

in private affairs and delicate government issues, the former pupil also granted him the title of first count of Portalegre⁵⁶.

The children of noble families who were subordinated to the House of Viseu-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 Malabar⁵⁷. At the time, Francisco de Almeida, newly appointed first viceroy of India, expressed his perception of Brito as someone familiar with the king's secrets⁵⁸. 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 Rodrigues⁵⁹. 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.

⁵⁶ 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.

⁵⁷ 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.

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

⁵⁹ 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»⁶⁰.

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»⁶¹.

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 Chamberlain⁶². 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,⁶³. 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 king⁶⁴. 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

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

⁶¹ 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.

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

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

⁶⁴ 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 him⁶⁵. 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»⁶⁶.

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 marriage⁶⁷. 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 2nd marquis of the House of Vila Real, were bothered by the prominence shown by this new royal agent⁶⁸.

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 1500⁶⁹ and Diogo da Silva de Meneses passed away in 1504, a few days before Álvaro de Portugal⁷⁰. 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 documentation⁷¹ 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*)⁷².

⁶⁵ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 46.

⁶⁶ Zurita, *Historia*, book III, chap. ix.

⁶⁷ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 110-111.

⁶⁸ Zurita, *Historia*, book III, chap. ix.

⁶⁹ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 111.

⁷⁰ Freire, *Brasões*, vol. III, 350, 367-368.

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² 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*⁷³. 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 sociability⁷⁴. 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 pact⁷⁵. 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 officials⁷⁶.

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

⁷³ 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*.

⁷⁴ 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.

⁷⁵ Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 52-53.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 86-101.

extraordinary achievements⁷⁷. In this sense, Manuel took care to entertain contact with the divine, both through officially supporting Church ceremonial and private devotional practices⁷⁸. Namely, the visits made to holy places were already documented in his adolescence⁷⁹, 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 institutions⁸⁰.

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 favour⁸¹. 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 acts⁸².

⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁸ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 224-236.

⁷⁹ Resende, "Vida", 227.

⁸⁰ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. I, 158.

⁸¹ Costa, *D. Manuel I*, 122-123.

⁸² 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 manner⁸³. 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 Guarda⁸⁴. 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 petitions⁸⁵. 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 Portugal⁸⁶. 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

⁸³ 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.

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

⁸⁵ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 227-228.

⁸⁶ 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 1515⁸⁷. Nuno enjoyed the king's graces thanks to the fact that he was very privy («*muito privado*»)⁸⁸ 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 succession⁸⁹. 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 future⁹⁰. 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 Galicia⁹¹.

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

⁸⁷ Freire, *Brasões*, vol. III, 29.

⁸⁸ Saraiva (ed.), *Ditos*, 116.

⁸⁹ 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.

⁹⁰ 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.

⁹¹ 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 Santiago⁹².

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 sovereign⁹³, 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 vital⁹⁴. Given that Manuel I was the advocate of a model of government through counsel⁹⁵, 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 time⁹⁶. 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 position⁹⁷.

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 faction⁹⁸.

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

⁹² Ibidem, vol. II, 25 and vol. III, 389-390.

⁹³ Góis, *Crónica*, vol. IV, 228.

⁹⁴ 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.

⁹⁵ 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.

⁹⁶ 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.

⁹⁷ 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.

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

the royal inner circle⁹⁹. Even an overview of the reign shows that Martinho and Diogo held their prominence throughout the period, despite occasional friction caused by Diogo¹⁰⁰. 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 court¹⁰¹. 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 duties¹⁰².

⁹⁹ 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.

¹⁰⁰ 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.

¹⁰¹ Aubin, *Le Latin*, vol. III, 70-101.

¹⁰² 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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