

Working title of the dissertation project:

**Material and Colour in Good King René's Tournament Book: A Study of the Illumination
Workshop in 15th-Century France**

Teresa Knapowska

teresa.knapowska@amu.edu.pl

Doctoral School of Humanities (Year 1), Institute of Art History
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland

1. Research Framework

The objective of my research project is to conduct innovative studies and, consequently, obtain new knowledge about the creation process of the cycle of miniatures in six copies of *Le Livre des tournois* [The Tournament Book] by king René d'Anjou, dating from the 15th century, preserved in Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France), Cambridge MA (Houghton Library), and the Czartoryski Library in Kraków (National Museum in Kraków). Particular attention will be paid to the in-depth study of the Polish manuscript, which has not yet been the subject of any detailed monographic research, although it occupies a central place within this corpus. This work will place it into a broader context, allowing the creation process of the various copies of this work to be traced. My focus on this topic aligns with Eastern European heritage, particularly as I am working with an under-researched object from a Polish collection.

The material analysis of the manuscripts, approached from a historical-artistic angle, will provide new knowledge about 15th-century painting techniques and reveal the links between materials, colours, and the iconography of these works. The results of the project will lead to a detailed characterisation of the work of illuminators in France in the second half of the 15th century, taking as a case study a major illumination workshop.

This project aligns with the growing field of heritage science. It will include, among other things, non-invasive physico-chemical analyses of the manuscripts.

2. Scientific Objective

This project aims to shed new light on the cycle of miniatures of the Tournament Book, attributed to the court painter of René d'Anjou, Barthélemy d'Eyck (1420-1472). This paper manuscript, designed as a tournament manual for princes and the aristocracy, contains 26 miniatures illustrating the text, which were faithfully reproduced in the 15th century, although each copy presents significant

1

variations (modifications of the palette, additions in the composition of scenes such as landscapes or secondary personnel, or differences in format and support, paper or parchment).

As I mentioned earlier, my main objective is to conduct a comprehensive characterization of the reproduction of miniatures in these manuscripts. To achieve this, several specific tasks are planned:

- I. Identification of the technical aspects involved in producing the manuscripts of the Tournament Book, drawing from available conservation documentation, and emphasising the key challenges faced by researchers.
- II. Conducting interdisciplinary physico-chemical analyses on the six manuscripts. These analyses will identify the techniques and materials used, enabling the reconstruction of the creation process from the preparation of the support to the execution of the miniatures. The results will characterise the 15th-century illumination workshops working on the Tournament Book, possibly specifying their location, the sources of supply of materials, and evaluating the production costs.
- III. Exploring unpublished archival sources to shed light on the organisation of miniature workshops and the work of artists at the court of king René. This research will focus on analysing accounts, tax registers, inventories, correspondence, and wills.
- IV. Analysis of the symbolism of the materials and colours used in the miniatures. This task will aim to determine whether the choice of pigments was random or carried a deeper symbolic meaning. A comparison of the six manuscripts will evaluate the relationship between materials and iconography, considering the political and economic contexts of the workshops. This aspect is part of recent research on the relationships between iconography, symbolism, and material aspects of manuscript painting, in connection with the work of Charlotte Denoël, who is my PhD supervisor.