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Challenges in the conservation of archival bindings - The National Archive of Torre do Tombo

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Torre do Tombo National Archive (ANTT)

https://antt.dglab.gov.pt/
ANTT is a building that was built from scratch for its intended purpose, designed by the architect Arsénio Cordeiro, with gargoyles by sculptor José Aurélio. Inaugurated in December 1990, it is a classified national heritage building. It has 4 floors of storage and 3 floors of services divided into two distinct areas: the back office area and the public area, open to researchers and the general public. Classified as a monument of public interest since 2012. Area occupied by the building - 11 265m² (eleven thousand two hundred and sixty-five square meters), Useful area of the building - 54 235m² (fifty-four thousand two hundred and thirty-five square meters).
The National Archive of Torre do Tombo (ANTT) holds a diverse universe of archival heritage, from the 9th century to the present day, in a wide variety of media, and fulfils its main mission of safeguarding, enhancing and disseminating this heritage.

Ordem de São Bento, Mosteiro de São Pedro de Cete, mç. 1, n.º 1, 0882-03-27
PT/TT/MSPC/01/000001

"Livro de D. Mumadona"
[post. 1115]
Colegiada de Santa Maria Oliveira de Guimarães, liv. 1
PT/TT/CSMOG/L1
Article 17º - Communication of archival heritage

1 - The communication of documentation held in public archives is guaranteed, subject to the limitations arising from the imperatives of preserving the species and without prejudice to the restrictions imposed by law.
Physical condition assessment

The Evaluation Panel establishes practical and simple parameters for the person performing the evaluation to select, in a system of numbers and colors that correspond to the degradation indexes for accessing the document and the reference code or symbol, and also provides a space for noting the observations of the evaluation.

→ It includes a scale from 1 to 4, which is interpreted by assigning a color to each number, depending on the state of the document.
WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO APPLY THE MARKER OF PHYSICAL CONDITION

The evaluation of the physical condition of documents proposes the use of an instrument capable of collecting the data observed during the evaluation of the physical condition of the documents. This collection instrument will be the Physical Condition Marker, which contains a series of elements to quantify and qualify the physical condition of the document, so that when it is requested by researchers, we know in what state it is and whether or not it is available for consultation. This process will save time and will give us the advantage of knowing the condition of the documents and the opportunity to decide what action to take regarding their preservation in case of deterioration.
Result of the physical condition assessment for access
Storage

Today there are 140 linear km of shelves
The National Archive currently has more than 100 km of documentation
What are the biggest challenges facing this conservation and restoration service

- Drawing up physical condition assessment criteria to ensure the integrity of the documents;
- Implementing good practices for assessing physical condition and access to documents
- Conservation intervention within 48 hours to ensure access to documents at risk
- Internal and external training
- Develop projects with internal and external specialists, but tailored to the needs of the document types
AVAILABILITY

https://digitarq.arquivos.pt/asearch
Archival Binding: our conservation solutions

In archive the sewing and binding systems follow common typologies. A careful observation reveals variations in terms of materials and execution methodologies, adapted by the “binder” according to the desired objective or his technical expertise.
There is a number of different typological entities with the common trait of a limp or semi-limp binding cover.
Our challenges

Allow access to information

Understand the specificities in the workmanship of documents and bindings

Reuse or not of existing materials

Adapt without significantly changing the binding system

Observe and record all details during the intervention

Evaluate the resistance of the original materials, Consider the use of different materials
Respect for the authenticity of documents

Interdisciplinarity

Analysis of the problem

Use of stable materials

Move towards efficient results
Preserving all the materials that we couldn’t use in the storage box with the document
- Authenticity;
- Respect for materials;
- Maintaining their function

Quarter leather binding, cardboard, hand painted paper cover.

Reinforcement of the paper cover with handmade paper, “Arte&Memoria” reproduction of 18th century European paper, cotton/ hemp, pH -7.3 – 8.4 Starch and 3% neutral PVA
Maintaining function – new materials

Eterno board
- 100% chlorine free
- Lignin free
- pH 7.5 – 9.5
- Acid free
- Alkaline buffer
- No optical brightening agent

Lamination with tengujo paper with kozo fibers, 8.6 g/m²

Tylose MH 300 P2 in ethanol solution / Klucel G 300mP in ethanol
Respect for materials - maintaining their function

Hidden interior wooden back plates

New cover with handmade paper “Arte&Memoria” reproduction of 18th century European paper, cotton/ hemp, pH 7.3 – 8.4

PT/ADSTB/NOT/1CNSTB04/001/0009
1674
Setúbal Archive
Evaluate the resistance of the original materials,
Consider the use of different materials

Santa Clara do Funchal, liv. 7 (PT/TT/CSCF/008/0007)
Date: 1700

Textile covers overlapping ancient parchment covers with card board.
Lamination with tengujo paper with kozo fibers, 8.6 g/m²
Tylose MH 300 P2 in ethanol solution / Klucel G 300mP in ethanol

Santa Clara do Funchal, liv. 7
(PT/TT/CSCF/008/0007)
Observe and record all details during the intervention
Authenticity

Adapt without significantly changing the binding system

Remake secondary binding, main binding
Is it possible?
-Yes

Santa Clara do Funchal, liv. 7
(PT/TT/CSCF/008/0007)
Evaluate the resistance of the original materials. Consider the use of different materials.

Santa Clara do Funchal, liv. 7
(PT/TT/CSCF/008/0007)

After careful cleaning

Reinforcement of the textile cover
Adapt without significantly changing the binding system
Understand the specificities in the workmanship of documents and bindings

Leather semi-limp binding

Núcleo Antigo nº 605 (PT/TTCRC/B/9/605) 1514
Lining of the covering with reused parchment and paper board

Núcleo Antigo nº 605 (PT/TTCRC/B/9/605)
Evaluate the resistance of the original materials

Ancient reuse of materials – lining with 14th century illuminated parchment

Removal of card pasteboard

Núcleo Antigo nº 605 (PT/TTCRC/B/9/605)
Constituição Política da República Portuguesa (PT/TT/CP/6) 1838

Removal of card pasteboard
Interdisciplinarity

Constituição Política da República Portuguesa (PT/TT/CP/6) 1838

Removal of card pasteboard
THANK YOU

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