Livro Preto* is described as “yellowed today.” Throughout the chronicle, various marginal annotations refer to documents contained in the *Livro Preto* using the designation *L. amarelo* (Yellow Book). This change in denomination undoubtedly results from the gradual fading of the original black ink, which over time has acquired a more yellowish hue. Interestingly, Avelino de Jesus da Costa, in his codicological analysis of the *Livro Preto* of the Cathedral of Coimbra, similarly notes that the codex’s originally black colour has faded, now presenting a yellowed or “russet” tone. See Costa & Amaral (2023, pp. 122, 162); Costa & Rodrigues (1999, p. CCXXXII).

⁴² Regarding the 18th century codices of the Monastery of Grijó, see Pinto (2023, pp. 25–28, 35).

affected. As part of the dissolution process, the canons produced a detailed inventory of their movable goods, including liturgical objects and ecclesiastical furnishings, which were transferred to the local parish church, which continued to serve the community. This inventory also listed the monastery's cartularies and codices, among which the *Livro Preto* is explicitly mentioned⁴³.

In 1780, Queen Maria I authorised the restoration of the monastery, allowing the return of the canons and the recovery of their former possessions and privileges. This arrangement remained in place until the final suppression of male religious orders in 1834 (Costa, 1993, p. 290). The dissolution led to the integration of monastic libraries and archives into the *Fazenda Nacional*, resulting in the dispersal of many documentary collections. This process is closely linked to the efforts of Alexandre Herculano who, between 1853 and 1854, acting under the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon, surveyed ecclesiastical archives across the kingdom in search of materials for the *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica* (Ribeiro, 2003a, vol. 1, pp. 510–511; Coelho, 2011, pp. 70–81).

At an undetermined date, the medieval codices from the Monastery of Grijó were transferred to the registry of the Civil Government of Porto. The *Livro Preto* was later incorporated into the National Archive between 1860 and 1864, through the efforts of José Manuel da Costa Basto, who collected codices from various dissolved religious institutions across the country (Amaral, 2016, p. LXXXIV). On the front flyleaf, a handwritten note reads: "Gov. Civil do Porto – 12 / Colecção Costa Basto, no. 12", corresponding to the original shelfmark assigned by the National Archive prior to its later reclassification. The codex also bears several stamps of varying sizes and dates, all from the National Archive (*LP*, fls. 1, 4, 5).

In November 2009, the codex was entered into *Digitarq*, the online catalogue of the Portuguese National Archive, and since July 2018, it has been fully digitised and made publicly accessible through the institution's website, thus ensuring broad access to this valuable documentary witness⁴⁴.

Conclusion

The *Livro Preto* of the Monastery of São Salvador de Grijó stands as a compelling testament to the strategies employed by medieval monastic

⁴³ Arquivo Distrital do Porto [Porto]. K/18/4 – 77, fl. 78.

⁴⁴ Available for consultation at: <https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/documentDetails/115b2d79efce4c539ddb6c1d1988e9fe>. Last accessed on 30th June 2026.

communities to assert their institutional identity and legal continuity amid political fragmentation and juridical instability. Compiled between 1449 and 1452, in the turbulent aftermath of the Battle of Alfarrobeira, this cartulary functioned not merely as an archive but as a deliberate legal and symbolic response to threats of patrimonial erosion, contested authority, and the necessity for legitimisation before both Crown and local powers. Its production under the auspices of the *Desembargo Régio* —notably involving the renowned chronicler Fernão Lopes— reveals a sophisticated legal and documentary strategy aimed at affirming monastic rights, autonomy, and collective memory.

More than a static repository of documents, the *Livro Preto* operated as an active instrument of power. Its compilation reflects a defensive logic shaped by the realities of overlapping jurisdictions and intensifying political pressures, projecting institutional authority into both the present and the future. From a historiographical perspective, its significance transcends the local context of Grijó, providing valuable insights into late medieval Portuguese documentary practices, the functioning of royal administration, and the construction of institutional memory. The codex's importance is further underscored by the loss of many original sources due to administrative reforms such as the *Leitura Nova* and catastrophic events like the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, positioning the *Livro Preto* as a crucial witness to a fragmented documentary heritage.

Although this study represents only a preliminary engagement with the codex, it forms part of a broader scholarly endeavour to produce a critical, annotated edition of the *Livro Preto*, in accordance with the editorial and methodological principles of the paleographical and diplomatic tradition of the University of Coimbra. This forthcoming edition will grant both specialists and the wider academic community rigorous access to a source of exceptional historical and legal value, thereby enabling deeper comparative analyses and advancing the study of documentary culture in 15th-century Portugal.

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