

# VisigothicPal: project ViGOTHIC

[Continues from [‘VisigothicPal: when Visigothic script meets the DigiPal software’](#)]

Project ViGOTHIC is a two-year long project funded by the [European Commission, Horizon 2020](#). I applied for and received a [Marie Curie Individual Fellowship](#) to develop it. It **aims** to facilitate and refine **the study of Visigothic script and Visigothic script manuscripts**, to make the scientific community aware of the needs and possibilities of conducting research based on these sources, and to disseminate the research that has already been carried out in the field or that is currently in progress. In summary, **ViGOTHIC intends to open the study of Visigothic script to everyone interested in Manuscript Studies**. It is located at King’s College London, where I started working last month, and is being supervised by Prof. [Julia Crick](#) with [Peter Stokes](#) as co-Investigator. All of this means: I now work at King’s College London [[link](#) to my official page ], I will be merging Visigothic script and the DigiPal Software, and I will be doing very fancy stuff to help my field of research, Visigothic script, to move forward.

As you might be thinking, one cannot just put all things Visigothic within the database of the [DigiPal](#) software in a two-year long project. I needed to define a **corpus** with which to test DigiPal. I was first tempted to use my [hundreds of charters from the north-western Iberian Peninsula](#), to see if I could make sense of the thousands of cuttings I have, and continue my work on them. However, there was and still is a very big problem with the idea of uploading surrogates of charters, particularly from this corpus since they come from several different archives with their own ethos: copyright restrictions! Although I will eventually get clearance, in the meantime a different corpus was needed. Bearing in mind that I would more than likely have had the same problem with a corpus of charters coming from a different area, I decided to take a look at the **codices** instead.



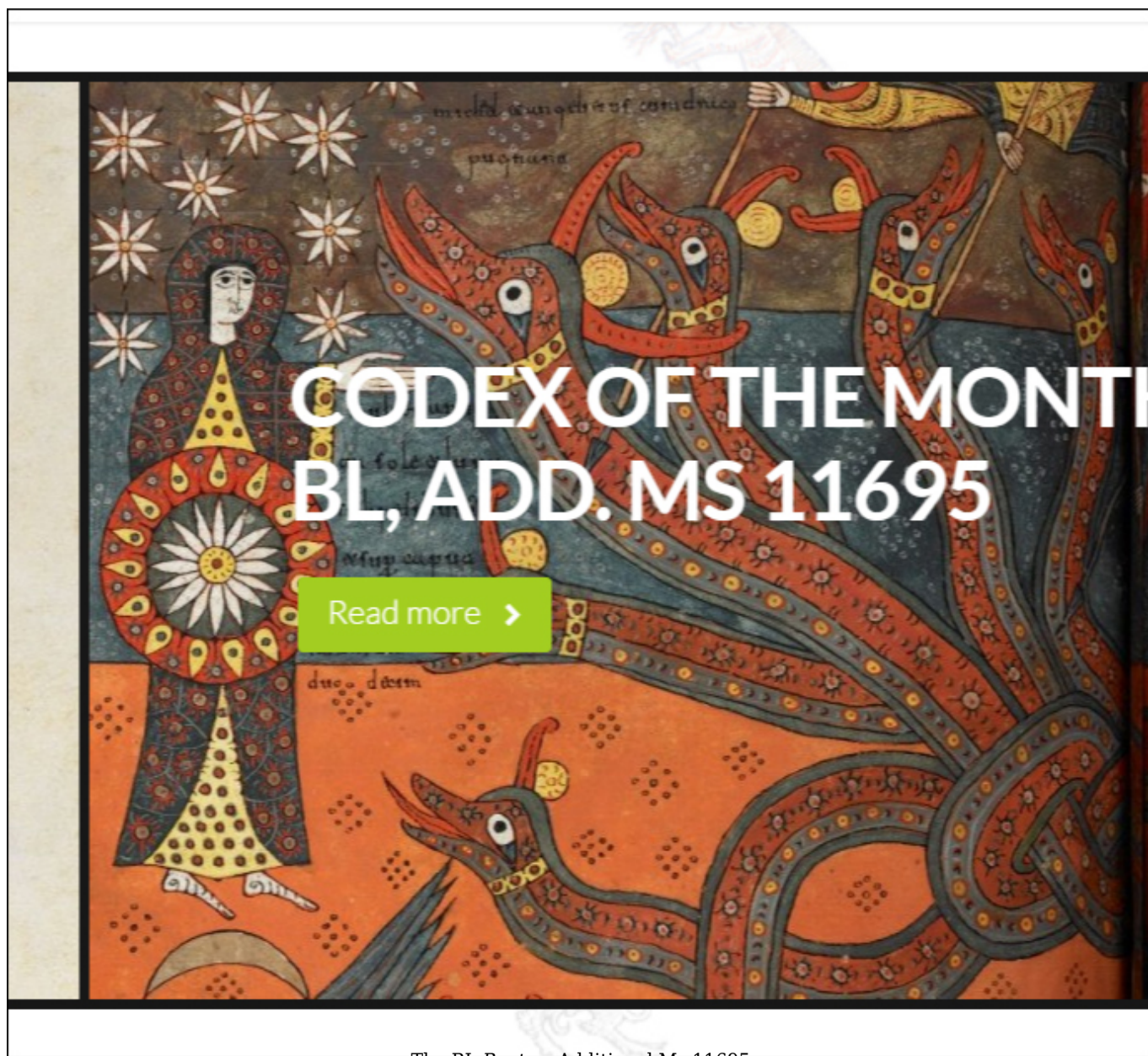
The screenshot displays the DigiPal interface. On the left, a thumbnail of a manuscript page is shown. The main area features a detailed metadata entry for 'Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, Emilianense 25 (F 194)'. The entry includes the following information:

- 946**
- Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, Emilianense 25 (F 194)**
- [10th c., a. 946]**
- CONTENTS:** Isidorus, *Etymologiae*.
- PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** Support: parchment. No. of leaves: 300 fols. (370 x 270 mm). Collation: 8 leaves/quire. Layout: 2 col./38 lin. (250 x 190 mm). Copyist/s: Eximeno. Illuminator/s: w/o. Script: minuscule Visigothic script.
- HISTORY:** Provenance/origin: area Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla (La Rioja). [Archive file](#).
- [Bibliography: Millares, *Corpus*, no 185.]**
- Digitized - Album.**

Below the metadata, a timeline interface shows various manuscript holdings across different libraries and institutions, with a search bar and a timeline axis from 800 to 1020.

Some time ago I was absorbed in the [online catalogue of Visigothic script codices](#) – I still am, but aim to do it better. All that knowledge and very few people work with these codices! In that catalogue, besides the problem (joy) of more codices continuing to appear but barely being looked at by anyone, the controversy of the attribution of dates and places of origin for some codices has also been highlighted [more about problems in the field [here](#)]. It is very difficult, or rather almost impossible, to establish these data with some certainty if the codex itself does not give any clues. Moreover, since we do not have a thorough **catalogue of Visigothic script characteristics by dates and production centres**... Hey! I would love to do that, it would be indeed useful. Every single one of the 350ish codices needs some care. Someone to study them thoroughly. And **would it not be awesome** if at the same time someone could create a **database** that other people could use? Imagine you have a codex written in Visigothic script and you do not know where and when it was

written. You could search by centres and dates within the database and do some comparisons with other dated and placed sources to see how yours fits! Of course, I am not going to do that in the next two years, rather I am going to see **if that idea is doable**.



The BL *Beatus*: Additional Ms 11695

From the **350ish list of codices**, some **50 provide dates and places of origin** through colophons, notes added by readers, and other documents copied on them. Of these 50, **25 are available online** [you can take a look at the list [here](#)], amongst them the one I chose: the [British Library Add. Ms 11695](#). This codex is not only one of the few that is digitised, but also **one of the most significant ones** from my point of view, given: (i) its production centre: it was copied in the Benedictine monastery of Silos - vip(lace); (ii) its content: it contains one of the most famous medieval bestsellers of the Iberian Peninsula: the Beatus - lovely Apocalypse; (iii) its date: it was copied in the late 11<sup>th</sup> - early 12<sup>th</sup> century, in a period when Visigothic script was heavily transforming itself because of the graphic influence of Caroline minuscule [you can read more on hybridization [here](#)]. Moreover, thanks to the Napoleonic visit to Spain, **the British Library has a considerable number of codices in Visigothic script from Silos**, some of them from the same date as the Beatus, thus allowing comparison among hands throughout the books. [I'm giving a talk next month at the KCL about this; [send me an email](#) for more info if interested]

Therefore, **project ViGOTHIC**, my project while I am here at King's College working with Julia Crick and the team who developed the DigiPal software in the first place, is going to **test digital tools applied to Visigothic script through the analysis of the Beatus**. I will: (i) apply and evaluate computer-assisted techniques (DigiPal) to the study of Visigothic script; (ii) determine the viability and benefits of computerised semi-automated analysis; (iii) establish a point of reference for computerised analysis of Visigothic script codices by providing accurate graphic foundations to foster historical research. Also, since I will be analysing the codex, I set some **extra objectives**: (i) to determine how many scribes intervened in the copy of the codex, their graphic characteristics and differences; (ii) to analyse the evolution of the script by comparing hands and, thus, the period in which each scribe worked; (iii) to study the cultural context that led to the creation of this composite codex (comparison with coeval manuscripts).

By the end of this **ViGOTHIC** project, if everything goes as planned and the software is as useful as I foresee it is going to be, it will be time to **think about the future**. Can we also add the other 24 dated, geographically placed, and digitised codices to the database? Can we merge this database with an improved version of the online catalogue? **Did I mention ViGOTHIC will probably have a full online counterpart (aka a website) named VisigothicPal?**

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