

# THE PRODOMEA PHASING AND COMPATIBILITY INDICATORS AS TOOLS FOR THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF CONSERVATION INTERVENTIONS. ASSESSMENT AND VALIDATION IN THE SANTA CLARA-A-VELHA MONASTERY (COIMBRA, PORTUGAL)

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## Abstract

The PRODOMEA 8-phase model is a DSS that aims at tackling with the diversity of conditions, materials, methods and disciplines involved in monument conservation interventions by accompanying planners through conceiving, designing and execution phases, suggesting recommended actions and key actors for each phase. For most recommended actions, different options available should be considered in light of their physical-chemical, operational, socio-cultural and environmental compatibility towards the monument, which may be assessed via quantitative and semi-quantitative indicators, resulting in an overall (in)compatibility index, thus guiding decision making.

The Monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha (Coimbra, Portugal) today essentially corresponds to the early XIV century church and cloister, and to a rich collection of archaeological finds, that detail the nunnery life until it was abandoned to recurrent river flooding, in the late XVII century; ultimately, all but the church top was submersed for most of the XX century. The Monastery recently suffered an extensive conservation intervention, integrated in a larger requalification project that included the construction of a containment barrier against flooding, the exhaustive archaeological survey of the site and the construction of an interpretative centre.

The PRODOMEA approach was applied as a post-intervention exercise with a double objective: to validate the use of this methodology as an assessment tool, and as an instrument to extract knowledge on best practices and on actions to be avoided or modified in future interventions. This paper reports the main outcome of this exercise.

The exercise indicated that this DSS is suited to serve as a planning tool for complex interventions and, for Santa Clara-a-Velha, its using would have made a qualitative difference, namely by anticipating some of the problems that arose during execution. Attention is drawn to three illustrative examples: the apse rooftop and the cloister paving bricks and lithic remains to be remounted.

**Keywords:** PRODOMEA DSS, Santa Clara-a-Velha Monastery, conservation intervention planning

## 1. Introduction

Planning conservation interventions for the built heritage is a complex task that entails addressing the most diverse issues and calls for a confluence of several distinct areas of knowledge. Tackling this extension of subjects would benefit from a systematized approach, but this same extension poses some difficulties at conceiving a

sufficiently comprehensive methodology. On the other hand, the high specificity of heritage objects does not help the definition of systematic methodologies to guide the planning process, since these may prove too rigid for the necessary adaptations to each specific case.

One of the possible ways one may seek to contribute to a better planning process is to analyse and learn from past experiences. This paper tries to apply a recently proposed systematic methodology to the planning of the Monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha (MSCV) conservation intervention undertaken a few years ago, so as to assess the benefits and limitations of its application to a particularly complex case study.

## **1.1. The PRODOMEA DSS**

**(FULL TEXT in the Book of Proceedings)**

## **1.2. The Monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha: brief historical note**

### **2. Methodology**

### **3. Results**

### **4. Discussion**

#### **4.1 The PRODOMEA DSS**

#### **4.2 The Santa Clara-a-Velha Intervention Planning Process**

## **6. Conclusions**

The PRODOMEA DSS seems to be able to tackle complex conservation intervention planning processes; it is both comprehensive and adaptive enough to respond to the multiplicity of aspects that must be considered within the scope of a built heritage conservation intervention. Nevertheless, some actions are proposed to join the PRODOMEA DSS list, such as the *characterization of construction and artistic techniques*, the *definition of technical solutions* and the items related to the request-for-tender preparation.

Most probably, the application of this DSS to the planning of the MSCV intervention would have helped to prevent some inconsistencies and resolve beforehand some of the problems that were raised during conservation works.

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