

## **THE PRIVATE CIRCLE OF AN UNEXPECTED KING: THE FIRST MANIFESTATIONS OF FAVOURITISM IN THE REIGN OF MANUEL I OF PORTUGAL<sup>1</sup>**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Manuel I of Portugal (reign. 1495-1521) reached the throne unexpectedly, similar to the way he had surprisingly become duke. Therefore, his early life was not punctuated by the usual patronage and court dynamics observed around crown princes. His path to the throne was met with resistance, but also saw the emergence of a circle rallying around him.

This article identifies the members of Manuel's private circle at the moment he became king. Additionally, we analyse his entourage to identify his favourites. For this, we highlight an episode in the early years of his reign, his private pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1502. An analysis of his choice of companions for the journey is one of the examples illustrating how throughout his reign Manuel tried to reach a balance between factions, favouring long-time servants and promoting new close relationships in order to strengthen royal power.

**KEY WORDS:** Portuguese crown; Duchy of Viséu-Beja; Manuel I; private circle; favouritism.

## **LA PRIVANZA DE UN REY INESPERADO: LAS PRIMERAS EXPRESIONES DE FAVORITISMO DE D. MANUEL I DE PORTUGAL**

### **RESUMEN**

Manuel I de Portugal (reinado 1495-1521) llegó al trono inesperadamente, al igual que antes se había convertido en duque sorprendentemente. Así, sus primeros años no estuvieron marcados por la habitual dinámica de relaciones observada en torno a los príncipes herederos. Su camino hacia el trono encontró resistencia, pero también vio surgir una facción en su apoyo.

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Este artículo identifica a los miembros del círculo privado de Manuel cuando se convirtió en rey. Además, analizamos su entorno para identificar a sus favoritos. Para ello, destacamos un episodio de los primeros años del reinado, su peregrinación privada a Santiago de Compostela en 1502. El análisis de la elección de sus acompañantes es uno de los ejemplos que ilustran cómo a lo largo de su reinado Manuel trató de alcanzar un equilibrio entre facciones, favoreciendo a los servidores de siempre y promoviendo nuevas relaciones estrechas para fortalecer el poder real.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Corona portuguesa; ducado de Viseu-Beja; D. Manuel I.; privanza; favoritismo.

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The accession of King Manuel I of Portugal, in 1495, can be understood as a re-foundation of the Avis dynasty<sup>2</sup>, founded by King João I, Manuel's great-grandfather, some hundred years before, through a war fought to maintain the kingdom's independence from Castile.

Manuel's ascent to the throne is considered by historians as a turning point for Portugal. His twenty-six-year reign was marked by deep internal reforms and the beginnings of an overseas empire on a global scale. Several Atlantic archipelagos such as Madeira and Azores had Portuguese settlements and were well on their way into being incorporated into the Portuguese Crown and more settlements started to crop up in north-western and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Portuguese armadas arrived in Asia and Brazil, where intervention was carried out in the name of the crown. This made for a period of unusual state growth and complexity of its bureaucracy, during which an increasing number of Crown supporters were required to sustain the creation of new, complex structures of interaction between the Portuguese political centre and its peripheries<sup>3</sup>.

This sentiment of change associated with the enthronement of Manuel I was also felt and voiced out by contemporaries. A close read of *histoire événementielle* shows us how an extraordinary sequence of events led to the breaking of the direct line of monarchical succession and cemented the feeling of exception around the reign of Manuel I. Indeed, in 1495, for the first time in the history of Portugal, the royal insignia were handed over to someone whose immediate progenitor had not been the sovereign of the country, or even held the status of crown prince<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, *D. Manuel I 1469-1521. Um Príncipe do Renascimento* (S.l.: Círculo de Leitores, 2005), 100.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem; Jean Aubin, *Le Latin et l'Astrolabe*, vol. III, *Études Inédites sur le Règne de D. Manuel I 1495-1521*, ed. Maria da Conceição Flores, Luís Filipe F. R. Thomaz and Françoise Aubin (Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 2006); A. R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, vol. II (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> As pointed out above, João I (k. 1385-1415) gave origin to a new dynasty, that of Avis, but it is worth noting that he was an illegitimate son of King Pedro I (k. 1357-1367). It was the death of João

## FROM «BOY WITH NO TITLES» TO KING OF PORTUGAL

There is no doubt that Manuel had royal blood. His father was Fernando, the second duke of Viseu, which also meant that Manuel was the grandson of a king, Duarte (k. 1433-1438); the nephew of another, Afonso V (k. 1438-1481); and a first cousin of his predecessor, João II (k. 1481-1495). This family line is enough to understand the skewed way through which Manuel I ascended the throne; to a certain extent, comparable to other contexts in Renaissance Europe, for example the cases of Juana I of Castile, François I of France, and Elizabeth I of England<sup>5</sup>. The fact that circumstances in Portugal were much more intricate and surprising did not go unnoticed by the king's contemporaries. Duarte Galvão, a former secretary to Afonso V, who was made councillor and diplomat by João II, in a prologue to a chronicle of the kingdom's founder addressed to the king Manuel I in around 1502, declared these circumstances and their exception had been God's design<sup>6</sup>. Other chroniclers such as Garcia de Resende and Damião de Góis followed suit, also emphasising the successive deaths of potential heirs to the throne, only differing in their telling of events by the number of lives lost<sup>7</sup>. These narratives served to highlight Manuel's destiny as special.

In 1469, when Manuel was born, and in subsequent years, his position in the line of succession meant that he was very far from the throne. Afonso V was the king at the time, and João his son and heir. João, in turn, fathered a male heir in 1475, who was given his grandfather's name. The strong religious beliefs Afonso's daughter, Princess Joana, forced her father to accept her dedication to life in a convent, where she lived from 1471 up until her death in 1490. In the event of a collapse of the king's direct bloodline, the succession of the throne would fall onto the collateral line of the Duchy of Viseu. The first duke, Fernando, was Afonso V's younger brother who died in 1470. He was survived by his wife and first cousin Beatriz, and by six sons and three daughters, one of whom, Leonor, married the future king João II<sup>8</sup>. Manuel was the youngest son and the youngest member of the family.

Thus, for a long time Manuel was not expected to become king. For years, his life was limited to being a «boy with no title», as documents at the time suggestively

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half-brother Fernando (k. 1367-1383) with no heir apart from his daughter Beatriz (who married the Castilian king Juan I) that drove João to dispute the Portuguese throne, which he eventually won.

<sup>5</sup> Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Juana la Loca, la Cautiva de Tordesillas* (Madrid: Espasa, 2001), 15, 51, 89-93; Cédric Michon, *François Ier. Les Femmes, le Pouvoir et la Guerre* (Paris: Belin, 2015), 15-16; Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I & Her Circle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13-42.

<sup>6</sup> Duarte Galvão, *Chronica do Muito Alto, e Muito Esclarecido Príncipe D. Affonso Henriques* (Lisbon: Oficina Ferreyriana, 1726), xvi.

<sup>7</sup> Garcia de Resende, "Miscelânea", in *Livro das Obras de Garcia de Resende*, ed. Evelina Verdelho (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1994), 547; Damião de Góis, *Crónica do Felicíssimo Rei D. Manuel*, vol. I (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1949), 11-12.

<sup>8</sup> Her sister Isabel became the duchess of Braganza by marriage to Fernando, the third duke. The remaining sister Catarina, passed away very young. Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 10.

name him<sup>9</sup>, having absolutely no guarantee that he would even own land or reach a prominent official responsibility<sup>10</sup>.

Although it happened slowly over time, Manuel got closer and closer to the throne, gaining political and social importance. The premature death of the majority of his brothers was a determining factor<sup>11</sup>. Eventually Manuel ended up with only one male sibling, eldest Diogo, fourth duke of Viseu. Caught up in a conspiracy against João II, the duke died at the hands of the king himself in 1484. A magnanimous João allowed Manuel, who was only fifteen years old, to take possession of the House and title as it fell vacant, although the symbolic foundation of the House was transferred from Viseu to Beja, in order to avoid connotations with the traitor<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, Manuel's fortunes improved and by then he was second in line to the throne, after Afonso, João II's only legitimate son. It was the prince's untimely death in 1491, from a riding accident, that finally placed the duke of Beja centre stage. Manuel became the heir to the throne, but only presumptively. In fact, the monarch endeavoured to refuse his cousin's official status as heir to the throne, in order to benefit Jorge de Lencastre, his illegitimate son. In his final four years, João II avoided his responsibility of summoning the *cortes* (a parliamentary body) to swear his cousin and brother-in-law in as his successor, contrary to the practice in Portugal at the time; a practice that had been followed previously in 1476 on behalf of the late Prince Afonso<sup>13</sup>. João II only named Manuel his heir in a will just before his death, weakened by his illness and pressured by a powerful group of court members and political allies. Among them were his own wife (and Manuel's sister), Queen Leonor, some members of the Portuguese aristocracy, and the Catholic Monarchs of Castile and Aragon<sup>14</sup>.

In the end, the supporters of João II and his illegitimate son Jorge abstained from directly contesting the ascension and crowning of Manuel as king of Portugal, which took place on 27 October 1495. Nevertheless, signs of discontent were displayed every now and then<sup>15</sup>. The controversy of the succession thus left marks on the memory of the protagonists, forcing the new sovereign to develop the ability, out of caution, to present himself as an integrating and conciliatory agent among the elites

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<sup>9</sup> Álvaro Lopes de Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos (1438-1489). Códice 443 da Coleção Pombalina na B.N.L.*, ed. Anastásia Mestrinho Salgado and Abílio José Salgado (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1983), 153.

<sup>10</sup> In the early 1480s, the *Infanta* Beatriz interceded with João II that Manuel be trusted with the great mastership of the Order of Avis, a project that had never come to fruition: Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 54.

<sup>11</sup> Two of them, Simão and Dinis, died before Manuel was born. João, who became the third duke of Viseu, died in around 1472, and Duarte four years later: *Ibidem*, 25, 29, 41, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 14.

<sup>13</sup> José Adelino Maltez, “O Estado e as Instituições”, in *Nova História de Portugal*, dir. Joel Serrão and A. H. de Oliveira Marques, vol. V, *Portugal do Renascimento à Crise Dinástica*, coord. João José Alves Dias (Lisbon, Editorial Presença, 1998), 387-389.

<sup>14</sup> Jean Aubin, *Le Latin et L’Astrolabe*, vol. II, *Recherches sur le Portugal de la Renaissance, son Expansion en Asie et les Relations Internationales* (Lisbon – Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian – CNCDP, 2000), 49-82.

<sup>15</sup> João José Alves Dias, Isabel M. R. Mendes Drumond Braga and Paulo Drumond Braga, “A Conjuntura”, in *Nova História de Portugal*, dir. Joel Serrão and A. H. de Oliveira Marques, vol. V, *Portugal do Renascimento à Crise Dinástica*, coord. João José Alves Dias (Lisbon, Editorial Presença, 1998), 713.

and opposing factions, whilst working towards a centripetal exercise of power<sup>16</sup>. It is noteworthy that, after more than sixty years, when writing his chronicle of Manuel's reign, Damião de Góis still felt the need to scrutinize the legal rights that had assisted the duke of Beja in wielding the sceptre, echoing the intensity of the old dispute<sup>17</sup>.

## KINSHIP AND SERVICE AS CORNERSTONES OF MANUEL'S PRIVATE CIRCLE

Inasmuch as Manuel was far from being a key figure of the kingdom throughout his childhood and early youth, he was also left out of the usual courtly schemes. This changed naturally in 1484, from the moment he became duke of Beja, as he started to dispense patronage based on the material and symbolic resources he controlled, as well as acting as a mediator before the Crown<sup>18</sup>. After the Duchy of Braganza became extinct in the previous year, following the first conspiracy plot against João II<sup>19</sup>, the Duchy of Viseu-Beja (already the wealthiest and more prestigious in the kingdom<sup>20</sup>) came to benefit from a truly unique position within Portuguese aristocracy.

For some time, however, the young duke was limited to being Prince Afonso's successor, and even after the latter disappeared, he lived in prolonged uncertainty about the destiny that awaited him. That is to say, Manuel escaped the general rule, by which European dynastic states functioned, by which a prince in line for the throne would turn into a gravitational centre, around which courtiers and factions positioned themselves. These would then become trusted members at court, benefitting from the king's favour and in turn influencing the king's decision-making processes, following the coronation<sup>21</sup>.

Although Manuel I had not been in such a position, his court and rule were not free from favourites emerging, parties forming, and confrontations of a political nature happening. First, the breakdown of the direct line of succession and then Manuel's own ambitions with imperialist and messianic underpinnings came into being as

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<sup>16</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*; Aubin, *Le Latin*, vol. III, 12-14; João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Teresa Lacerda, "Os Comandos das Armadas da Índia e as Ordens Militares no Reinado de D. Manuel I", in *As Ordens Militares e as Ordens de Cavalaria entre o Ocidente e o Oriente*, coord. Isabel Cristina F. Fernandes (Palmela: Município de Palmela, 2009), 479-487.

<sup>17</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 61-63.

<sup>19</sup> João II's reign had been shaken by deep conflict between the monarch and some members of the aristocracy. This led to the arrest and execution, in 1483, of Fernando, third duke of Braganza, as well as the departure of his brothers for Castile, namely, João, marquis of Montemor, Afonso, count of Faro, and Álvaro, chancellor of the kingdom: Humberto Baquero Moreno, *A Conspiração Contra D. João II: o Julgamento do Duque de Bragança* (Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1970). These figures were tied to the House of Viseu-Beja by strong bonds of kinship, which had been built through both consanguinity and affinity.

<sup>20</sup> Mafalda Soares da Cunha, *Linagem, Parentesco e Poder: A Casa de Bragança (1384-1483)* (Lisbon: Fundação da Casa de Bragança, 1990), 77.

<sup>21</sup> José Martínez Millán, "De la Muerte del Príncipe Juan al Fallecimiento de Felipe el Hermoso (1497-1506)", in *La Corte de Carlos V*, dir. José Martínez Millán, vol. I, *Corte y Gobierno*, coord. José Martínez Millán and Carlos Javier de Carlos Morales (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Conmemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000), 60.

Portuguese power expanded overseas under his reign. This would lead to the reconfiguration of the Avis dynasty and the kingdom, but also to the emergence of separate factions<sup>22</sup>. Manuel I had to promote new relationships and manage delicate balances and interests associated with persons and groups that were less complacent with him. He carefully refrained from causing real misfortune among João II's former followers and even attracted some of them to his own entourage<sup>23</sup>. A prime example of this latter tactic was his decision to summon and include some of the supporters of D. Jorge de Lencastre, the illegitimate son of João II, in his overseas expansion politics<sup>24</sup>. At the same time, as a superior source of grace and benefiting from growing wealth provided by the activities overseas, the monarch took to rewarding old allegiances and friendships, as detailed below.

In these terms, the way in which Manuel I's court operated validates the historiographical thinking that the royal palaces of the modern period were contact areas between sovereigns and noblemen, where consensus was sought<sup>25</sup>, contrary to Norbert Elias and the idea of nobility submissive to the king<sup>26</sup>. It is by virtue of this peculiar picture that it is important both to analyse how King Manuel I structured his relationships and to uncover the people who earned his personal and political trust.

Manuel I's association with different social circles are recognizable throughout his reign. It was from these groups that his circle of closest connections emerged, people who, through their proximity to the king, sought to influence him somehow. One group that stood out from the beginning was the monarch's immediate family, notably among them the women, all of them widows, who in some ways led the family and influenced decision-making. The most influential person was certainly Manuel's mother, the *Infanta* Beatriz of Portugal, who had been the head of the wealthy and powerful House of Viseu until her duke sons came of age. She, along with her niece Isabel I of Castile, were also key figures in the peace negotiations that in 1479 put an end to a four-year war between the Portuguese and Castilian crowns<sup>27</sup>. Manuel's sister,

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<sup>22</sup> Luís Filipe Thomaz, "Factions, Interests and Messianism: the Politics of Portuguese Expansion in the East, 1500-1521", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 28/1 (1991): 97-109.

<sup>23</sup> Aubin, *Le Latin*, vol. III, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Costa and Lacerda, "Os Comandos", 483-486.

<sup>25</sup> Ronald G. Asch, "Introduction: Court and Household from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450-1650*, ed. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: The German Historical Institute London – Oxford University Press, 1991), 3; Rita Costa Gomes, "A Curialização da Nobreza", in *O Tempo de Vasco da Gama*, dir. Diogo Ramada Curto (S.l.: CNCDP – Difel, 1998), 180; José Martínez Millán, "La Historiografía sobre Carlos V", in *La Corte de Carlos V*, dir. José Martínez Millán, vol. I, *Corte y Gobierno*, coord. José Martínez Millán and Carlos Javier de Carlos Morales (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Commemoración de los Centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2000), 37, 39.

<sup>26</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983). For an in-depth critique of Elias's proposals see Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995).

<sup>27</sup> Maria Barreto Dávila, "Quotidiano e Jogos de Poder nas Terçarias de Moura", in *Reinas e Infantas en los Reinos Medievales Ibéricos. Contribuciones para su Estudio*, coord. Silvia Cernadas Martínez and Miguel García-Fernández (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Compostela, 2018), 375-392; Maria Barreto Dávila, *A Mulher dos Descobrimentos. D. Beatriz, Infanta de Portugal* (Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2019), 151-165.



Leonor, João II's widowed queen and an uncompromising defender of Manuel's right to the throne<sup>28</sup>, was also a central figure of the king's inner circle. The final member of the group was their sister, Isabel, widow of the third duke of Braganza, who had been sentenced to death for alleged treason against João II. She guaranteed the safety of their small children by sending them into exile in the neighbouring kingdom<sup>29</sup>.

The family bonds between the members of the group created an environment in which feelings of attachment developed naturally among them, already advocated by theologians and juridical thought at the time<sup>30</sup>. The fatalities that befell them, either personal or political, reinforced the affection between the members, as well as their group spirit. This much is shown by day-to-day life events, once things grew calmer and Manuel I had been crowned king. The role played in courtly life by the king's mother and sisters was to be expected and therefore is not even particularly telling<sup>31</sup>. His readiness in joining Beatriz and Leonor on his return to Lisbon after an official visit to Castile and Aragon in 1498<sup>32</sup>, as well as their being chosen as godmothers of João, his son and heir, in 1502<sup>33</sup>, seem to result from choices in which his heart spoke louder than protocol. It may be a trivial detail, but it is important to note that Beatriz was busy with the tender task of embroidering a shirt for her son in September 1506, at the time of her death<sup>34</sup>.

The strength of the ties that united the female trio and the novice monarch had political effects, validating the notion that «there was no such thing as mere friendship or family affection in the early modern court»<sup>35</sup>. This became evident just six months after Manuel's enthronement, when in Lent of 1496 the four individuals gathered in Setúbal to discuss «many things of substance»<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *De Princesa a Rainha-Velha. D. Leonor de Lencastre* (S.l., Círculo de Leitores, 2011), 152-162.

<sup>29</sup> Antonio de la Torre, “Los Hijos del Duque de Braganza en Castilla (1483-1496)”, *Hidalguía* 10 (1962): 161-168; Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *De Princesa*, 229-231.

<sup>30</sup> Pedro Cardim, “Amor e Amizade na Cultura Política dos Séculos XVI e XVII”, *Lusitania Sacra* 2nd. Series, 11 (1999): 23-29.

<sup>31</sup> Diplomatic documentation from the period offers the best examples of court life at the beginning of Manuel's reign, including explicit references to the central role played by his mother and sisters. Antonio de la Torre and Luis Suárez Fernández (ed.), *Documentos referentes a las relaciones con Portugal durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, 3 vols. (Valladolid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1958-1963), vol. III, 66-68, 77, 79-80.

<sup>32</sup> Biblioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon), *Apontamentos de Fernão de Pina*: codex 51-V-69, 209.

<sup>33</sup> Biblioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon), *Apontamentos de Fernão de Pina*: codex 51-V-69, 211. Manuel married Isabel, eldest daughter of the Catholic Monarchs Fernando and Isabel, who died at childbirth in Zaragoza in 1498, when Manuel and Isabel were on a tour to be confirmed as heirs of Castille and Aragon. The couple's only child Miguel da Paz, who was the heir to the Iberian kingdoms, remained with his maternal grandparents until his early death in 1500. Manuel then married Maria, sister of Isabel, who gave birth to the future king João III in 1502. The latter ascended the Portuguese throne in 1521.

<sup>34</sup> Dávila, *A Mulher*, 24.

<sup>35</sup> M. J. Rodríguez-Salgado, “The Court of Philip II of Spain”, in *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450-1650*, ed. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: The German Historical Institute London – Oxford University Press, 1991), 206.

<sup>36</sup> Biblioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon), *Apontamentos de Fernão de Pina*: codex 51-V-69, 205 (all translations from primary sources are mine).

A close read of the documentation emanating from the Royal Chancellery at precisely this period shows a flurry of letters granting and confirming privileges for the widow queen. The inner circle was concerned with the consolidation of Leonor's material well-being and even her symbolic status as the former Queen consort. Most notably, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of March, Leonor saw the confirmation of several permanent revenues of large sums<sup>37</sup>. More importantly, she secured custody of the revenues of Óbidos, Sintra, Alenquer, Aldeia Galega e Aldeia Gavinha<sup>38</sup>, as well as full jurisdiction over the same towns<sup>39</sup>. Traditionally, the Portuguese Queen consorts had also administered these towns. Surely, the women in the king's family were not unaware that Manuel's future queen could contest these gifts and become a threat to their interests. Thus they were securing Leonor's position and standing.

Another pressing issue, not least to the duchess Isabel, was the return to Portugal of their relatives who had been exiled to Castile during the reign of João II, and the reconstitution of their households. The subject still concerned them in the following winter, during their stay in Alenquer<sup>40</sup>. Certainly, this was linked to the possibility of obtaining aggrandizement and benefits but these motivations became intertwined with Manuel I's own political interests. The women were no strangers to politics. Their manoeuvres are consistent with previous political interventions, in particular by Beatriz, who sat in the royal council during the war between Castile and Portugal<sup>41</sup>. Leonor had also tried to intervene once, without success, at a meeting led by her husband, demonstrating her willingness to intervene in decision-making at the central level<sup>42</sup>.

Leonor became the queen dowager during her brother's reign. An informant from the Republic of Venice, who was stationed in Lisbon between 1504 and 1506, recorded that the king always asked for his sister's opinion along with the opinions of the most important court figures<sup>43</sup>. The depth of the relationship and understanding between the two was already apparent in 1498, when Manuel I moved to Castile and

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<sup>37</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 43, 57, 60v-61.

<sup>38</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 43, 57-57v, 60-60v.

<sup>39</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 43, 57v-59.

<sup>40</sup> Biblioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon), *Apontamentos de Fernão de Pina*: codex 51-V-69, 206. The return of the exiled, or their descendants, to Portugal and the restoration of the respective houses was important to Manuel I, as they were a part of his family and therefore facilitated the rebalancing of forces within the high nobility, endowing him with important allies in the initial phase of his government: Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 77-79.

<sup>41</sup> Dávila, *A Mulher*, 127.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, 127-128.

<sup>43</sup> Lunardo da Cà Masser was his name: Prospero Peragallo (ed.), "Carta de el-Rei D. Manuel ao Rei Catholico Narrando-lhe as Viagens Portuguezas à India desde 1500 até 1505 (seguem em appendice a Relação análoga de Lunardo Cha Masser e dois documentos de Cantino e Pasqualigo)", *Memorias da Academia Real das Sciencias de Lisboa – Classe de Sciencias Moraes, Políticas e Bellas-Lettras* new series, VII-2 (1892): 93. There is another version of Cà Masser's report published in English: D. S. Chambers, "Venetian perceptions of Portugal, c. 1500. Appendix. Lunardo Masser's Description of Portugal (1504-6)", in *Cultural Links Between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance*, ed. K. J. P. Lowe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30-43.



Aragon, leaving his sister as regent of Portugal<sup>44</sup>. Once again in 1500, Leonor demonstrated her political acumen by orchestrating the marriage between Jorge de Lencastre, her husband's illegitimate son, with Beatriz de Vilhena, daughter of Álvaro de Portugal and a member of the Braganza house, whom she had brought up. This alliance would help secure Manuel's grip on the throne and control his political rival, and shows a perfect harmony between the members of the royal family<sup>45</sup>.

From the beginning of his reign, Manuel bestowed numerous privileges and rewards to his sisters and mother, some of singular nature. The latter, in particular, personally requested and obtained the *direito de padroado* for certain churches, meaning she had full administration of those establishments, replacing Church authority<sup>46</sup>. She also obtained privileges to the residents and hospital of Caldas, an establishment she herself founded<sup>47</sup>. It is noteworthy that the majority of these rewards were of a patrimonial nature, whether revenues or material goods<sup>48</sup>. The Royal Chancellery also records several rewards to servants and retinue's members of the female trio, and in several cases at their personal request<sup>49</sup>. As such, they took advantage of their close relationship with the king to act as brokers, thus forwarding their own standing and consolidating their patronage and influence.

Manuel I's generosity towards his immediate female relatives resulted in a double gain. On the one hand, the king was morally indebted to these women for their protection and active role in defending his right of succession. By granting them revenues, rents and other gifts he was repaying them for their role in his elevation to the throne, as he himself had been the recipient of similar prize. But his generosity also came out of genuine care and affection, as Manuel's will in 1517 attests. In it, the king entreats his heir and successor to continue supporting Leonor and Isabel, as by that time his mother Beatriz was no longer alive. He invokes Leonor "for the great debt I owe her and for the great and special love I hold for her". A similar argument is used for his other sister Isabel, duchess of Braganza, whom he claims should be cared for given "[his] great love and her virtues"<sup>50</sup>. The image of the monarch as someone susceptible to the influence of forceful women seems a constant in Manuel's life and his behaviour towards his second wife Maria was no different and perhaps better illustrates his character. Queen Maria, his second consort from 1500 to 1517, daughter of the kings of Castile and Aragon, gained a prominent role as the king's advisor and

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<sup>44</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 31, 104; Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *De Princesa*, 178-180.

<sup>45</sup> Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *De Princesa*, 186-187.

<sup>46</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 32, 113.

<sup>47</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 28, 55-55v, 63.

<sup>48</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 24, 64; book 28, 66, 97-97v; book 29, 120v; book 34, 76-78; book 40, 86; book 41, 87; book 43, 58v, 59v-60.

<sup>49</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon), *Chancelaria de D. Manuel I*: book 1, 9v; book 7, 25-25v; book 15, 163; book 24, 146v; book 28, 75; book 29, 120; book 32, 113-113v; book 33, 92v; book 38, 5.

<sup>50</sup> "Testamento de el-rei D. Manuel", in *Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, org. Miguel Jasmins Rodrigues, vol. VI, digital edition on CD-ROM (S.l.: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 2009), 126-127.

companion. Possibly inspired by her own mother, the charismatic Isabel, Maria successfully exerted her influence with her husband in matters of governance<sup>51</sup>.

Outside this immediate circle, others also enjoyed the care and affection of the king. Above all were the servants of the House of Viseu-Beja. The strength of the bond between Manuel and those who had lived in close proximity to him before he became king was widely known. This can be illustrated with a statement by Damião de Góis: «He was so considerate in paying for services that he often asked if there were any servants of his who he might have forgotten, who were not satisfied, especially those who had served him before he became king»<sup>52</sup>.

It is pertinent, at this point, to ponder on the usefulness of the House of Viseu-Beja to Manuel I. Royal demonstrations of protection and affection in the context of a vertical relationship cannot be taken separately from the benefits that came with them<sup>53</sup>. The monarch made a point of promoting the transition of many of his former dependents into the royal household<sup>54</sup>. Arguably, this fitted well with the aristocracy rewarding system but, pragmatically, also allowed him to profit from the services of people to whom he was well acquainted with. However, given the circumstances that surrounded the king's accession, the restructuring of the royal household around Manuel's faithful servants, does not seem like mere rewarding for support. The demands arising from state reform as well as overseas commerce and warfare justify the king's continued patronage of a growing number of members of the royal household, especially given the high profits obtained in the enterprise<sup>55</sup>. Despite these factors, if the king was shrewd enough to lay the foundations of his reign by devising compromise solutions, he was also clever enough to establish support networks that would allow him to maintain a position of strength.

The most cherished bonds by Manuel I were with the people who, from a very young age, had attended to his personal care and education: his wet nurse Justa Rodrigues, the master (*mestre*) Francisco Fernandes, and his guardian (*aió*) Diogo da Silva de Meneses. The latter was the beneficiary of the most impressive promotion known to a vassal of the House of Viseu-Beja. In 1496, in addition to having named Diogo Meneses as private secretary (*escrivão da puridade*), meaning he assisted the king

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<sup>51</sup> Alexandra Pelúcia, “A Baronia do Alvito e a Expansão Manuelina no Oriente ou a Reacção Organizada à Política Imperialista”, in *A Alta Nobreza e a Fundação do Estado da Índia*, ed. João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Vítor Luís Gaspar Rodrigues (Lisbon: UNL/CHAM – IICT/CEHA, 2004), 290-292; Isabel dos Guimarães Sá and Michel Combet, *Rainhas Consortes de D. Manuel I. Isabel de Castela, Maria de Castela, Leonor de Áustria* (S.l.: Círculo de Leitores, 2012), 124-163.

<sup>52</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 227.

<sup>53</sup> On the topic of patronage see the following key works: Pedro Cardim, “Amor”: 21-57; Sharon Kettering, *Patronage in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century France*, (Aldershot – Burlington: Ashgate, 2002); José María Imízcoz Beunza and Andoni Artola Renedo (coords.), *Patronazgo y Clientelismo en la Monarquía Hispánica (Siglos XVI-XIX)* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2016).

<sup>54</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 74.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, 101.

in private affairs and delicate government issues, the former pupil also granted him the title of first count of Portalegre<sup>56</sup>.

The children of noble families who were subordinated to the House of Viséu-Beja experienced uncommon life trajectories. Their importance grew alongside Manuel's as they became his companions, although it should be emphasized that this began when he was far from envisaging his rise to the dukedom of Beja, much less to the royal throne. In light of this context, it seems plausible that affection grew and developed naturally between them, free of excessive constraints dictated by social hierarchy. Nonetheless, tangible advantages came from the friendship as they reached positions as senior officers, first for the young duke and later for the unlikely monarch.

Among these people was Lourenço de Brito, son of Artur de Brito, castellan (*alcaide-mor*) of Beja, who was entrusted with the task of serving Manuel as chief cupbearer (*copeiro-mor*) before and after the year 1495. Other signs indicate the existence of a personal relationship between them. Manuel, as duke, chose him as one of six knights who accompanied him in a tournament held in Évora in 1490 on the occasion of Prince Afonso's wedding, and fifteen years later, he was given command of one of the ships in the fleet sailing to India. On the same year of 1505, he was made captain of Cannanore, one of the recently established fortresses on the coast of Malabar<sup>57</sup>. At the time, Francisco de Almeida, newly appointed first viceroy of India, expressed his perception of Brito as someone familiar with the king's secrets<sup>58</sup>. Given that Almeida was not known as a keen enthusiast of the king's overseas politics, one may think Lourenço de Brito had been deliberately placed into the orbit of the viceroy to act as an observer and royal informer.

Also under the aegis of Manuel in the Évora tournament was his brother through milk kinship, João Manuel, the son of his wet nurse Justa Rodrigues<sup>59</sup>. The status of milk kin to the «boy with no title» – who, by chance, rose to the position of duke and king – gave João a parallel experience of social and political ascension. Their day-to-day proximity, age similarity and affection between Manuel and João meant that the latter was granted the office of great chamberlain (*camareiro-mor*), initially in the duchy and subsequently in the royal court. As would be expected, complete supervision over his master's personal quarters and daily life reinforced the position in which the friendship born between the two had placed João Manuel from a young age: the one of follower and confidant.

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<sup>56</sup> Silvina Silvério and Marisa Pires Marques, “Diogo da Silva de Meneses e a Política Régia Manuelina”, in *A Alta Nobreza e a Fundação do Estado da Índia*, ed. João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Vítor Luís Gaspar Rodrigues (Lisbon: UNL/CHAM – IICT/CEHA, 2004), 245-249.

<sup>57</sup> João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Vítor Luís Gaspar Rodrigues, “Lourenço de Brito, First Captain of Cannanore, and His Asian Career”, in *Winds of Spices: Essays on Portuguese Establishments in Medieval India with Special Reference to Cannanore*, ed. K. S. Mathew and Joy Varkey (Tellichery: IRISH, 2006), 21-23.

<sup>58</sup> Gaspar Correia, *Crónicas de D. Manuel e de D. João III (até 1533)*, ed. José Pereira da Costa (Lisbon: Academia das Ciências, 1992), 38.

<sup>59</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 50; Anselmo Braamcamp Freire, *Brasões da Sala de Sintra*, vol. III (S.l.: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 1996), 144.

One could conclude that the Great Chamberlain João Manuel was the king's favourite when characterizing their relationship. However, it should be noted that the king did not favour him or any other subject in exclusivity, not even in particular moments of his reign. Manuel can best be understood as cultivating many privileged contacts, with a group of favourites of a diverse nature, whose composition was subject to change, as will be understood from what follows.

The examples of Diogo da Silva de Meneses and João Manuel illustrate this well. From a tender age, both were privy to Manuel's person and benefitted equally from his good fortune. The considerable age gap between them, however, meant that they were shown different forms of esteem. While Diogo might have had a fatherly aura, intensified by Manuel having become an orphan at an early age, João was a companion through childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Diogo's age and maturity, coupled with the esteem he earned, made him an obvious minister in the Manueline government. He was chosen as private secretary and therefore was formally involved in political decisions. At the time an anecdote about his closeness with Manuel I circulated: «when someone would brag to the Count of Portalegre, the one who was privy [to Manuel I], about words spoken to the king, he was to say: You lie, because I know what men tell the king»<sup>60</sup>.

Jerónimo Zurita corroborates Diogo's importance by way of the negotiations initiated in 1496 to set up the marriage between Manuel I and Isabel, the eldest daughter of the Catholic Monarchs. According to this Aragonese chronicler, the first representatives appointed by the Portuguese monarch were Fernando de Meneses, a cousin of Manuel and the heir of the first marquis of Vila Real, and Diogo da Silva de Meneses «who was his [the king's] great private, through whom all in the state was handled»<sup>61</sup>.

The negotiations continued in the following year with new protagonists. On the Portuguese side, there were Álvaro de Portugal, another king's cousin and brother of the deceased third duke of Braganza, and João Manuel, the Great Chamberlain<sup>62</sup>. Álvaro's involvement could be explained by his acquaintance with the Catholic Monarchs, a result of the many years spent in exile, but also by his kinship with Manuel I,<sup>63</sup>. Indeed, this seemed to be the reason for his choice, in the opinion of the ambassador Ochoa de Isasaga of the Catholic Monarchs to Portugal, who claimed Álvaro had a very considerable influence over the king<sup>64</sup>. On the other hand, João Manuel did not come from a prominent lineage. Moreover, his office consigned him to a domestic sphere at court. His nomination, therefore, benefitted from the friendship with his longstanding patron. Damião de Góis, who had served Manuel I as a page

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<sup>60</sup> José Hermano Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos Portugueses Dignos de Memória. História Íntima do Século XVI* (Lisbon: Publicações Europa-América, 1997), 479.

<sup>61</sup> Jerónimo Zurita, *Historia del Rey Don Fernando el Católico. De las Empresas, y Ligas de Italia*, ed. José Javier Isso, Pilar Rivero and Julián Pelegrín (S.l.: Institución "Fernando el Católico", 2005), <http://ifc.dpz.es/publicaciones/ebooks/id/2423> (consulted on 17th July 2020), book II, chap. xxiii.

<sup>62</sup> Torre and Suárez Fernández (ed.), *Documentos*, vol. III, 1, 12, 15-17.

<sup>63</sup> Juan Gil, *El Exilio Portugués en Sevilla. De los Braganza a Magallanes* (Sevilla: Fundación Cajasol, 2009), 26-38.

<sup>64</sup> Torre and Suárez Fernández (ed.), *Documentos*, vol. III, 69.

boy, writing many years later, asserted that João Manuel had been chosen because he was someone whom the king rightly trusted for being wise, as well as for having been brought up with him<sup>65</sup>. Across the Portuguese border, a less reserved Zurita explained that João Manuel «was much higher up in the king's graces than the count of Portalegre, who previously had the upper hand; so the king of Portugal began to communicate his secrets with the knight, leaving nothing out»<sup>66</sup>.

No other source corroborates, whether directly or indirectly, that the Great Chamberlain supplanted the count of Portalegre. The only objective circumstance known is the role played by João Manuel in the Iberian diplomatic scene, confirmed in 1500 on his returning to Castile to negotiate Manuel I's second marriage<sup>67</sup>. With this in mind, another suggestion also made by Zurita can be believed, as it seems plausible that Diogo da Silva de Meneses and Fernando de Meneses, newly made 2<sup>nd</sup> marquis of the House of Vila Real, were bothered by the prominence shown by this new royal agent<sup>68</sup>.

Death would soon take the monarch's two valued friends, thus removing their supposed rivalry. João Manuel took his last breath during the trip to Castile in 1500<sup>69</sup> and Diogo da Silva de Meneses passed away in 1504, a few days before Álvaro de Portugal<sup>70</sup>. The presence of all of them, along with Fernando de Meneses, in the arrangement of the marriages of Manuel I, however, reinforces the perception of the usefulness of his early support networks, woven around the relatives and former associates of the House of Viseu-Beja; essentially, his long-standing allies.

## GOVERNMENT, SPIRITUALITY AND ROYAL FAVOURITISM

Another group graced with Manuel I's trust were the men who assisted him in administering the kingdom and court. These royal officers and counsellors, of whom there were many, had no special connection to Manuel before his crowning. Many dozens of cases can be traced in scattered documentation<sup>71</sup> due to the longevity of his reign, the vast number of offices, and the sustained employment of different individuals on a given office. Having said that, in order to ascertain the relationships of greater importance cultivated by the king, one must focus on the personalities who, having reached a position of public prominence, were also likely to be awarded the status of intimates or favourites (*privados* and *validos*)<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 46.

<sup>66</sup> Zurita, *Historia*, book III, chap. ix.

<sup>67</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 110-111.

<sup>68</sup> Zurita, *Historia*, book III, chap. ix.

<sup>69</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 111.

<sup>70</sup> Freire, *Brasões*, vol. III, 350, 367-368.

<sup>71</sup> It can be determined that Manuel I's group of advisors oscillated approximately between 38 and 65 individuals: Susannah C. Humble Ferreira, "Development of the Portuguese Royal Council in the Reign of Manuel I (1495-1521)", *Portuguese Studies Review* 12/1 (2004): 7-9.

<sup>72</sup> John Elliott has emphasized that the concrete experiences accumulated and the consciousness of regal favouritism gave rise to this kind of lexicon in early modern Europe: John Elliott, "Introducción", in *El Mundo de los Validos*, dir. John Elliott and Laurence Brockliss (Madrid: Taurus, 1999), 9-10.



The sources on Manuel's reign make little use of the words *privado* or *valido*<sup>73</sup>. When they do, however, they imply has privileged and regular access to the monarch, as well as being privy with him, leading to a relationship of complicity, much like elsewhere in Europe. Absolute trust therefore cleared the way for these people to receive special favour from the sovereign, which in turn allowed them to stand out as favourites, especially in comparison with a majority of courtiers. As noted above, this type of social interaction can be explicitly identified since the onset of Manuel's reign in documentation and sources of the time. However, a careful historical analysis of events between the end of the fifteenth century and the dawn of the sixteenth century allows us to argue that other agents matched the same description.

In the absence of other elements, Manuel I's pilgrimage to the Galician sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela in 1502 gives some indication of the factors differentiating the 'ordinary' members from the favourites in the king's political circle. As we know, trips taken by the monarch were an indicator of the dimension of the private sphere within the royal milieu, since such trips were used by the members of the royal family as a form of looser sociability<sup>74</sup>. This was particularly visible in Manuel's pilgrimage, which as a private event had no parallel during his reign. Only a few travel companions surrounded the king. In the eyes of the court, their selection was very meaningful.

It was not the first time Manuel had crossed the Luso-Castilian border. In 1481, still a «boy with no title», he remained in Castile for several months as a hostage, as required by the clauses of the Terçarias de Moura pact<sup>75</sup>. He returned there in 1498 already as king, to be sworn in as heir to the crowns of Castile and Aragon along with his first wife, Isabel, daughter of the Catholic Monarchs. On his first trip, he had been accompanied by a small group of servants. On his second, a far more solemn one, more apparatus was required and the retinue was numerous, made up of distinguished members of the nobility and clergy, alongside a number of royal officials<sup>76</sup>.

The 1502 trip took place under a different banner to the previous ones. It was not a state matter, but rather the king's own intimate appeal. This justified undertaking the trip with only a handful of men, with the king travelling in disguise while in Galicia, only revealing his identity when reaching Santiago de Compostela. Manuel I was deeply spiritual. It can be said that the era was conducive to such a feeling. However, the circumstances that marked his existence were rather peculiar. This, along with the specificities of his education, shaped by the principles of Franciscan observance, instilled in him the belief that he was God-chosen, destined to lead Portugal to

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<sup>73</sup> Its use can be detected in the chronicle written by Damião de Góis. An example is the description of how Manuel came to know from his intimates that his son, Prince João, was being advised to disobey him: Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 69. The same work introduces the notion of privilege in relation to the ties between Asian leaders and some of their supporters, with whom the Portuguese established contacts in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Other narrative sources of the time with explicit references to Manuel's favourites are a compilation of episodes at court involving the nobility, which will be recalled below: Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos; Zurita, Historia*.

<sup>74</sup> Pedro Cardim, "A Corte Régia e o Alargamento da Esfera Privada", in *História da Vida Privada em Portugal*, dir. José Mattoso, vol. II, *A Idade Moderna*, coord. Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro (S.l.: Temas e Debates - Círculo de Leitores, 2011), 192.

<sup>75</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 52-53.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*, 86-101.

extraordinary achievements<sup>77</sup>. In this sense, Manuel took care to entertain contact with the divine, both through officially supporting Church ceremonial and private devotional practices<sup>78</sup>. Namely, the visits made to holy places were already documented in his adolescence<sup>79</sup>, something that continued and perhaps even increased once he was crowned. Indeed, it became clear that

for the purpose of the success of these voyages [to India], besides frequently giving alms, the king also made offers of money and spices for many places of worship, both in these realms [of Portugal and Algarve] and outside them. He did the same for individuals, so that through intercession and prayer God would make his affairs prosper. As well as this, he and the queen [Maria] personally visited many devotional institutions<sup>80</sup>.

It was in the context of state growth that Manuel I decided on the trip to Santiago. He was conscious of being a «very blessed king» (*Felicíssimo Rei*), as Damião de Góis calls him in the title of a chronicle dedicated to the Manuel's reign, or especially fortunate (*Venturoso*) according to popular memory. This instilled in him a desire to thank God for the graces he had been given. The latest of these blessings had happened on 6 June 1502, just before the trip, and consisted in the birth of a male heir, Prince João. The challenges to be faced in the near future, including the continuation of overseas confrontations with the Muslims, required the king to continue supplicating divine favour<sup>81</sup>. Could there be anything better to facilitate it than the mediation of St. James, the apostle who had earned the reputation of Moor-killer (*Mata-Mouros*) in the Iberian Peninsula?

The king's departure from Lisbon took place in the following October. He followed the pilgrimage route along the Portuguese coast, heading north. The most important stops were in Coimbra, Aveiro, Oporto and Valença do Minho, where the king enacted some notable acts of governance. Already in Galician territory, the king's party stopped in Tui, later reaching Santiago de Compostela, where they paid respects to the apostle and carried out charitable acts<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> Luís Filipe Thomaz, "L'Idée Impériale Manueline", in *La Découverte, le Portugal et l'Europe. Actes du Colloque*, dir. Jean Aubin (Paris: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian – Centre Culturel Portugais, 1990), 35-103; Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 139, 175-179.

<sup>78</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 224-236.

<sup>79</sup> Resende, "Vida", 227.

<sup>80</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 158.

<sup>81</sup> Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 122-123.

<sup>82</sup> It is not the purpose of this article to detail the voyage to Santiago de Compostela, or to analyse its devotional and political context. For this, see the relevant bibliography: António Cruz, "No V Centenário de Dom Manuel", *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. Série História* 1 (1970): 1-75; Humberto Baquero Moreno, "Vias Portuguesas de Peregrinação a Santiago de Compostela", *Revista da Faculdade de Letras do Porto – História* 2nd. Series, 3 (1986): 77-89; Manuel Cadafaz de Matos, "A Peregrinação de D. Manuel a Santiago de Compostela (em 1502) Vista à Luz de Alguns Documentos Inéditos", in *I Congresso Internacional dos Caminhos Portugueses de Santiago de Compostela* (Lisbon: Edições Távola Redonda, 1992), 215-238; Paulo Catarino Lopes, "Uma Definição Identitária para os Caminhos Portugueses Tardo-Medievais de Santiago de Compostela? Dois Casos que Convidam à Reflexão Crítica", *Ad Limina* 11/11 (2020): 61-84.

This chain of events corresponds to the account given by Damião de Góis, the only source known to us that describes the pilgrimage in a structured, yet concise manner<sup>83</sup>. In any case, the detail essential to this discussion lies in Góis disclosing the six names of those chosen by Manuel I as travelling companions. Apparently, the sovereign dispensed with mounted guards. On one hand, this helped him to go unnoticed while in Galicia, but on the other, it created increased security responsibilities for his followers. The composition of the royal entourage was then as follows, in the same order as it appears in Góis:

- Pedro Vaz Gavião, bishop of Guarda and prior of the church of Santa Cruz de Coimbra;
- Diogo Lobo, second baron of Alvito and lord treasurer (*vedor da fazenda*);
- Martinho de Castelo Branco, lord (and future count) of Vila Nova de Portimão, also he lord treasurer;
- Nuno Manuel, overseer of weights and measures (*almotacé-mor*), brother of João Manuel and therefore a milk brother of the king;
- António de Noronha, recently sworn in as privy secretary (*escrivão da puridade*) and cousin of the king;
- Fernando de Meneses, second marquis of Vila Real, brother of António de Noronha and therefore cousin of the king.

Let us now clarify some of the reasons that might explain the link between these people and the pilgrimage as a grand manifestation of access to royal favour in Manuel's reign. The presence of a clergyman, to provide spiritual guidance during the excursion, was essential. The Portuguese high clergy was, at the time, made up of several notable people. Pedro Vaz Gavião became one of in the early days of the reign, when he was made head chaplain to the king and bishop of Guarda<sup>84</sup>. He was also a member of the supreme court of justice at the *Desembargo do Paço*, which implied periodically meeting with the king in order to dispatch petitions<sup>85</sup>. The key to Manuel's appreciation of Pedro, however, was the latter's position as vicar of Tomar between 1487 and 1496. Tomar was the seat of the Order of Christ, the successor to the Knights Templar in Portugal<sup>86</sup>. Given that the leadership of the order had belonged to the dukes of Viseu-Beja since the beginning of the fifteenth century, undoubtedly this meant a close familiarity between Pedro Vaz Gavião and Manuel. The clergyman was

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<sup>83</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 158-159. There are a few documents pertaining to the pilgrimage that confirm the itinerary and his reception throughout the journey, as well as some useful expenditure and consumption data, all published by Cruz, "No V Centenário", 34-68 and Matos, "A Peregrinação", 223-236.

<sup>84</sup> José Pedro Piva, *Os Bispos de Portugal e do Império, 1495-1777* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2006), 291.

<sup>85</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 227-228.

<sup>86</sup> Maria Emília Madeira Santos and Maria João Soares, "Igreja, Missionação e Sociedade", in *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, coord. Maria Emília Madeira Santos, vol. II (Lisbon – Praia: Centro de Estudos de História e Cartografia Antiga / Instituto de Investigação Científica e Tropical – Instituto Nacional da Cultura de Cabo Verde, 1995), 367.

among the duke's supporters, making it easier for him to transition to higher positions at a national level at the start of Manuel's reign.

As *almotacé-mor*, Nuno Manuel was responsible for court supplies. Although this was an important job, it did not directly influence the administration of the kingdom or the Portuguese empire. When narrating the pilgrimage, Damião de Góis mistakenly mentions Nuno as the chief of the royal guard, ignoring the fact that he would not become so until 1515<sup>87</sup>. Nuno enjoyed the king's graces thanks to the fact that he was very privy («*muito privado*»)<sup>88</sup> with the sovereign, no doubt by virtue of their longstanding and close ties. In the absence of the late João Manuel, Nuno was perhaps the king's closest friend.

Fernando de Meneses and António de Noronha were Manuel's cousins, the three of them the great-grandchildren of the first duke of Braganza. The ties of political solidarity between them were at least as important as kinship, as the House of Vila Real, through Fernando (then the heir), plainly supported the cause of the duke of Beja before King João II, in the context of the royal succession<sup>89</sup>. Once crowned, Manuel soon returned the favour. The reorganization of the nobility, carried out as early as 1496, was in the interests of the Braganzas and their close relatives, and served to promote the faithful Diogo da Silva de Meneses and Fernando de Meneses. By right of birth, Fernando was destined to be the second marquis of Vila Real, but meanwhile he was made count of Alcoutim, with the promise that this new title would carry over to the heirs of the House of Vila Real in future<sup>90</sup>. Having been elevated to the position of marquis in 1499, Fernando's close relationship with the king was confirmed three years later, both by his inclusion in the small entourage of pilgrims and by his role as leader of the group, chosen by the king, thus serving as the king's double once they crossed the border into Galicia<sup>91</sup>.

As for António de Noronha, his social and familial standing was sufficient to guarantee his attachment to Manuel I. The House of Vila Real's fortunes under royal favour indirectly benefited him. Furthermore, Manuel's wish to bring António to his close circle was expressed when he most likely facilitated his marriage to Joana da Silva, daughter of the first count of Portalegre. The latter then resigned from his position as privy secretary in favour of his son-in-law. Whether due to the importance of those involved in the marriage, or due to the changes in an office of such importance, it was obligatory that the sovereign checked, if not encouraged, the negotiations. His final

<sup>87</sup> Freire, *Brasões*, vol. III, 29.

<sup>88</sup> Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos*, 116.

<sup>89</sup> Jean Aubin, *Le Latin*, vol. II, 79; André Pinto de Sousa Dias Teixeira, "Uma Linhagem ao Serviço da «Ideia Imperial Manuelina»: Noronhas e Meneses de Vila Real, em Marrocos e na Índia", in *A Alta Nobreza e a Fundação do Estado da Índia*, ed. João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Vítor Luís Gaspar Rodrigues (Lisbon: UNL/CHAM – ICT/CEHA, 2004), 127.

<sup>90</sup> Freire, *Brasões*, vol. III, 343-350. On the chronology of the attribution of the county of Portalegre, idealized in 1496 and formalized in 1498, see Silvério and Marques, "Diogo", 249.

<sup>91</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 158. Another primary source briefly recalls the pilgrimage of 1502 through an account of the episode of the exchange of public authority between Manuel I and one of the nobles who travelled with him. According to this, the man chosen would have been the chief of the royal guard, João de Sousa, to the chagrin of the marquis of Vila Real: Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos*, 117. The description is implausible because João was given the office in question only in 1510: Freire, *Brasões*, vol. I, 214-215.

approval, with António de Noronha's position becoming formalized, was drawn up in September 1502, the month prior to departing to Santiago<sup>92</sup>.

In the king of Portugal's government, the chief financial officials, or *vedores da fazenda*, were no less important than the private secretary. It was customary for them to attend hearings held by the sovereign<sup>93</sup>, a clear evidence of the traditional importance attached to the office. The presence of these officials in the meetings of the royal council meetings could even be vital<sup>94</sup>. Given that Manuel I was the advocate of a model of government through counsel<sup>95</sup>, it is safe to say that he took with him to Santiago the very core of the kingdom's government – some of his personal favourites were also the main ministers.

The members of treasury had control of the revenue and expenditure of the crown. The already demanding task became very complex with the emergence of the Portuguese empire and what came with it, mostly the organization of support structures and the imposition of royal commercial monopolies. That is why at least three individuals would be employed in this position at any one time<sup>96</sup>. Two of those in service in 1502 were Martinho de Castelo Branco and Diogo Lobo. Both had six years of experience working with Manuel I, although the former had more experience, having served João II in the same position<sup>97</sup>.

In comparison with the other members of the entourage of pilgrims, Martinho and Diogo are unique in that they bore no particular relationship with the king. Apart from having come across him at court when Manuel was still either a «boy with no title» or the duke of Beja, nothing suggests that they ever became close. On the contrary, the presence of both men in João II's inner circle in the final phase of his life, when the sovereign was far away from his family and only kept company with his followers, along with some verifiable connections with Jorge de Lencastre, indicate that both aligned themselves with the illegitimate's faction<sup>98</sup>.

The conciliatory stance taken by Manuel I from the earliest days of his reign has already been mentioned. The attitudes he demonstrated regarding Martinho and Diogo are justified in light of this context. First, he included them in the ranks of his main collaborators; as time went by and relationships were built, they became members of

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem, vol. II, 25 and vol. III, 389-390.

<sup>93</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 228.

<sup>94</sup> Rita Costa Gomes, “Le Conseil Royal au Portugal (1400-1520)”, in *Conseils et Conseillers dans l'Europe de la Renaissance v. 1450 – v. 1550*, dir. Cédric Michon (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabellais de Tours - Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 152, 157.

<sup>95</sup> Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 224. On the application of the model in late medieval and modern Europe, see Pere Molas Ribalta, “The Impact of Central Institutions”, in *Power Elites and State Building*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (Oxford – New York: European Science Foundation – Clarendon Press, 1996), 20-27.

<sup>96</sup> Joaquim Romero de Magalhães, “As Estruturas Políticas de Unificação”, in *História de Portugal*, dir. José Mattoso, vol. III, *No Alvorecer da Modernidade*, coord. Joaquim Romero Magalhães (S.l.: Círculo de Leitores, 1993), 83-84.

<sup>97</sup> Pelúcia, “A Baronía”, 284; Valdemar Coutinho, “O Condado de Vila Nova de Portimão”, in *Alta Nobreza e a Fundação do Estado da Índia*, ed. João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Vítor Luís Gaspar Rodrigues (Lisbon: UNL/CHAM – IICT/CEHA, 2004), 229.

<sup>98</sup> Resende, “Vida”, chaps. ccx, ccxii-ccxiii; Aubin, *Le Latin*, vol. II, 80.



the royal inner circle<sup>99</sup>. Even an overview of the reign shows that Martinho and Diogo held their prominence throughout the period, despite occasional friction caused by Diogo<sup>100</sup>. The royal patronage of Martinho, who received the title of count of Vila Nova de Portimão in 1514, while António de Noronha's similar claim went unanswered, would cause the annoyance of his marquis brother, leading him to voluntarily withdraw from the royal court<sup>101</sup>. Royal favour was, therefore, neither a linear process, nor a static condition.

Finally, it is worth mentioning those absent from the king's entourage in the 1502 episode. In other words, those keeping Manuel I company in the excursion made sense from a personal, and even an institutional, viewpoint; but this did not exhaust the range of gentlemen who at that time were in a position of benefiting from the monarch's favouritism.

The king chose his companions, but the particular choices of this journey were also subject to fortuitous events. This seems to have been the case of Diogo da Silva de Meneses, whose old age weighed him down, making it difficult for him to travel the distance between Lisbon and Santiago, and of Jaime, fourth duke of Braganza. Age was not a problem for the king's nephew, his sister Isabel's son. At the age of twenty-three, Jaime was in his prime and benefitted from a unique position in Portugal as head of a house whose pre-eminence was only second to that of the royal house. After his forced exile in Castille, Jaime was restored to the dukedom and his uncle recognized him as the heir to the crown at a time when the king had no offspring. Manuel also devised his marriage to someone of equal standing, the Castilian Leonor de Mendoza, daughter of the third duke of Medina Sidonia. Manuel did not count on Jaime's impulsiveness. In 1502, after welcoming his bride, Jaime did not consummate the marriage. Instead, he decided to flee to Jerusalem, intending to embrace a religious life. He was stopped by the king's agents while in Aragon and escorted back. Thus, he was otherwise engaged, since Manuel I pressed him to return to his domestic duties<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> Diogo Lobo was known at the time as very close to the king: Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos*, 239. In turn, Martinho de Castelo was known for being someone the king held in high esteem, to whom he showed much love and trust, and whom he always informed of his affairs and secrets: Garcia de Resende, "Ida da Iffante Dona Breatiz pera Saboya", in *Livro das Obras de Garcia de Resende*, ed. Evelina Verdelho (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1994), 495-496.

<sup>100</sup> Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos*, 239; "Testamento de el-rei D. Manuel", in *Gavetas*, org. Rodrigues, vol. VI, 125-126, 128-129; Pelúcia, "A Baronia", 286-300.

<sup>101</sup> Aubin, *Le Latin*, vol. III, 70-101.

<sup>102</sup> Specifically on the life and socio-political career of the 4th Duke of Bragança, see the following works: Maria de Lurdes Rosa, "D. Jaime, Duque de Bragança: entre a Cortina e a Vidraça", in *O Tempo de Vasco da Gama*, dir. Diogo Ramada Curto (S.l.: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses - Difel, 1998), 319-332; Paulo Catarino Lopes, "Depois de Vós. Duke Jaime de Braganza in the Confidence of King Manuel I", *Tiempos Modernos: Revista Electrónica de Historia Moderna* 8/32 (2016): 35-50, <http://www.tiemposmodernos.org/tm3/index.php/tm/article/view/503/634> (consulted on 27th July 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Certainly, Manuel I benefitted from the vagaries of fortune when he rose to the Portuguese throne, but he also made good use of the support available, namely within the societal core of his early life. Anchored by their high social status, his blood relatives offered crucial and longstanding backing, especially his mother and sisters. They were seconded by other Houses who also had royal blood, such as the Braganzas and Vila Real. The servants of the Duchy of Viseu-Beja, the house headed by Manuel I before he took the royal crown, were another source of assistance and loyalty, despite the fact they did not intervene directly in the succession crisis that marked the final years of the reign of João II. Among the people surrounding Manuel I before he was acclaimed king in 1495, we can already discern some worthy of being called favourites of the «boy with no title» and later young duke.

Manuel rewarded those who supported him and with whom he had distinctive relationships. He employed them in the administration of the court and kingdom and in the fast growing overseas administrative apparatus. Most notably, he entrusted them with crucial tasks at a diplomatic level, such as negotiations with the Catholic Monarchs. The king's actions speak of the reciprocity that characterised clientelism, but also of his political tactics and even of his personal affections. Indeed, the king brought his old servants, whose trust was unquestionable, to the court and crown sphere, offering them key offices. In light of the political instability and factional disputes that preceded his rise to the throne, this can be seen as a wise move. His entourage acted as shield and protection, even allowing him to reach out and appease the group that had opposed his status as heir and successor to the throne and instead had supported the claims of the illegitimate son of João II.

In the early years of the reign, contemporary sources mentioned the count of Portalegre and the great chamberlain as favourites or persons privy to the king's affairs. The analysis of the data available suggests instead the existence of a privy circle of a sizeable dimension, but one where none of the members gained more prominence in detriment of others. Certainly, there are obvious demographic reasons. However, more importantly, the sovereign himself stimulated the renewal of the group by welcoming new members to his inner circle.

A good example of this strategy can be seen in 1502. By then, Manuel I had accomplished the stabilization of his royal power. While setting out on a private pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in order to acknowledge and give thanks for blessings bestowed upon him, he chose to take just a handful of companions. The analysis of this list confirms the importance of the old trusted relationships, as again the king chose attendants who were associated with the house of Viseu-Beja.

Additionally, we aimed at showing how membership of this privy circle was fluid. Previous opponents became supporters and old supporters could lose favour. Manuel's pragmatism certainly explains the inclusion of Diogo Lobo and Martinho de Castelo Branco in the royal circle. However, their participation in the pilgrimage of 1502 seems to suggest they eventually gained the king's esteem. Ultimately, what characterised a royal favourite was always a mix of personal friendships and political exercise.

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