

Between Italy and Portugal. The importance of mobility and circulation in the reformist dimension of Gomes Eanes (1419-1439)

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Abstract

The present text intends to reflect critically on the action of a Portuguese monk whose reforming program took such a wide scale, that allowed to establish a genuine dialogue between Italy and Portugal – that is, between the Crown and the papacy, between the religious and the secular – in the *Quattrocento*. An action that ultimately contributed significantly to integrating Portugal into the more general framework of the reform movements that had been going through Christianity since the second half of the 15th century. The idea to be analyze is, therefore, that the contribution of Gomes Eanes – the famous *Abbot of Florence* – to the Reform of the Church in the *Quattrocento* was effectively marked by a transnational dimension, then sustained by a necessary network of solidarities and influence. The basis for our study was the *carteggio* (correspondence) of Gomes Eanes, a vast and rich letter collection that spans two voluminous codices: the *Badia 4 (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Conventi Soppressi da ordinare)* and the *Ashburnham 1792 (Biblioteca Laurenziana)*.

Keywords

Gomes Eanes; Mobility and Circulation; Italy; Portugal; Religious reform; 15th Century.

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Religious reform, driven both by the Church and the Crown, was an important topic in fifteenth century Portugal. Connecting these two spheres of power we find an extraordinary individual: Gomes Eanes (c.1383-1459), the great Benedictine reformer known by everyone who studies him plainly as the *Abbot of Florence*². His *voice* resounds in hundreds of records illustrating Portugal's openness to the prevailing currents of reform and observance in the Christian world³.

Gomes Eanes was active in the political, diplomatic, religious and cultural spheres. Particularly noteworthy was his role in the reform movement of the Benedictine monastic order, especially between 1419 and 1439, the years during which he lived in Italy, whilst at the service of the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria in Florence, known traditionally as *Badia* (abbey), as its abbot. This text considers the role played by the extensive circulation of people, objects and ideas in the reformative dimension championed by Gomes Eanes during the two decades that he was at the head of the *Badia*, and the networks that he established in order to pursue his objectives. We will subsequently examine the contribution given by Gomes Eanes to the establishment of an intense dialogue between Portugal and Italy during the first half of the fifteenth century, driven by his zealous intent in bringing the reform to his homeland too. A dialogue which will ultimately reveal

² In his own time, Gomes Eanes was also frequently known just as the "abbot of Florence", which seemed to be enough to identify him and none other, and speaks volumes of his importance at that time. Extensive studies on this character have been carried out by António Domingues de Sousa Costa and by Eduardo Borges Nunes, who have provided the most exhaustive biographical approaches to Gomes Eanes, to this date: COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – "D. Gomes Eanes, reformador da Abadia de Florença, e as tentativas de reforma dos mosteiros portugueses no século XV". *Studia Monastica* 5.1 (1963), pp. 59-73; COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – *Bispos de Lamego e de Viseu no século XV*. Braga: Editorial Franciscana, 1986; NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez, abade de Florença: 1420-1440*. Braga: Edição do autor, 1963. Also important were the studies on Gomes Eanes by Guido Batteli in the 1930s and 1940s, and more recently two important articles by Martin Elbl: BATTELI, Guido – "Due celebri monaci portoghesi in Firenze nella prima metà del Quattrocento. L' Abate Gomes e Velasco di Portogallo". *Archivio Storico Italiano* 96 (1938), pp. 218-227; BATTELI, Guido – "L' Abate Don Gomes Ferreira da Silva e i portoghesi a Firenze nella prima metà del Quattrocento". In BARDI, G. (ed.) – *Relazioni Storiche Fra l'Italia e il Portogallo*. Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1940, pp. 149-163; ELBL, Martin; ELBL, Ivana – "The Private Archive (*Carteggio*) of Abbot Dom Fr. Gomes Eanes (Badia di Firenze) – An Analytical Catalogue, with Commentary, of Codex Ashburnham 1792 (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence), Part One". *Portuguese Studies Review* 21.1 (2013), pp. 19-151; ELBL, Martin; ELBL, Ivana – "The Private Archive (*Carteggio*) of Abbot Dom Fr. Gomes Eanes (Badia di Firenze) – An Analytical Catalogue, with Commentary, of Codex Ashburnham 1792 (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence), Part Two". *Portuguese Studies Review* 21.2 (2013), pp. 137-202. Finally, we can also highlight the following studies: MARE, Albinia de la – "Notes on Portuguese patrons of the Florentine books trade in the fifteenth century". In LOWE, Kate J. P. (ed.) – *Cultural Links between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 168-170; LOPES, Paulo Catarino – "Entre a Itália e Portugal. A relevância do livro na circulação cultural e reformista promovida pelo abade D. Gomes Eanes no século XV". In ALESSANDRINI, Nunziatella; RUSSO, Mariagrazia; SABATINI, Gaetano (orgs.) – *Homo est minor mundus. Construção de Saberes e Relações Diplomáticas luso-italianas (sécs. XV-XVIII)*. Lisboa: Fábrica da Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Loreto, 2018, pp. 31-57.

³ See José Adriano Freitas de Carvalho's summary which traces a general framework of the religious reforms in Portugal in the fifteenth century, and shows the impact and extent of the action of Gomes Eanes in that field.; CARVALHO, José Adriano de Freitas – *Antes de Lutero: A Igreja e as Reformas Religiosas em Portugal no século XV. Anseios e limites*. Porto: CITCEM, Edições Afrontamento, 2016.

that religious renovation was a powerful motor to the circulation of people, objects and ideas, by the end of the Middle Ages.

The basis for our study was the *carteggio* (correspondence) of Gomes Eanes, a vast and rich letter collection that spans two voluminous codices: the *Badia 4* (*Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Conventi Soppressi da ordinare*) and the *Ashburnham 1792* (*Biblioteca Laurenziana*), which is also the best known⁴.

Personal trajectory and profile

Gomes Eanes was born in Lisbon, in the parish of S. Mamede, in the last quarter of the 14th century. The first information on his personal journey is linked to his departure to Padua, in 1409, to study Law, following in the footsteps of his father, João Martins, who also had legal training and an important career both in the service of the Portuguese king, D. João I, and among the oligarchy associated with the government of the city of Lisbon. Such connection to the Court was further strengthened by João Martins' early bonds with the Charneca family, from whom he was brought up, including Martim Afonso Pires da Charneca, chosen by the king, in 1398, to succeed D. Lourenço Vicente as Archbishop of Braga⁵.

Such background may explain, not only the decision to invest in Gomes Eanes' education in Italy, surely aiming on a promising career on the royal service⁶, but also his early and important connections to the Portuguese kings and their entourage.

He remained in the Faculty of Law of the University of Padua until 1413, when he moved to the monastery of Santa Justina of Padua, entering the Benedictine Order and doing his novitiate under the orientation of the reforming abbot Ludovico Barbo (1381-1443).

⁴ In terms of the publication of his *carteggio*, Gomes Eanes' private and official epistolary archives have been considerably studied and transcribed by António Domingues de Sousa Costa and Eduardo Borges Nunes, and many of these documents were also included in the edition of the *Monumenta Henricina*. Ed. Manuel Almada, Idalino Brochado and António Dinis, 15 vols. Coimbra: Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do V Centenário do Infante D. Henrique, 1960-1974. However, the (almost) complete edition of this correspondence was only accomplished most recently by Rita Costa-Gomes, based in the main manuscripts existing in Florence: *A Portuguese Abbot in Renaissance Florence. The Letter Collection of Gomes Eanes (1415-1463)*. Ed. Rita Costa-Gomes. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2017. This edition, including a total of 550 letters, increased substantially our knowledge of the extant epistolography of this prolific author and consequently what we know of the man and his times. This is the edition we will follow in all the citations along this text.

⁵ About João Martins, the father of Gomes Eanes, see FARELO, Mário – *A oligarquia camarária de Lisboa (1325-1433)*. Lisbon: Universisade de Lisboa, 2008, pp. 504-509. PhD Thesis. About Gomes Eanes, see COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – “D. Gomes Eanes”, pp. 59-73; NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez*, pp. 3-23; COSTA-GOMES, Rita (ed.) – *A Portuguese Abbot*, XI-XXI.

⁶ As many others, by the same time: FARELO, Mário – “Amigos para a vida? Solidariedades dos estudantes portugueses em Itália (finais séc. XIV-inícios do séc. XV)”. In LOPES, Paulo Catarino (ed.) – *Portugal e a Europa nos séculos XV e XVI: Olhares, relações, identidade(s)*. Lisboa: IEM-CHAM, 2019, pp. 275-276.

He professed in January of 1414 and joined the group of Barbo's *fidelissimos* whose spiritual orientation was guided by six fundamental principles: healthy cohabitation; diligent spiritual orientation; compassion and sobriety of government; reform of monastic organization; cultural and literary improvement; continuous advancement of temporal and spiritual administration.⁷ Four years later, in 1418, he would be leading a group of 16 monks with the objective of reforming the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria in Florence, the *Badia*.

Gomes Eanes was officially a cloistered prior, but in reality, his power and range of action exceeded far beyond his canonical position. As Eduardo Nunes mentions, he "managed the monastery not only in the cure of the spirits and observance, but he also oversaw the estate, revenues and expenses".⁸ Obviously, Gomes Eanes introduced strict observance in all spheres of life in the abbey in Florence.

The following year, in 1419, he was elected abbot of that institution, a position he would maintain until his election as General of the Order of the Camaldolese in 1439. The *Badia* became, in the meantime, the second most important monastery of the Benedictine Congregation founded by Ludovico Barbo, after Santa Giustina. In 1441, two years into his direction of the Camaldolese Order, Gomes Eanes petitioned for the priorship of the Regular Canon's Monastery of Santa Cruz of Coimbra in a plea to Eugenius IV (1431-1447). His request was granted and the pope conceded him the governance of that monastery, a position that he would hold for the following eighteen years, until his death in 1459⁹.

Gomes Eanes was a monk trained as a canonist. As a result, he was coherent, conservative and even authoritarian at times, and envisaged reform in a well-defined context: he saw it as a ground-breaking act founded on profound and unconditional respect for the *Rule*, always in line with the purest Benedictine tradition. As Eduardo Nunes points out, "he was neither a humanist nor an artist, but rather a man of action and government."¹⁰ Canon law and established hierarchy were, for him, irrefutable; the entire behavioral edifice of a monk rested on the priority and undisputable requirements of discipline, precision, and especially, perfect obedience. All this came together in a pragmatic spirit, which did not dissociate contemplation from pro-activity. In other words, for Gomes Eanes, spirituality needed to be in association with the power of initiative and fervent entrepreneurship, essential conditions for any project of reorganization and improvement to succeed.

⁷ NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez*, pp. 24-30.

⁸ NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez*, p. 42.

⁹ Special attention should be given to Saul António Gomes work in what concerns Gomes Eanes' activity as head of the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra: GOMES, Saul António – "D. Gomes Eanes e a Capela de Santo André e dos Cinco Mártires de Marrocos do Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra". *Arquivo Coimbrão* 35 (2002), pp. 439-540.

¹⁰ NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez*, p. 129.

Gomes Eanes aspired to reform, observance, good administration, and especially, spiritual ascension, which was only attainable if founded on the previous attributes. Thus, most of his so-called reformist activity was characterized by this movement of reciprocal causality. Since the good spiritual guidance of the monastery should be the first obligation of an abbot, Gomes Eanes knew that he had to find the right balance of initiative and judicious action. The constant pursuit of such balance can be seen in his management (temporal and spiritual) either as abbot of the *Badia* or as prior of Santa Cruz of Coimbra. In essence, his methods of administration and government were very similar, always in line with the purest tradition of St. Benedict and of Ludovico Barbo, his long-time mentor.

His activity as a reformer was realistic because it operationalized the reform not with general laws – such as Martin V (1417-1431) – but more concretely, monastery by monastery. Always in the path of Eugenius IV¹¹, the greatest promotor of this method, he proceeded to reform the monasteries house by house, city by city, using the appropriate occasions and the suitable men for the task. This action was always well located in space and time, focusing on specific rather than general principles.¹² Usefulness, sustainability, culture, art, and above all, faith, were his principles in the reform of the *Badia* and the extensive work he initiated there.

These guiding principles weighed equally in the two attempts to join the *Badia* with the monastery of Santa Maria del Sepolcro, known as *delle Campora*, belonging to the order of St. Jerome, in 1421 and 1434 respectively. The same may be said about the attempt to reform the small monastery of San Donnino, in the outskirts of Pisa, in 1426.

At the head of the Monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra from 1441 to 1459, D. Gomes continued to be guided by an attitude of amendment, improvement and renewal¹³. The Bull of Nicolau V (1447-1455), dated June 28, 1452, is sufficiently eloquent in illustrating precisely this. It conferred powers to the then Prior of Santa Cruz for the general reformation of the entire Order of Saint Augustine in the Kingdom of Portugal, which meant the faculty to visit all monasteries, priories and other places, exempt or not, of men and women of the Order of Saint Augustine. Moreover, it granted him the power to inquire into the faults of the clergy, punish and correct the guilty and even deprive them of their offices and dignities, if the severeness of the fault justified it. He could also proceed with the reformation of the statutes and customs, confirming, adding and modifying as he saw fit, with the right of coercion against those who tried to limit him in his position.

¹¹ For an overview of his pontificate see UGINET, François-Charles – “Eugène IV”. In *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*. Dir. Philippe Levillain. Paris: Fayard, 1994, pp. 642-645.

¹² As we will see, the two projects that extended the reformist activity of Gomes Eanes to contexts of large amplitude resulted in failure.

¹³ GOMES, Saul António – “D. Gomes Eanes e a Capela”, pp. 439-540.

In Coimbra, he also proved to be a keen defender of the monastery's ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as well as of its canonical and civil immunities and privileges. In a politically convenient ambiance, he managed to obtain from King Afonso V, in 1449, a general confirmation of all former royal privileges granted to the monastery. It should also be noted that he showed particular attention to the well-being of the canonical community, namely providing for the suitability of resources allocated to the subsistence of the professed¹⁴.

Such characteristics of his rulership of the house of Coimbra, were already easily recognizable during his years in Florence, either in the objectives he wanted to achieve and the actions he took with those goals in mind, or in the ways in which he handled his influence and promoted his reformist agenda near the powerful.

Especially during the years he headed the *Badia*, in the many areas of his action, we can distinguish how mobility was a constant and decisive factor for Gomes Eanes' success, both in carrying out his plans for religious renovation and observance per se, and in exercising his authority as abbot.

Visitations, papal assignments, secular tasks at the service of the Signoria of Florence, missions related to the temporal and spiritual administration of the *Badia*, missions on behalf of the Portuguese Crown, travels associated with the reconstruction of the *Badia* and the handling of its library/*scriptorium*, as well as dislocations for the founding of other religious institutions such as the *Murate* in Italy, and the *Lóios* in Portugal, were a consistent and constant part of his *modus operandi*, without which we would be unable to study and understand such a prolific and original personality. There were also many other travels resulting from other more personal interests like trying to escape epidemics, or at the other extreme, related to the abbot's growing circle of friends and *clientèle*, introduced to his narrower circle by asking for personal favors, and thereby using books, as objects of gift, as curious and revealing objects of desire which acquire a whole new role in these handlings.

The extraordinarily numerous and rich collection of letters that came to us, are an incomparable source of information on his life. Not only do they reveal much about his personality and interests, they also let us understand his movements, his way of operating, his influence and agency upon the powerful of his time.

¹⁴ GOMES, Saul António – “D. Gomes Eanes e a Capela”, pp. 439-540.

The correspondence

The documentary *corpus* used for this study¹⁵ is, in itself, paradigmatic of the relevance of cultural circulation, both in Gomes Eanes' reformist intents and in terms of his personal sociability. By observing the synergy derived from the contagion between his different spheres of activity, clearly visible in his *carteggio*, we are able to understand, for example, how his action made certain events possible, like the infiltration of Italian agents in Portugal in the first half of the fifteenth century, or inversely, the involvement of Portuguese nationals in important areas of Italian life such as academic and humanist circles¹⁶, the acquisition and circulation of cultural and artistic items (books, paintings, luxury items), religious pilgrimages, and of course, trade.¹⁷ Furthermore, his correspondence enables us to learn about different aspects of the coeval practice of travelling, namely at a sociological level, at a motivational level, or even information about the means of transport and required conditions for land and sea routes to be practiced or chosen.

As Rita Costa-Gomes has pointed out, epistolary writing was a widespread form of communication in the late Middle Ages, and it was a prime textual form of creating and strengthening relations of trust and friendship between people.¹⁸ This was particularly true for Gomes Eanes, where proximity often bordered intimacy.¹⁹

In the case of Gomes Eanes, the attentive observation of his letters reveal personal emotions and perceptions, as well as intrinsic intentions and ideologies. In this capacity, they provide important information about the context in which they were produced, as well as who writes them and, above all, receives them.

The books

Endowed with such a specific function, the letters included in Gomes Eanes' *carteggio* allow for a reconstruction of the abbot's trans-national web of social and political relations, and its inherent mobility. Among the many possible examples of such networking, we chose the study of the circulation of books and Gomes

¹⁵ Which, we should point out, includes original missives currently kept in two Florentine archives (Biblioteca Laurenziana and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale), and therefore do not correspond to the entirety of Gomes Eanes' presence in Italy, nor to the entirety of his correspondence.

¹⁶ To which, as his correspondence demonstrates so well, Gomes Eanes was intimately connected, both in Florence and in the Roman Curia itself.

¹⁷ *A Portuguese Abbot*, XI-XXI.

¹⁸ COSTA-GOMES, Rita – "Letters and Letter-Writing in Fifteenth Century Portugal". In SCHULTE, Regina; TIPPELSKIRCH, Xenia von (eds.) – *Writing, Reading, Interpreting and Historicizing: Letters as Historical Sources*. Florence: Working Papers of the European University, 2004, pp. 11-37; *A Portuguese Abbot*, XXXIV-XLIII.

¹⁹ Close observation of these letters reveals personal emotions and perceptions, as well as intrinsic intentions and ideologies. As such they are rare and invaluable historical sources.

Eanes involvement in procuring, lending and commanding books as a particularly enlightening path for focusing on religious-cultural questions and as a means of establishing long-lasting relationships. When Gomes Eanes entered the *Badia* in 1418 the institution possessed very few books. By the time he left the abbey, in 1440, it had an extensive and valuable library. He sponsored translations, copies and acquisitions, as well as commissioning various other books. These were not limited to religious texts, but included inherited books, bequeathed libraries and recovered works that had been lost – as becomes obvious from the reading of the missives sent in 1436 by Timoteo Ricci first to Ambrogio Traversari²⁰ and later to Andrea de Torri.²¹

Noteworthy throughout this whole period is the fact that the circulation of books as cultural objects accompanies that of their authors, users and guardians. This is not surprising given the great importance that the abbot gave to the ecclesiastical and literary training of the members of his community, to the point that books and culture were one of the mainstreams of his religious reform program.

There were many requests for gaining access to, or borrowing the works in the *Badia*'s collection, namely by the humanist monk Ambrogio Traversari, a close friend of Gomes Eanes.²² But also, Iacopo di Lapo Niccolini²³ and the monk Ignazio Ferrucci of the monastery of San Donnino in Pisa.²⁴ Ludovico Barbo himself, abbot of the Santa Justina monastery of Padua, seat of the monastic congregation to which the *Badia* belonged, asked Gomes Eanes for a copy of the recent translation of *De Vita Patrum* by Traversari²⁵ It is not an exaggeration to propose that, at that time, Santa Maria of Florence served, among other things, as a center for distribution of books.²⁶

Concurrently, various references reveal the role played by the *Badia* as a safe deposit for books, i.e., a space in which that cultural and artistic object was left under the protection and safekeeping of the local monks.

Worthy of special attention in this context are two of the epistolary records. One was the letter sent on June 18, 1426 by Antonio Correr to Gomes Eanes,²⁷ in which the cardinal and bishop of Oporto (Italy) explains that the papal curia had been relocated due to the plague. Along with this missive he sent two boxes with books and various objects to be kept in the custody of Gomes Eanes in the Florentine *Badia*. The other was the correspondence sent by the monk Matteo di Sicilia of the

²⁰ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 342-343.

²¹ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 352.

²² *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 517, 531.

²³ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 156.

²⁴ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 195-196, 202-203.

²⁵ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 293-294.

²⁶ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 282.

²⁷ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 57-59.

Subiaco monastery to the prior and monks of the Florentine *Badia*, indicating that the books had been sent inside a locked container with the respective inventory.²⁸

In the sphere of the elaboration and acquisition of books, several influential people found in Gomes Eanes a resourceful person and even a mentor. A good example is Afonso Eanes, a merchant from Oporto and member of the Royal Council of King Duarte (r.1433-1438), of whom he was a proctor in Italy. We know from the correspondence between the two men that Afonso Eanes asked the abbot for guidance and supervision over books he had commissioned to be copied in Florence, in particular a *Book of Hours* whose quality was supposed to exceed that of most illuminated manuscripts.²⁹

Another case is that of João Rodrigues, dean of Lisbon and secretary of the future king Duarte. On May 8 and 22, 1429, writing from Rome, João Rodrigues asked the abbot of Florence for help in acquiring a copy of the Latin epistles of Colluccio Salutati, which he saw as indispensable for his work as secretary to the prince, along with several other books that he considered useful.³⁰ Two years before, João Rodrigues had asked Gomes Eanes for help in finding a copyist capable of completing a breviary that had been initiated in Portugal, as well as assistance in obtaining the appropriate parchment for this work.³¹

In May 1437, while waiting in Venice to embark on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Vasco Rodrigues, precentor of the cathedral of Braga, sent his last will and testament to Gomes Eanes, and asked that a breviary that he intended to recover upon his return, be illuminated under the latter's supervision.³² In February that year, in a letter to Gomes Eanes, prince Fernando (1402-1443) also entrusted the abbot of Florence with the supervision of the making of a certain book.³³

In turn, Friar Lope de Olmedo, head of the Order of the Hermit Monks of St. Jerome wrote to Gomes Eanes in September and December of 1426 asking for a copy of the treaty *De Serenitate Conscientiae* to be made, which at the time was in the possession of the abbot of Florence. The work was intended for Samuel de Marini, brother of the archbishop of Genova.³⁴

In May 1437 the royal judge Rodrigo Anes Vilela asked Gomes Eanes for advice and protection for his son, who was studying in Italy, and if necessary his supervision in the purchase of the books required for the completion of his studies.³⁵

²⁸ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 82.

²⁹ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 65, 72-73.

³⁰ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 279, 282.

³¹ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 174-175.

³² *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 385-387.

³³ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 367-368.

³⁴ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 79-80, 111-112.

³⁵ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 405-406.

Correspondence from the monk Francesco di Gubbio that same year, seriously ill in Rome and with scant resources to live on, was emotionally charged as he desperately appealed from Gomes Eanes that he would send him books and pray for him.³⁶

In August of the following year the nobleman Aires Gomes da Silva at the service of prince Pedro and proctor of his affairs near the crown of Aragon, asked Gomes Eanes to send him a book that he had ordered in Bruges, via Florence.³⁷

Parallel to all such evidence, there are several indications that in his incessant travels, Gomes Eanes most likely also carried books with him. A good example was his journey to Monte Sonaio with several monks, in which his baggage included two baskets that served to transport books (among other things).³⁸ The same happened in 1438 when he travelled to Pisa to escape the epidemic that was raging in Florence, also in the company of other monks. When he returned from one of his trips to Portugal in 1436, Gomes Eanes brought with him a considerable number of books.³⁹

References to *Books of Hours*, *Breviaries* or merely to “books” without specifying their type, abound in more than eighty of the letters of Gomes Eanes’s correspondence, profusely evidencing the circulation of material culture, almost always in the context of the contacts between Portugal and Italy.

The artistic dimension

It is worth noting that Gomes Eanes was also a well learned patron in the domain of the arts. He hired artists specialized in murals and other forms of painting, including the Portuguese painter João Gonçalves who lived in the *Badia* of Florence for several years.⁴⁰ In effect, independently of the medium, the Abbot of Florence⁴¹ revealed an open spirit towards art from very early on. He considered the artistic element to be essential for the apparatus and magnificence of cult in the interior of a temple, and indispensable in the daily life of the monks, particularly in terms of human and spiritual education.

One example is the series of twelve frescoes painted by a Portuguese painter in the upper cloister of the *Badia* with scenes of the life of St. Benedict. These are two periods of pictorial activity that correspond, respectively, to two painters: the first

³⁶ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 179-182.

³⁷ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 241-242.

³⁸ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 536.

³⁹ NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez*, pp. 126-127.

⁴⁰ NUNES, Eduardo Alexandre Borges – *Dom Frey Gomez*, pp. 269-280.

⁴¹ Gomes Eanes also became known by this designation.

is the above mentioned João Gonçalves – the author of ten frescoes – and the other, although probably Portuguese, remains anonymous⁴².

In the monastery of Santa Cruz of Coimbra, he also promoted major works and the renewal of liturgical objects within the Church, as well as importing sculptures from Italy. He was also responsible for ordering the construction of a large new pipe organ, as well as for importing from Flanders of a mechanical watch. This in addition to enriching the cenobium with liturgical vestments, revealing particular care with the aesthetic-devotional apparatus. However, the most important work of art sponsored by D. Gomes in Coimbra was the chapel-sanctuary of Santo André and of the Franciscan Moroccan Martyrs, where a jeweled mitre and the silver ark intended for the bones of the five Martyrs, with its five silver images, deserve to be highlighted. In short, he continued his artistic patronage in Coimbra in exactly the same terms as he had done in Florence⁴³.

Also in this respect, his correspondence is revealing of how the displacements between the cenobium and the outside world are responsible for the circulation of artistic trends and patterns. With the particularity of, once more, dealing with cross-border displacements, thus evocative of a transnational dialogue, in this specific case, between Portugal and Italy. Christianity is, in fact, conceived by the abbot of Florence as a functional space to be visited and explored in the most diverse dimensions in support of religious reform.

Religious observance and renewal

The letters of Gomes Eanes' (*carteggio*) relating to observance and religious renovation reveal the same intense circulation that characterized his trajectory in Italy. Good examples are the letters exchanged with the monk Marino de Maffeo between 1421 and 1422, who at the time was in Rome in the papal curia, "acting on behalf of the cause of the annexation of Santa Maria del Santo Sepolcro (le Campora) to the Badia Fiorentina, a papal decision opposed by the Prior of that monastery."⁴⁴

Another can be found in the epistle sent to Gomes Eanes by the director of the Congregation of Santa Giustina, Teofilo Michiel, dated June 16, 1424, in which he "conveys to abbot Gomes Eanes the decision of the annual chapter to entrust him with the project of reforming the monasteries of Rimini and Cesena by sending some of his monks there."⁴⁵

⁴² REIS, António Matos – "O Claustro da Badia de Florença". In *Estudos em homenagem ao Professor Doutor José Amadeu Coelho Dias*. Vol. 1. Porto: Faculdade de Letras, 2006, pp. 141-158.

⁴³ GOMES, Saul António – "D. Gomes Eanes e a Capela".

⁴⁴ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 23.

Equally revealing in this context is the correspondence exchanged with the monk Iacopo Niccolini who, on January 16, 1426, complained to the abbot of Florence about a monk who had stolen food, and at the same time asked him for help in mentoring the studies of a young and promising novice. Two years later, Iacopo again “begs abbot Gomes Eanes to consider his decision of sending harmful and incorrigible monks to his community, whose behavior and vices will contaminate the others and cause scandal.”⁴⁶

There are various other examples of an intense circulation of monks, such as the letters by Biagio Onofri (monastery of Santo Donnino in Pisa on May 13, 1429), by his disciple Estevão de Aguiar (on September 5, 1429), and by the monk Bartolo in 1430 clearly attest.

In the first case, “the monks are disappointed that they will not have the visit of Abbot Gomes, as they rejoice on the growing numbers in the community. (...) Biagio also refers to the acquisition of clothes for the winter.”⁴⁷ In the second epistle, Estevão de Aguiar “asks for Abbot Gomes Eanes’ assistance in the reform of the monasteries of Portugal, and requests that some brothers be sent from Italy for that purpose.”⁴⁸ Finally, the monk Bartolo reports to the abbot the state of disrepair and popular agitation that he found in the church of San Bartolo a Grieve where he recommends that Gomes Eanes comes to visit soon.⁴⁹

A wide network of influence

Gomes Eanes’ *carteggio* reveals him, ultimately, as the epicenter of a group of Portuguese travelers, namely noblemen, students and clerics who at the time circulated in Italy, all thanks to his network of influence and his involvement in different spheres of activity, in most cases related to projects of religious reform.

As we can see in Chart 1 and in the corresponding Graph 1 and Map 1 (pertaining to the *carteggio* and chronology under study), the geographic breadth and the number of places from where the abbot of Florence received correspondence is remarkable, especially in relation to his work in Italy.

⁴⁶ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 219.

⁴⁷ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 280.

⁴⁸ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 290.

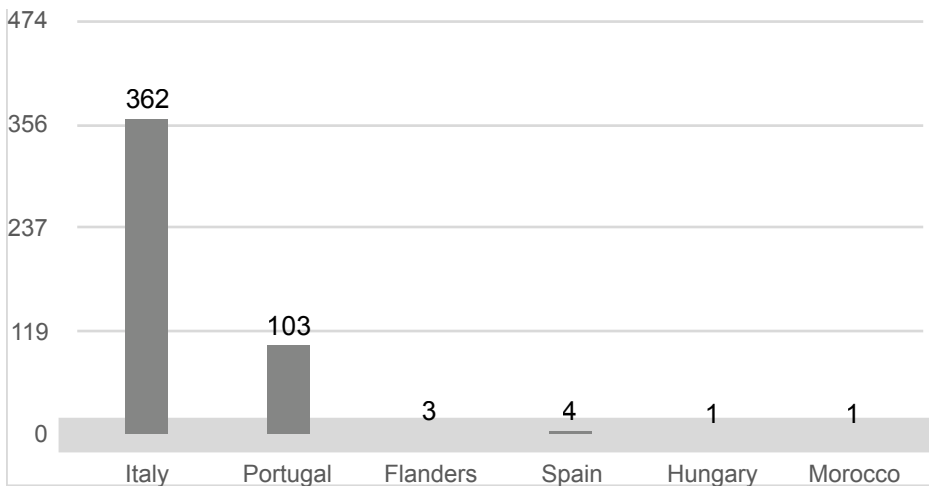
⁴⁹ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 306.

Chart 1 – Letters sent to Gomes Eanes (Place of origin)

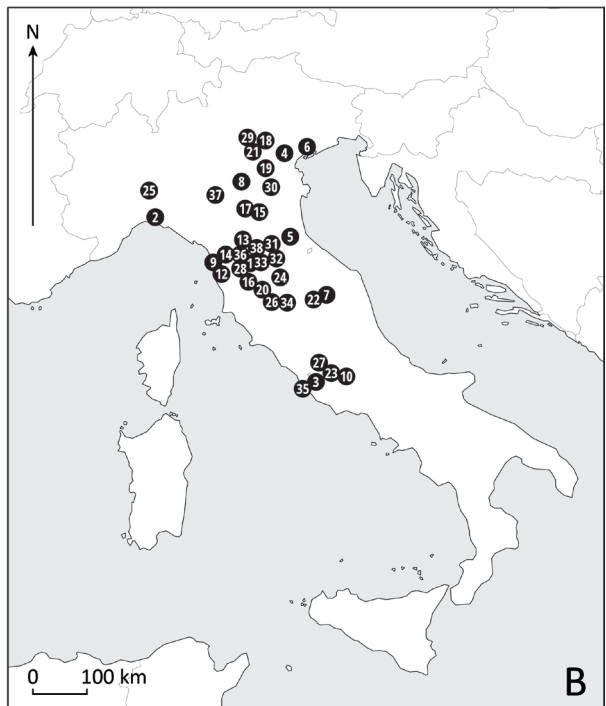
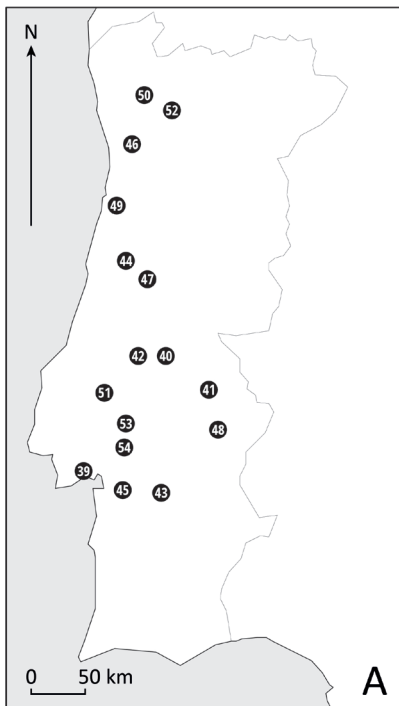
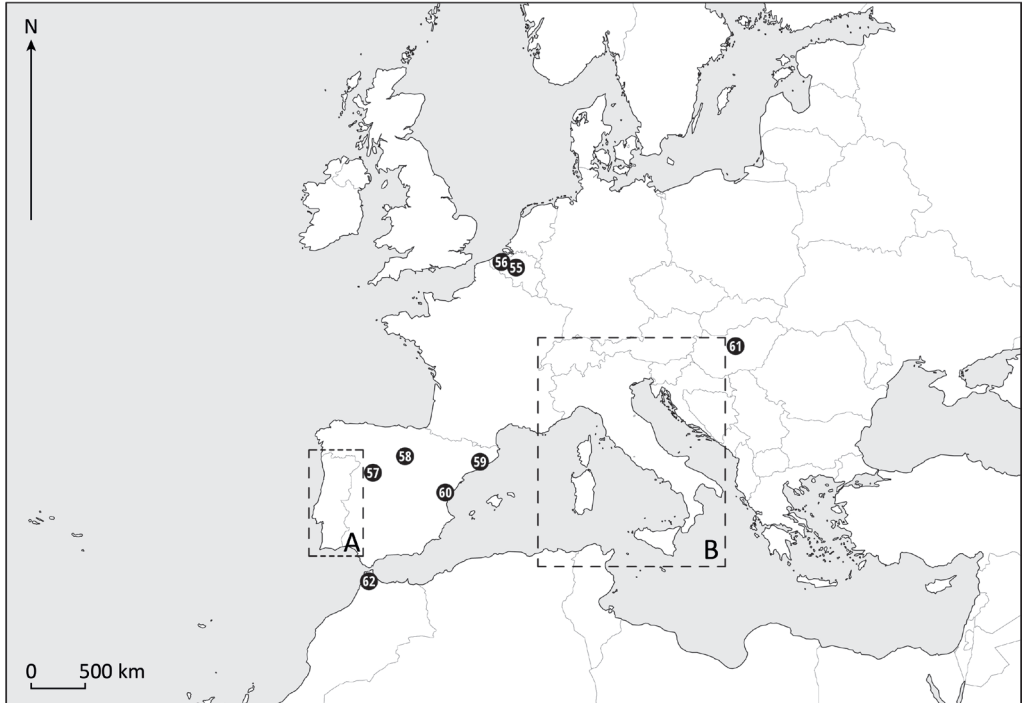
Nº	Place of origin	Occurrences
1	Florence	17
2	Genoa	2
3	Rome	78
4	Padoa	17
5	Cesena	1
6	Venice	28
7	Assisi	2
8	San Benedetto di Polirone (Mantua)	2
9	Pisa	113
10	Subiaco (Rome)	2
11	San Martino a Mensola (Florence)	7
12	Livorno	1
13	Santa Maria a Querceto (Florence)	1
14	San Michele di Agnano (Pisa)	1
15	Bologna	34
16	Badia ad Isola (Siena)	2
17	Mercatello	3
18	Vicenza	2
19	Santa Maria de Praglia (Padua)	1
20	Siena	4
21	S. Giacomo da Grigliano (Lavagno)	1
22	Perugia	1
23	Cervara	1
24	Arezzo	2
25	Tortona	1
26	San Quirico d'Orcia	1
27	Tivoli	3
28	San Casciano (Florence)	2
29	San Leonardo (Verona)	1
30	Ferrara	8
31	San Gaudenzio (San Godenzo)	1
32	Bibbiena	1
33	San Salvi (Florence)	1
34	Montepulciano	1
35	Fiumesino	2
36	Prato	1
37	Parma	1
38	Monte Senario (Vaglia)	1
	<i>Italy (location unknown)</i>	14
	ITALY – TOTAL	362
39	Lisbon (Portugal)	51
40	Abrantes (Portugal)	1
41	Fronteira (Portugal)	2

42	Punhete (Constância, Portugal)	5
43	Torrão (Portugal)	2
44	Tentúgal (Portugal)	1
45	Alcácer do Sal (Portugal)	2
46	Porto (Portugal)	10
47	Coimbra (Portugal)	2
48	Estremoz (Portugal)	1
49	Aveiro (Portugal)	1
50	Braga (Portugal)	4
51	Santarém (Portugal)	9
52	Quintã da Barra (Portugal)	1
53	Salvaterra (Portugal)	1
54	Benavente (Portugal)	1
	<i>Portugal (location unknown)</i>	9
PORTUGAL - TOTAL		103
55	L'Écluse (Flanders)	1
56	Bruges (Flanders)	2
FLANDERS - TOTAL		3
57	Salamanca (Spain)	1
58	Burgo de Osma (Spain)	1
59	Barcelona (Spain)	1
60	Valencia (Spain)	1
SPAIN - TOTAL		4
61	Buda (Hungary)	1
62	Tangier (Morocco)	1
OTHERS - TOTAL		2
TOTAL (GLOBAL)		474

Graphic 1 – Letters sent to Gomes Eanes (Place of origin - Occurrences)



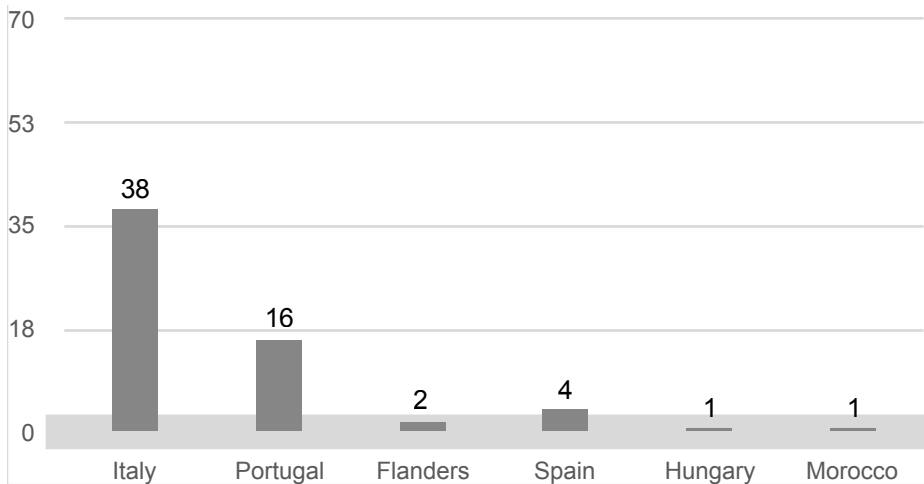
Map 1 – Letters sent to Gomes Eanes (Place of origin)



No less remarkable are the mentions to cities like Rome, Pisa, Venice, Padoa, Bologna and even Florence (Chart 1 and corresponding Graphic 2). In the case of Rome, the numbers are indicative of Gomes Eanes' activity (direct and indirect) in the curia. It was not unwarranted that in his trajectory between Portugal and Italy he served six popes, all of whom were, to a greater or lesser degree, reformers: Gregory XII, Martin V, Eugenius IV, Nicholas V, Calixtus III, and Pius II.

It is also worth mentioning that cities like Pisa – with 113 mentions – Venice and Florence had a strong Portuguese presence at the time, mainly for commercial reasons (as can be seen from the correspondence of the merchant Afonso Eanes present in the *carteggio*, in its almost totality sent from Pisa)⁵⁰. The same could be said about Bologna, this time due to the intense *peregrinatio academica* from Portugal⁵¹.

Graphic 2 – Letters sent to Gomes Eanes (Place of origin - References)



⁵⁰ In total there are twenty-five missives sent by Afonso Eanes from Pisa to Gomes Eanes. In addition to these there are still one from Genoa and four from Porto (Portugal), both commercial cities. COSTA-GOMES, Rita – “Between Pisa and Porto: Afonso Eanes, Merchant of the King of Portugal (1426-1440)”. In CURTO, Diogo Ramada (ed.) – *From Florence to the Mediterranean and Beyond*. Florence: Olshki Editore, 2009, pp. 235-248.

⁵¹ COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – “Estudantes portugueses na reitoria do Colégio de S. Clemente de Bolonha na primeira metade do século XV”. *Arquivos de História da Cultura Portuguesa*, vol. III, 1 (1969), pp. 3-157; COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – *Portugueses no Colégio de S. Clemente e Universidade de Bolonha durante o século XV*. 2 vols. Bolonha: Real Colégio de España, 1990, *passim*.

Educator of reformers

One of the most impressive testimonies to Gomes Eanes' reforming action were his disciples. Dispersed across different monasteries and religious orders they took with them the uses of observance and the seeds of reform. The fruit would appear years later, manifested, for example, in the improvement of several Camaldolese monasteries, in the dynamic renovation movement of the Congregation of St. Salvi within the Order of Vallombrosa and the flourishing Cistercian community of Settimo. Regarding the latter, see the missive sent by Domenico Capranica to Gomes Eanes, dated August 22, 1437⁵².

Expansion, vitality, novices, good revenues, observance and spiritual discipline. All this in the monasteries reformed by his former students and always involving intense circulation of people, objects, ideas, and in this specific case, models of good behavior and virtue.

An extensive circle of friends

Another feature of Gomes Eanes' contribution to the reform of the Church in the 15th century were the ties of mutual friendship that he established with some of the founders of the new movements of observance. Gomes Eanes had great and powerful friends in the curia: Ludovico Barbo, Juan de Mella (1397-1467) and the *cubicularius* Arsénio, are just a few examples.

With them he exchanged advice, and services. He asked for their help and rewarded them generously. An example was his special friendship with the second man of the Congregation of Santa Giustina, Giovanni di Sicilia, abbot of St. Paul. Eugenius IV even joined the two abbots in various missions. But there were others, like Fr. Beltramo de Correnti, abbot of the congregation of Cervara. These friendships were always cemented on personal and epistolary contacts (the letters show this very well). A further example is the friendship with Fr. Lope de Olmedo (1370-1433), leader of the Order of the Hermit Monks of St. Jerome. Contacts, mutual help, consultations, and influences in the field of ideology and action. Then there was the friendship with the three founders of the Portuguese congregation of Secular Canons of Vilar de Frades, later called St. John Evangelist, or more commonly, of the *Lóios*: preceptor João Vicente (1380-1463), bishop of Lamego and future superior of this congregation, the preacher Martim Lourenço and the nobleman Afonso Nogueira (1399-1464).

⁵² *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 432-433.

Gomes Eanes's involvement in the founding of the *Lóios* was decisive, as demonstrated by the correspondence he exchanged in 1426-1427 with João Vicente. In it we can distinguish Gomes Eanes' intense *circulation*, particularly to obtain the statutes of the canons of St. George of Alga to help found the *Lóios*.⁵³

In this context – as revealed by letters dating from August 9, 20 and 23, 1426 sent by the aforementioned merchant Afonso Eanes to Gomes Eanes –, Afonso Nogueira, one of the founders of the *Lóios*, was in Florence to obtain the statutes through the intermediary of the abbot of Florence, who undertook the endeavor of requesting the manuscripts from Giovanni Michiel (?-1430), abbot of San Giorgio Maggiore of Venice.⁵⁴

Both the missive sent by the latter on September 23 of that year to Gomes Eanes, and the letter from Afonso Nogueira (of January 2, 1428, also addressed to the abbot of Florence) showed the positive outcome of this process.

But the strongest friendship that Gomes Eanes cultivated in Italy was with the General of the Camaldolese, the humanist monk Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439). It was a friendship born out of a communion of ideas and mutual admiration, nurtured and manifested in a circle of common friends, namely Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464), and through the exchange of books, collaboration in the visitation of the Vallombrosa abbey, joint assignments, money loans, and various other circumstances⁵⁵.

Missions

As abbot of a famous monastery who personally made himself noteworthy by his observance and integrity, or through his in-depth knowledge of the canons and legal procedure, Gomes Eanes saw a good part of his time and activity requisitioned for situations beyond the monastery and its business, in the form of occasional assignments or even permanent positions.

Some of his missions were of a secular nature, either by request of private individuals or by the Florentine authorities (which in most cases implied Gomes Eanes acting as an arbitrator in financial disputes), or in the circles of the Portuguese Crown. But the bulk of his assignments came from the Roman Curia, some of which were clearly indicative of his reforming spirit, such as his rank of visitor of

⁵³ COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – *Bispos de Lamego*, pp. 202-220.

⁵⁴ The Abbey of Santa Maria of Florence, governed by Gomes Eanes, belonged, along with the monasteries of Santa Justina of Padua, of St. George of Venice, and St. Felix and St. Fortunatus of Aimone to the Congregation of Santa Justina of Padua (established officially on January 1, 1419).

⁵⁵ Regarding the theme of the circle of friendships emerging from common humanistic interests see CABY, Cécile – *Autoportrait d'un moine en humaniste. Girolamo Aliotti (1412-1480)*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018, *passim*.

monasteries and reformer of Orders. The big majority of these posts were by order of Eugenius IV, whose approach to reform was congruent with that of the abbot of Florence.

The best example is probably his action to support the foundation of a new convent for nuns in Florence, which would grow rapidly and become famous under the name of *Le Murate*, (walled women)⁵⁶. He worked to find living quarters for them and to obtain the approval of Eugenius IV. He copied the rule himself, and attached the Constitutions elaborated for that purpose also by him. He helped the nuns through commissions that he obtained from the pope, and did everything in his means to make sure that their requests were attended to.

The connection with the Portuguese Crown

Throughout the entire fifteenth century, the Portuguese monarchy lived in heated confrontation with the clergy as a result of the Crown's determination to reform the problematic context of religious life that prevailed in Portugal at the time⁵⁷. The royal commitment in renewing and altering the problematic religious situation lived in Portugal can be seen in the emblematic book *Leal Conselheiro* (*Loyal Counselor*), by King Duarte, where he advocates reforming action from an essentially spiritual perspective, i.e., the interior renewal of the Christian faithful, laity and clergy.

The new Avis dynasty took on the *obligation* of good spiritual guidance of the faithful, and of the actual clerics. Only in appearance was this context contradictory, since on the one hand the Crown adopted legal measures to restrict the clergy's freedom,⁵⁸ and on the other it invested in corrective measures for the Church and its members, which ultimately meant recognizing the greater importance of the ecclesiastical universe, at different levels, for the destinies of the realm.

⁵⁶ SOUSA, Ivo Carneiro de – “A rainha D. Leonor e as murate de Florença (notas de investigação)”. *Revista da Faculdade de Letras – História*, IV (1987), pp. 119-133.

⁵⁷ Regarding the nature and scope of this conflict between royal power and the Church, see MARQUES, José – “Relações entre a Igreja e o Estado em Portugal no século XV”. *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História* 11 (1994), pp. 137-172; VENTURA, Margarida Garcez – *Igreja e poder no século XV. Dinastia de Avis e liberdades eclesiásticas (1383-1450)*. Lisboa: Colibri, 1997; ROSA, Maria de Lurdes – *As Almas Herdeiras. Fundação de Capelas Fúnebres e Afirmação da Alma como Sujeito de Direito (Portugal, 1400-1521)*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2012 [in particular the Introduction and the 3rd part, dedicated to the reform in fifteenth century Portugal].

⁵⁸ See the proclamation of the “Jacobine laws” of December 1419 (that is, forty ordinances concerning jurisdictional – and not theological or disciplinary – issues between the church and temporal power) which so displeased the Portuguese clergy. It was a significant moment in the relations between the Portuguese Crown and Church, which after that became tense. VENTURA, Margarida Garcez – “As ‘Leis Jacobinas’. Estudo e transcrição”. *Medievalista* [online] 12 (July-December 2012). Available at <https://medievalista.fcsh.unl.pt/MEDIEVALISTA12/ventura1203.html>.

Throughout this process, which essentially had the objective of returning to the earlier purity and simplicity of the Church, the royal family's affection and preference for Gomes Eanes was evident, as a reforming and zealous element who believed in an observant spirituality. Some examples are the epistles dispatched by the following people and institutions: the papal prothonotary Alvaro Ferreira (Rome, March 15, 1427; and Buda, between August and October 1426),⁵⁹ the acting proctor of the king of Portugal in the papal curia, João Rodrigues (Rome, February 2, 1429),⁶⁰ Afonso Eanes (Pisa, August 16, 1426),⁶¹ the Council of the city of Lisbon (May 16, 1437),⁶² Marco Contarini (Venice, April 22, 1437), and especially, King John I (Lisbon, July 28, 1429)⁶³ and King Duarte (Santarém, January 29 and March 23, 1437;⁶⁴ Lisbon, May 16, June 25, July 21, August 27 and September 9, 1437⁶⁵). Also significant are the letters sent by Queen Leonor (r.1433-1438, regent 1438-1439) to her brother, King John of Navarre (r.1425-1479) from Santarém on January 31, 1437,⁶⁶ and to Gomes Eanes, from Abrantes on February 20, 1438.⁶⁷

Two factors determined the Crown's choice of Gomes Eanes to carry out the reform in Portugal: in the first place, his reforming spirit, demonstrated by the reform of the monastery of Santa Maria of Florence and of other regular Italian communities; secondly, his solidarity with the Crown and his role as someone who would advance the Portuguese interests in Italy, especially near the Papal curia (it is no coincidence that he was an ambassador, both in Portugal and the curia). In fact, Gomes Eanes circulated with ease among the papal curia and the courts of cardinals, abbots, kings and princes. He even belonged to the private circle of Eugenius IV at the time of the latter's flight to Florence.

In Portugal, both Prince Duarte and Princess Isabel (1397-1471), his sister and future Duchess of Burgundy⁶⁸, are excellent examples of the association of

⁵⁹ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 66-68, 152.

⁶⁰ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 257-258.

⁶¹ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 72-73.

⁶² *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 398-399.

⁶³ *A Portuguese Abbot*, p. 285.

⁶⁴ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 358-361, 370-372.

⁶⁵ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 392-395, 412-413, 425-426, 434-436, 447-449.

⁶⁶ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 362-363.

⁶⁷ *A Portuguese Abbot*, pp. 487-488.

⁶⁸ Isabel supports, since early on, the movements and proposals associated with the renewal of religious life. Indeed, even before marrying Philippe III of Burgundy, said Philippe the Good (1396-1467), the Infanta carried out an important reforming action. But, once in Burgundy, she openly promoted the proposals of the reformist movements from Northern Europe (closely linked to *Devotio Moderna*) which advocated new currents of spirituality guided by observance. Her religiosity was clearly determined by these currents that aimed at the clerical dimension, but also the lay dimension. At the cultural level, specifically, the activity of the new Duchess stood out in supporting the translation of old texts of a religious matrix, as well as the exchange between the courts of Portugal and Burgundy, namely through the introduction of works from the Portuguese Court in Burgundy (of which the aforementioned *Leal Conselheiro* – *Loyal Counselor* – is an example) and, on the contrary, to the dissemination in the realm of origin of the writings of authors from beyond the Pyrenees (such as the *Book of the Three Virtues*, by the Italian poet and philosopher Cristina de Pisano [1363-c 1430], who lived in France during

D. Gomes with powerful lay figures in pursuing his reformist intentions. Of the favors obtained by the king from Pope Eugene IV thanks to the intervention of the Abbot of Florence, passing through the involvement of Isabel in the attempts to introduce Benedictine observance in Portugal, at the time promoted by D. Gomes, there are several examples of exchanges between the court and the Portuguese reformer.

Gomes Eanes was a member of the royal councils of King Duarte (r.1433-1438) and King Afonso V (r.1438-1481). He also carried out the functions of papal legate for Portugal between 1435 and 1437, and participated actively in several important Church events, including sessions of the Council of Basel/Ferrara/Florence (1431-1445), as a supporter of Eugenius IV.

As shown in Chart 1 and corresponding Graphs 1 and 2, there is evidence of a dialogue between Portugal and Italy being established and continuously nourished by the Benedictine abbot, largely thanks to epistolography.

This dialogue showed the profound connection between the religious and royal authorities that would help the reforming process of the Church get under way in fifteenth-century Portugal. The most productive period of this process was precisely during the twenty years that Gomes Eanes was in Italy: the abbot of Florence traveled twice to Portugal during that time to promote reform, first of the Benedictine Order, between 1424 and 1426, and later of the monastic orders in Portugal from 1435 to 1436. The second project implied the general visitation and reformation of the entire clergy in Portugal. In both cases he had the support of the Crown.

In the second voyage, Gomes Eanes, accompanied by the bishop of Lamego, João Vicente (1380-1463), came with the titles of general visitors and reformers of the entire clergy of Portugal.

Both projects were generalist in nature and very extensive and ambitious in their objectives, and eventually resulted in failure. Only in the following century, as would happen with the rest of Christendom, would Portugal be prepared for a complete reform initiative. In other words, reforms of this scope, with the consequent and impacting changes in the structures of the national Catholic world, would only find a favorable institutional environment (at the religious level) after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), that is, in 1563. For its effective application it was necessary to be supported only by an inclusive movement that offered them cohesion and institutional solidarity, even if carried out by reformers as prestigious as Abbot Gomes Eanes.

The specific reasons for this failure lie, above all, in three elements: on the one hand, the internal disagreements and oppositions experienced by the very order to

the first half of the fourteenth century). See SOMME, Monique – *Isabelle de Portugal, Duchesse de Bourgogne. Une femme au pouvoir au XVe siècle*. Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998, pp. 451-478. The sixteenth chapter of this work, entitled “Faith and works”, is fundamental to the study of the support given by Isabel to the reform of religious orders.

which D. Gomes belonged, the Benedictines; on the other hand, the obstacles posed by other elements of the clergy who felt affected in the process (that is, who saw their benefits and privileges in some way curtailed); then, the papacy's deep fears of the increasingly intense and evident intrusion of royal power in the sphere of ecclesiastical affairs.

The first aspect seems evident in the first mission, first of all due to the resistance moved by other reformers such as the influential archbishop of Braga, Fernando da Guerra (1390-1467), and the equally Benedictine Friar André Dias (1348-c. 1451)⁶⁹, renowned abbot, bishop, master of theology, canonist and university professor in Rome, who also participated in the councils of Constance (1414-1418) and Basel-Ferrara-Florence (1431-1445).

Already in the context of the second mission of D. Gomes, in a letter of 28 January 1436, Friar André Dias protested against the abbot of Florence, because it was said that in his attempts to introduce reform in Portuguese Benedictine monasteries he intended to deprive him of rights. In this correspondence, Friar André Dias pleads with Gomes Eanes to spare him problems in his old age, and that he must make observance not to his monastery, but to others, such as Pedroso, Santo Tirso and Pombeiro, whose abbots, in addition to having more children and women than he, were far more ignorant, foolish, reckless and irresponsible. A threatening letter this was, to the point of including threats of recourse to the council. Indeed, the obstacles raised to the reform of the Benedictines in Portugal by D. Gomes reached such a point that he had to return to Italy.

But it is also possible to identify this first point in the dissensions registered between D. Gomes himself and his disciples, as happened with Friar Estêvão de Aguiar and Friar Fernando Falcão, Portuguese nobles and professed Benedictines from the abbey of Florence, who obtained from Pope Martin V permission to erect a Benedictine monastery of Observance and exempt in Portugal, to be built with the help of relatives and the faithful (it would be in the place of Xabregas, in Lisbon).

This was a process in which D. Gomes, mentor of both, felt unauthorized, not least because he did not agree with the erection of other monasteries, hopeful in the reform of the existing ones. In this case, therefore, Gomes Eanes himself posed personal questions that prevented the reforms from advancing: his authority was at stake (since he did not agree with the permanence of Estêvão and Fernando in Portugal) and, on the other hand, he did not approve of the fact that Frei Estêvão worked on his own initiative.

In essence those were two reforming intentions, however divergent in the methods of realization. As the correspondence reveals, the conciliatory intervention of Infante Duarte and Infanta Isabel was necessary for the spirits to calm down and

⁶⁹ Who was more a proclaimer of reformist intention than a reformist.

for reconciliation to take place. In other words, reformist intentions and programs lacked consistency and uniformity. So how could Benedictine observance in Portugal be realized?

The second vector, on the other hand, reveals itself in an enlightening way in the context of D. Gomes' reforming mission to Portugal in 1435-1436, when a plea is presented by the prosecutors of the prelates and clergy of Portugal, then in the Curia, setting out the reasons against the designation the Bishop of Lamego, João Vicente, founder of the Order of Lóios, and Gomes Eanes, abbot of Florence, for the development of such a mission. The aim of the supplication was to prevent the visit and to turn the pope's attention back to the need to safeguard ecclesiastical freedoms, with the appointment of unsuspecting visitors, capable of resisting the pressure and influence of powerful lay people (they referred, of course, to the fact that the initiative of the general visit came from the king himself, Duarte). The plea even contained a veiled threat of recourse to the Council, which may have instilled certain fears in the spirit of Pope Eugenius IV.

The third vector, in turn, is manifested in an absolute form also in the second reform mission of D. Gomes to Portugal, when Pope Eugenius IV, in view of the request of Duarte to the Holy See for the appointment of the Florentine abbot as reformer general of the Portuguese monastic congregations, fearing the reaction of the then abbot of Alcobaça who was his supporter in the Council in Basel, postponed the appointment as much as he could – after all, it is necessary to remember, that it is a project of general visitation and reform of all the clergy in Portugal.

As can be concluded, all these mechanisms of obstacle and reaction, in particular those carried out in the very heart of Christendom, dictated the impossibility of greater attempts of *reformatio* to be carried out successfully. And so D. Gomes had, on both occasions, to return to Italy without seeing Duarte's wishes and his own fulfilled.

Finally, we can also refer, in a more abstract but no less binding sense, as causes for the failure, inertia and generalized decay, as well as the very ambition and utopia of the projects, since they aimed at reforming the whole Church at once, an entire nation, without practical conditions for that.

Gomes Eanes and Portugal in the reformist currents that characterize Christendom of the time

Seen from a different angle, Gomes Eanes' trajectory was an example of how, throughout the 15th century, Portugal was not dissociated from the Christian world's leaning to reform religious life. On the contrary, to a greater or lesser extent,

it was part of the contemporary international movements for the reform of the Church, and was therefore not limited to passively watching what was going on beyond its border limits.

Apart from the people and objects circulating in Europe, there were reforming programs which were ultimately religious identity models.

Somehow the heirs, above all because of the spirit of contestation and the desire for change, of previous sects and heresies (ranging from the 12th century to the beginning of the 14th century) such as Libertinism, the Beguines and the Beghards, the *Fratelli* and even the current of Nominalism, these reformist currents had in common several doctrinal and, therefore, ideological traits – which explain, after all, the disorders and reactions that aroused within the church.

We speak of the clear tendency towards the establishment of an interior Christianity, of conscience, evangelical and de-clericalized. All culminated in the authentic desire for a *renovatio ecclesiae*, that is, a markedly spiritual process that would involve a deepening of the pastoral zeal and a reduction of the relaxed life that then characterized a good part of the clergy towards the perfection and rigor of the Christianity of the origins (closer, therefore, to the source: Jesus Christ).

The *forma vitae* of the ecclesiastical world, full of weaknesses and deviations, was a reality and it was necessary, with more or less radicalism, to combat and change this state of affairs: simony, corruption of the clergy, clientelism, the relaxation of the lesser friars (at the point of absolute ignorance and illiteracy), episcopal absenteeism, the temporality of the Pontifical Curia, etc. With a view to authentic zeal for religion, the renewal project of religious life had to be as broad as possible, thus covering the administrative aspect, normative, cultural and spiritual.

In summary, the 15th century was marked by several movements that proclaimed the reform of ecclesiastical institutions, in order to conform them to the Gospel in Christian life, publicly and privately, especially clerics and religious⁷⁰.

In the North and center of Western Christianity, since the end of the 13th century, were figures such as Master Eckart (c. 1260-c. 1328) and his mystical school, William of Ockham (c. 1287-1347), Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275-c. 1342), John Duns or Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) and John of Jandun (c. 1285-1328). Entering the 14th century and fully affirmed in the 15th century stand out John Wycliffe (c. 1328-1384) and the Lollards, John Huss (1369-1415) and the Hussites, Jerome of Prague (1379-1416), the movement of Conrad of Prussia (second half of the 14th century), Dionisius Ryckel or Dionisius Carthusian (c. 1402-1471), the movement of the Dutch Dominicans and, above all, the movement entitled *devotio moderna*, as well as its followers, namely the Cologne Carthusians.

⁷⁰ COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa – “D. Gomes Eanes”, pp. 59-164

We underline the importance of *devotio moderna*, unequivocally one of the most impressive identity models related to religious reformism, which undoubtedly reached Portugal.

In the Latin countries, to the south, the observant mendicants (Franciscan and Dominican), eremitism and the currents of reform of monasticism are highlighted, where we can insert the intense activity of Gomes Eanes. This without forgetting the initiatives of important figures such as Saint Francisca Romana (1384-1440) and Saint Lourenço Justiniano (1381-1456). In turn, other voices, such as Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), Saint Bridget of Sweden (c. 1303-1373) and the Iberian Saint Vicente de Ferrer (1350-1419) debated the issue of ecclesiastical reform intensely. In Spain, the action of Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517) stands out, as well as of the Franciscan and Dominican reformers, where we must emphasize Pedro de Villacreces (c. 1350-1422), the great mentor of the Franciscan reform in Spain and who made him feel deeply in Portugal. In Italy, specifically, the *Pre-Reformation* was conducted by the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) and by the observances of Saint Dominic, Saint Augustine (hermits) and Saint Francis (capuchin).

A final word regarding the councils themselves, especially those of Constance and Basel-Ferrara-Florence. In the course of them these issues and the urgent need for reforms were raised. However, the political struggles that marked these assemblies and involved the papacy and the temporal princes removed all the effectiveness of these complaints. Still, the cause of the reform has been linked to the cause of the council for more than a century. Rome saw it as a weapon of the episcopal and parliamentary system of the priests of Constance and Basel and reacted against it as it reacted against conciliarism⁷¹.

All currents and their protagonists supported their theses in the failures and needs of Christian society and, especially, ecclesiastical society, denouncing, with particular vigor, the luxury and lust of the Church, the clergy's disinterest in the Bible, the primacy of popular rites and devotions, the relaxation of the apostolic function, the exclusion of the laity from pastoral activities and spiritual life.

D. Gomes' reforms would not be strictly in line with all these trends, which at times defended theses incompatible with Catholic doctrine and were therefore condemned by the councils. However, like them, they demanded the change of many aspects in the Catholic Church, mainly in relation to the return to a spirituality more in line with the origins of Christianity (here the agreement with the *devotio moderna* is preeminent), which passed, through example, for the correct formation of clergy, as well as for the purity of their action.

⁷¹ DIAS, José Sebastião da Silva – *Correntes de Sentimento Religioso em Portugal (Séculos XVI a XVIII)*. Vol. I. Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1960, pp. 5-31.

For all this, we realize how the Gomes Eanes' correcting program can never be considered independently, as something stagnant, but rather as part of a broader showcase of events and people that go far beyond the borders of Portugal, extending all over western Europe of the 1400s. He should be, especially, perceived as deeply connected to the Portuguese Crown and with Italy.

Then, the contacts he established, particularly during his time in Italy, integrated his action into platforms of solidarity and supranational influence, which ultimately reflect the frank mobility of the secular and clerical reform proposals of the 15th century in Christianity.

In all this process his mobility stands out, both as a temporal administrator and as a devout reformer, as does the dynamism of the community he led. To a certain extent, this fact contradicts the vow of stability and worldly renunciation promoted by Benedictine canon.

The two decades he spent at the helm of the *Badia* show clearly the relevance of mobility in a Benedictine community ideally devoted to monastic stability and removed from the world, although this mobility was, of course, controlled and regulated by the rules of the Order.

In its purist essence the *Regula Benedicti* ordained and substantiated the discipline of the cloister, focusing on the ecclesiastics' dedication to prayer, liturgical celebrations and mass, silence as an absolute condition for the voice of God and for contemplation of the other spiritual realities. However, reality revealed significant circulation between the monastery and the outside, as well as subsequent simultaneity between the ideal spirit of the monastery as *domus spiritualis* and the daily life of the community, and especially of its abbot. The monastic space was, in fact, fairly permeable to the exterior, and at the same time, maintaining a strong irradiance and influence beyond the walls that separated it from the world. However, it is important not to forget that this mobility was intended, ultimately, for a continuous improvement of the community, especially in terms of religious and cultural education.

Final notes

Gomes Eanes was, by nature, a restless soul. He did not separate action from the (good) government of cultural education, contemplation and spirituality, an attitude that made him act according to a logic derived largely from pragmatism. To reform was to act, and action meant movement. Thus, the building campaign that radically transformed the *Badia* monastery and enlarged its library, the temporal administration of the institution, the involvement in various secular

missions related to the management of the Signoria of Florence and the Portuguese Crown, all remind us that Gomes Eanes' reforming plans on Italian soil cannot be contemplated without considering the circulation and mobility that he stimulated.

In the general context of Gomes Eanes' activity as abbot of Florence, religious renovation required constant presence and supervision, which meant frequent dislocations. Therefore, circulation and mobility became intrinsic to reform. They functioned as inevitable steps of an established methodology.

To speak of Gomes Eanes is to speak of someone well inserted – and, therefore, profoundly knowledgeable – in the religious currents of a reformist character that expanded through Christianity in his time. To that extent, the circulation and mobility that characterize him as well as all those who in some way related to him, as well as objects (in particular books and letters) and the ideas associated with him contribute, as a whole, to transform him into a paradigm of the Italian Renaissance religious intellectual. Someone whose path turns out to be highly influential both in the definition and in the implementation of the new reforms that would characterize the whole of Christianity and whose breadth, to that extent, had an impact that we can consider – as time goes by – “global”.