



# THE ALJUBARROTA BATTLE AND ITS CONTEMPORARY HERITAGE

Edited by

**LUÍS ADÃO DA FONSECA,  
JOÃO GOUVEIA MONTEIRO,  
and MARIA CRISTINA PIMENTA**

**ARC** HUMANITIES PRESS



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## INTRODUCTION

**THIS IS THE** first volume of a new collection devoted to European Medieval Battles. It includes battles representing different chronologies and geographies, many of them not yet widely known to the international medieval studies community or to a wider general public but often highly resonant within particular national or local contexts.

The aim of the series is to make more widely known European battles which may have had a strong national or regional importance, without them being or becoming a pan-European event. Battles are intrinsically related to the winning and losing side, and often the knowledge and importance of a battle stops at the periphery of the winners and losers, even if it originally had consequences beyond those. Often battles relate to or help define national identities thereby shaping Europe in the post-medieval world. English was chosen as language of choice for this series in order to reach out to the largest possible audience. All the volumes provide an overview of the political context of the event, a detailed description of the combat, its reflections in the collective memory of each nation, the relevance of the battlefield and the battle at the present time, stressing different experiences visitors are expected to have in order to bring them closer to the respective historical epoch.

The first volume is dedicated to the Battle of Aljubarrota, fought in central Portugal on August 14, 1385, between the newly elected King João I of Portugal and the Castilian monarch, Juan I of Trastámara. In Portuguese history, this is viewed as the country's most celebrated battle, having profound consequences with regard to the ultimate configuration of the Iberian political world.

In the first chapter, we begin by embedding the conflict in the context of Iberian relations during the fourteenth century, integrating it into the macro European conflict of the Hundred Years' War. Through a comparative analysis between the European setting and its Iberian reflections, particularly in Castile and Portugal, the aim is to lead the public to a better understanding of a complex process. We will show how the Battle of Aljubarrota, itself a decisive military and political moment, can be seen as the Iberian expression of the aforementioned late medieval Anglo-French conflict.

Between chapters two and five, the contents will be exclusively devoted to the description of the battle, including a presentation of the archaeological remains, and an analysis of the different material and literary sources. Through a detailed description of the event (the itinerary of the forces involved, tactics adopted, weapons, etc.) we aim to prove how this battlefield presents a wonderful example for the study of medieval military history.

Chapters six and seven will present the way the battle was handled later in both historiographical and literary terms, particularly the mythical dimension of the event. From this perspective, Aljubarrota and its heroes turned out to have an exemplary value whenever the Portuguese felt their own independence threatened. For example, the battle was remembered in various political and social manifestations during the period of the Austrian Monarchy (1580–1640) and it remained very much alive in the eyes of future generations.

Finally, in chapter 8, this book concludes by showing the possibilities for engagement that exist today on-site, which attractively convey the experience of a medieval conflict, acting as an effective way to preserve public memory. Indeed, the Aljubarrota Foundation aims to offer a museum setting complemented by many other visitor experiences through an Interpretation Centre dedicated to this important battle, welcoming visitors of all ages, and giving them privileged insights into the history of these events, the involvement of all its protagonists and their role in the construction of the identity of Portugal.

A select bibliography is provided at the end. Works found in this bibliography but which are cited in footnotes are always given in shortened form in the latter. While the majority of research has been undertaken and published in Portuguese, we have attempted to include as much relevant material from English and French-language publications as possible. Nonetheless we hope that this volume will encourage more international researchers to study this battle and to profit from a visit to the actual battlefield site.

The editors

## Chapter I

# BEFORE ALJUBARROTA

LUÍS ADÃO DA FONSECA and MARIA CRISTINA PIMENTA

**THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE** of this chapter is to consider the national and international context surrounding the Battle of Aljubarrota (August 14, 1385). This subject has been addressed by various Portuguese and international historians, albeit in a somewhat oblique manner, both with regard to reflections on the actual battle as well as the period in which it occurred.<sup>1</sup> As one of the most researched and heavily discussed topics in Portuguese history, we believe it is interesting to reconsider this issue and enquire as to what extent Portugal's relationship with the other kingdoms of Europe in the fourteenth century allows us to place the Portuguese *National Crisis of 1383–1385*<sup>2</sup> and, even more so, its military expression in Aljubarrota, within the wider context of what has been called the Hundred Years' War.

### The Historical Context

The final decades of the fourteenth century were troubled, with a profound demographic and economic crisis that affected Western Europe after approximately three centuries of continuous growth following the “millennium.” Food supplies were problematic: insufficient agricultural crop yields from 1314 to 1317 were recorded in a large part of Western Europe, where agricultural activity was the main engine of the economy. At the same time, social tensions intensified and were often directed towards those who held or represented authority, whether bishop, lord, or officer of the king. As a result, weak physical resistance meant populations were susceptible to systematic outbreaks of epidemics, notably the mid-century Black Death. This was an endemic disease which, from sources available, arrived in Europe by sea through Genoese merchants with eco-

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to studies cited in the Select Bibliography (under Arnaut, Coelho, Duarte, Monteiro, Russell, and Suarez Fernandez), other key works in Portuguese include Saúl António Gomes, *A Batalha Real. 14 de Agosto de 1385* (Lisbon: Fundação Batalha de Aljubarrota, 2007); João Gouveia Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal nos finais da Idade Média* (Lisbon: Notícias, 1998); and Peter Russell, “Galés portuguesas ao serviço de Ricardo de Inglaterra (1385–89),” *Revista da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* 18 (1953): 61–73 (reprinted in the Variorum series, *Portugal, Spain and the African Atlantic: 1343–1490* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995)).

This chapter builds on two crucial earlier studies: Luís Adão da Fonseca, *O essencial sobre o Tratado de Windsor* and “Significado da Batalha de Aljubarrota no contexto da conjuntura política europeia no último quartel do séc. XIV,” in *A guerra e a sociedade na Idade Média, VI Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de Estudos Medievais*, ed. M. Helena C. Coelho, Saul Gomes and António M. Rebelo, 2 vols. (Coimbra: Sociedade portuguesa de estudos medievais, 2009), 1:57–74.

<sup>2</sup> This is the title of a publication by Marcelo Caetano (*A Crise Nacional de 1383–1385. Subsídios para o seu estudo* (Lisbon: Verbo, 1985)), and it became synonymous with the events in 1383–1385 in modern Portuguese historiography.

nomic interests in the Crimean Peninsula. Almost all of Europe was seriously hit by this disease, but it is difficult to get definitive figures on the overall death-rate.<sup>3</sup> This led to depopulation, an aspect that would eventually become one of the main obstacles to economic recovery, and loss of faith in the Church in the face of such human decimation, some seeing it as punishment from God. This opened the door to spiritual disorder embodied in either rigorous morality or a turn to heresy.

In Portugal, manifestations of these broader phenomena were felt in many aspects of social life and strongly influenced the framework of political action in the fifteenth century. The most well-known measures to decrease the effects of this crisis were introduced in Portugal by King Afonso IV (1325–1357). Arguably, most influential was a law called *Pragmática*, by which the monarch limited each social category to what they were allowed to spend, and at the same time, regulated labour in the fields and taxation on wages.<sup>4</sup> These and other measures<sup>5</sup> were far from easy to achieve and his successor, King Pedro I, was to follow his father's steps trying to preserve at least some social equilibrium.<sup>6</sup>

These general crises naturally had an effect on politics. Portugal was involved in many events within a broader western European sphere prior aside from those directly leading to the armies of King Juan I of Castile and the armies of King João I of Portugal coming to face each other on the battlefield at Aljubarrota. What happened before that afternoon in August 1385, a military episode of unquestionable historical importance, must be seen in the context of how Europe was structurally aligned and how this alignment was reflected in Portugal.

Because this battle triggered a serious crisis which affected political relationships across the Iberian Peninsula, it is important to present it within this broader European context. Indeed, let us consider these words written relatively recently:

It is essential to consider the two major warlike systems in this period of European history, perfectly differentiated in chronological terms, and both fully obedient to autonomous political-military issues. In this order of ideas, what is in question in the period which interests us—the second half of the fourteenth century—is of course the first cycle of wars, which took place between 1336 and 1388, which nowadays is classified as the Crécy military system.<sup>7</sup>

**3** One estimate puts the overall figure at around one-third of the population of Europe at the time. See further, Monteiro, *Aljubarrota 1385. A Batalha Real*, 32.

**4** Marcelo Caetano, *História do Direito Português (1140–1495)* (Lisbon: Verbo, 1992), 279. See *Livro das Leis e Posturas*, ed. by Maria Teresa Campos Rodrigues (Lisbon: Faculdade de Direito, 1971), 448–51.

**5** One of the last syntheses on this policy can be read in Coelho, *D. João I*, 22; Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa, “Idade Média (Séculos XI–XV),” in *História de Portugal*, ed. Rui Ramos, Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa and Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro (Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2010), chap. 4, 119–23 or Duarte, *Aljubarrota. Crónica dos anos de brasa*, 12–17.

**6** Pimenta, *D. Pedro I*, 90–150.

**7** Fonseca, “Significado da Batalha de Aljubarrota,” 61n22, contains essential references to understanding this process, such as Alfred H. Burne, *The Crécy War: A Military History of the Hundred Years War from 1337 to the Peace of Bretigny, 1360* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955).

The unfolding of events from 1336 onwards in France, when the War of Flanders started—the first of the aforementioned wars—immediately led to a reordering of political forces in Western Europe. The Iberian Peninsula could not remain indifferent to what was happening, since it directly affected the control of the area from the English Channel to the Cantabrian Sea. Given the connections this area provided with the Baltic and with the Mediterranean, this first phase of the Hundred Years' War also implied a struggle for the control of maritime communications within the area of the “first Atlantic,” extending along the western coasts of Europe.

At that time in Portugal, a century had passed since the end of the *Reconquista* (the conquest of Faro in the Algarve having taken place in 1249), and the continental borders with Castile had been set down in the well-known treaty of Alcanices (1279). Given this, the kingdom and its political leaders were fully aware of the need to define a maritime policy, which was initiated by extending the traditional historiographical interpretation of *Reconquista*; that is, being an attempt to divert turmoil within the country by waging war outside the borders of the kingdom. In other words, a new strategic frontier was being defined, by moving from the mainland to the sea, a place where maritime war and corsairs would take on a crucial dimension. Naturally, the diplomatic implications this political strategy involved were clear: as regards Castile, the defence of Portuguese interests would imply the preservation of a dual border (on the one hand, the land border and, on the other, a strategic border defending commercial and military routes which extended beyond the former). Being able to respond to this challenge obviously conditioned to a great extent—if not all of—the political actions of the Portuguese monarchy at that time.

Within the broader west European context of countries taking sides in the Hundred Years' War, the Avignon Papacy and suchlike, Portugal had initially kept apart, but this was no longer possible after 1346, the year of the French defeat at Crécy. During the 1340s, Portuguese diplomacy was played out on various levels which were contradictory in their implications. On the one hand, it was important not to lose friendship with Castile but, on the other hand, it had to align with English positions (who were at that moment in the ascendant), since without their support it would have been difficult for the Portuguese to access markets and ports in the North. Clear examples of this binary approach of Portugal towards England and Castile can be illustrated, respectively, through the matrimonial policy of the Portuguese monarchy which had a pro-English orientation,<sup>8</sup> or through the signing of a Luso-English trade treaty in 1353<sup>9</sup> and another peace treaty in 1358 between Pedro I of Portugal and the King of Castile, which envis-

**8** In 1345, an English betrothal with one of the daughters of King Afonso IV was negotiated (see V. M. Shillington and A. B. Chapman, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal* (London: Routledge, 1907), 7–8) and, in 1347, Leonor of Portugal married Pedro IV of Aragon, a marriage that clearly took place following the diplomatic contacts between England and the peninsular kingdoms, dating back to the start of 1344 (see Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa, *D. Afonso IV* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2005), 206–8 and 220–21).

**9** Tiago Viúla de Faria and Flávio Miranda, “Pur bonne alliance et amiste faire: Diplomacia e comércio entre Portugal e Inglaterra no final da Idade Média,” *Cultura, Espaço & Memória* 1 (2010): 109–27 at 111–12.

aged the marriage of the Lusitanian heir, Fernando, to the daughter of the Castilian monarch. While it is true that this marriage did not take place, this rapprochement between the crowns would last until at least 1362.<sup>10</sup>

Upon his accession to the throne, following the death of his father on January 18, 1357,<sup>11</sup> Fernando inherited a diplomatic balance between the aforementioned kingdoms. Portugal was being led by circumstances beyond its borders, following the 1360 Treaty of Brétigny which, at least for a few years, interrupted the rising losses caused by the great conflict. Even so, from the perspective of Portuguese interests, this balancing act did not solve every problem. If a civil war were rekindled in Castile (with its knock-on consequences in the alignment of positions on the European stage) its consequences would be felt in Portugal at the highest level. Peter Russell, in a well-known work, emphasized precisely this aspect when calling attention to the diplomatic mission sent by the Portuguese monarch Pedro I to England intending to apologize for what the King of Castile had said.<sup>12</sup> This mission was led by the Bishop of Évora and Gomes Lourenço do Avelar. They travelled to Gascony to meet the Prince of Wales and report the comments made by Pedro I of Castile on the bad reception that he and his daughters had received in 1366 in Portugal from his uncle, King Pedro I. This tightrope stance with England by the king of Portugal could not continue once he died in 1367.

After 1367 diplomacy became more intricate when the crowns of Castile and France, now also united at a military level, were able to turn the military tide with England. Indeed, the collaboration of the Castilian navy meant that France, defeated at Crécy, gained political strength. With the English defeat at La Rochelle, in 1372, the domination of Castilian ships in the Atlantic had become more significant.<sup>13</sup> In this scenario, it is easier to understand the commercial policy advocated by the Portuguese maritime cities in the second half of the fourteenth century. The opportunity of Portugal to maintain privileged access to the South Atlantic became a top priority in political and diplomatic relations concerning the Castilian, Basque, or Andalusian routes, inasmuch as the fleets of Castile were directly competing here. The fact that Portuguese vessels had access to the Atlantic under an alliance with Castile would ultimately limit Lusitanian seafaring; in the long run, it would provide a fatal blow to Portuguese foreign business relationships.

Given this situation, and the geographical location of the kingdom of Portugal, it was not very feasible to maintain autonomous Portuguese trade in the Atlantic. So, the preservation of maritime freedom—the priority of Portuguese foreign policy at the time—had been definitely compromised by the actions of the main adversaries in the Hundred Years' War, and Portugal had no way of turning conditions in its favour.

The international situation remained extremely fluid, and King Fernando of Portugal found himself with limited options. After the assassination of Pedro I the Cruel of Castile at the hands of his brother Enrique of Trastámara in 1369, the Portuguese king was

**10** *Chancelaria de D. Pedro I*, ed. A. H. Oliveira Marques (Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1984), 90–92. See Pimenta, *D. Pedro I*, 154ff.

**11** Lopes, *Crónica de D. Pedro I*, chap. 44 at 202.

**12** Lopes, *Crónica de D. Pedro I*, chap. 42, 191–93. See Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 100.

**13** Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 222–24.

asked to intervene and take revenge for the death of Pedro. In order to do so, King Fernando began by assuming a clearly Anglophile position, convinced that he could obtain benefits within the Peninsula by organizing a series of military interventions in the neighbouring territory.<sup>14</sup> However, the rapid turn of the European conflict in favour of the Franco-Castilian bloc obliged the King of Portugal to take a different stance, through the Luso-Castilian treaty of March 1371, signed at Alcoutim, and the promise to marry Leonor, daughter of Enrique II of Trastámara, the King of Castile.<sup>15</sup> Since this marriage did not in the end occur, we can see how the variety of matrimonial negotiations by the King of Portugal are only understood within the international chess-game taking place at the time.

When, in May 1372, Fernando decided to suddenly marry a Portuguese noblewoman, Leonor Teles,<sup>16</sup> that meant—in terms of foreign Portuguese policy—refusing to make any political decision that would imply a definitive European alignment. A different option (such as marrying a princess from Aragon or one from Castile, as had been decided in Alcoutim)<sup>17</sup> would certainly have required forming alliances which sooner or later would have compromised the position of Portugal within the framework of the Hundred Years' War. That is why “the marriage of Fernando to Leonor Teles was, for all intents and purposes, a clear move with the future in mind.[...] By paying the lowest possible cost, Fernando could not do anything else but negotiate the freedom of navigation for Lusitanian trade with the Lords of the Atlantic.”<sup>18</sup> In so doing, Portugal avoided a unilateral foreign policy, perhaps in a brilliant manner, to ensure to keep doors open for future commitments either with the Peninsular kingdoms or with France or England.<sup>19</sup>

Political options were further restricted once international political alignments took on a new, religious dimension. This happened in 1378 when Christendom became divided between two popes. After Pope Gregory XII decided to leave the French city of Avignon and return to Rome, a crisis emerged upon his death. As expected, his succes-

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**14** Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chap. 25 at 87–89 and chap. 28, 97–98 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional / Casa da Moeda, 1975). Cf. Rita Costa Gomes, *D. Fernando* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2005); Armando Martins, *Guerras fernandinas, 1369–1382* (Lisbon: Academia Portuguesa da História, 2008); Monteiro, “De D. Afonso IV (1325) à batalha de Alfarrobeira (1449),” 250–61.

**15** Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chap. 53, 179–83. On the meaning of the negotiations between Portugal and England, see Faria and Miranda, “Pur bonne alliance et amiste faire,” 113.

**16** Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chaps. 57–58 at 197–204 and chaps. 62–63 at 215–21.

**17** It should be noted that, as might be expected, the news of Fernando's marriage to Leonor Teles was not received without criticism in the court of Enrique II. See Serrano, *Beatriz de Portugal*, 53–55.

**18** Fonseca, *O essencial sobre o Tratado de Windsor*, 18–19.

**19** Examples of what has just been stated can be found in the signing of the Treaty of Tagilde (1372), between the Duke of Lancaster and the Portuguese king against Enrique II of Castile. Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chap. 67, 235–36. See Sérgio da Silva Pinto, “O primeiro tratado da aliança anglo-português—Tratado de Tagilde de 10 de Julho de 1372,” *Boletim do Arquivo Municipal de Braga* 12 (1949): 347–63; Russell, *The English Intervention*, 229–30; Arnaut, *A crise nacional dos fins do século XIV*, 34.



sion did not go undisputed, as the French were aiming to maintain the papal see at Avignon and other realms intended to support a Roman pope.

This dispute led to Clement VII settling in Avignon and Urban VI in Rome, each with different supporters. Portugal took the side of Urban VI, along with, among others, England, while France and Castile opted for Clement VII.<sup>20</sup> To safeguard navigation in the Atlantic (important to leading members of society as well as having an economic dimension), the Portuguese Crown faced another dilemma which meant it would not always be possible to act in a totally independent manner. Developments in the war meant Portugal might have to negotiate the circulation of Portuguese boats in the Atlantic with the Castilians as well as seeking an urgent renewal of the alliance with England. This explains two apparently contradictory matrimonial negotiations: on Portuguese initiative marriage was agreed upon between the Portuguese and Castilian heirs on May 21, 1380,<sup>21</sup> and, days later, Richard II of England gave João Fernandes Andeiro, Count of Ourém, authorization to enter into an alliance with Portugal, which was signed on July 15 and led to the negotiation of the marriage of Beatriz to the son of the Earl of Cambridge.<sup>22</sup> The outcome would eventually result in a definite rapprochement between Portugal and Castile, especially when the Earl of Cambridge led an expedition to Portugal, partly on Portuguese instigation but a failure.<sup>23</sup>

For the Castilians, this news was received with considerable concern, and they decided to assemble an armada with the aim of blocking the Portuguese coast.<sup>24</sup> As an interesting detail, it should be noted that the English involved in this expedition, when returning to England in September 1382, were transported in Castilian ships.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the power of Castile to dominate the path of the Atlantic routes seemed unquestionable. For the Portuguese monarch, it was time to opt for the most advantageous solution for the country's economy and, perhaps, one that would most satisfy the interests of Portuguese society. A new Luso-Castilian peace agreement was therefore signed in Elvas in August 1382. Beatriz—once again—was now promised to Fernando de Antequera, the Castilian prince who would later become king of Aragon.

In these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand the decision of King Fernando to cast aside a commitment to England in favour of a pro-Castilian alignment. The monarch clearly understood that Portugal could only navigate in the Atlantic if it was fully integrated within the area of Castilian influence. This required the Portuguese

**20** An interesting publication on this topic can be read in *Doctrinas y relaciones de poder en el Cisma de Occidente y en la época conciliar (1378–1449)*, ed. José Antonio de Camargo and Bernardo Bayona Aznar (Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2013).

**21** Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 329; Suárez Fernández, *Historia del reinado de Juan I de Castilla*, 1:78–80.

**22** Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chap. 162 at 561–62; Suárez Fernández, *Historia del reinado de Juan I de Castilla*, 1:79; Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 329–33.

**23** Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 335ff.

**24** Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 344. See Armando da Silva Saturnino Monteiro, *Batalhas e combates da marinha portuguesa*, vol. 1, 1139–1521 (Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1989), 33–36.

**25** Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 371–72.



monarch to take fundamental and decisive steps to reassess political power and, above all, the carrying out of his regal function.

We believe it is within this context that when Juan I of Castile suddenly became a widower in September 1382, and despite the various marriage proposals he received, the Portuguese princess Beatriz was chosen to be his new queen.<sup>26</sup> No attempt was made to prevent this marriage by the Portuguese—on the contrary in fact. There was a certain consensus in favour of this solution, perhaps because at that moment it represented the only way to maintain peace in the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, the

widowhood of the King of Castile himself, [...] completely changed the course of Beatriz's life. This was the fifth and definitive marriage option, which can be considered in part as a derivation from the previous ones, since many aspects of the bond had already been accepted. But only in part, because the major difference that separated Juan I from his son Fernando was the condition of the new pretender: it was not the same thing to marry Beatriz to the king of Castile as to his second son.<sup>27</sup>

As a result, after years of a fraught relationship between the Portuguese and Castilian thrones, King Fernando agreed to sign treaties at Pinto (December, 1382) and Salvaterra de Magos (April, 1383) as proof of a new *détente*.<sup>28</sup> By the latter treaty, King Fernando's only daughter, Beatriz, would marry the king of Castile, Juan I, at Badajoz. However, the Portuguese king died in October of that same year, and the regency of the kingdom was handed over to his widow, Leonor Teles. While the kingdom was unsettled by a lack of clarity in the line of succession, the queen, for personal and political reasons, embarked on a delicate path along which she undertook a precipitous defence of her daughter's rights, leading to a major schism in Portuguese society. In a very short period of time, these divisions came to light and opposition to the regent became a reality.

### Castile Turns from Friend to Enemy, 1383–1384

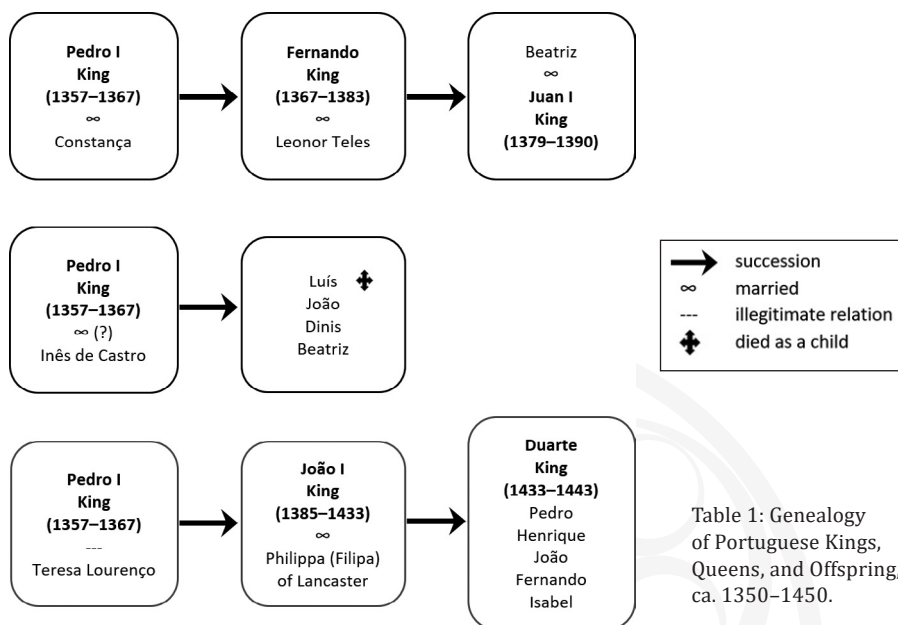
Without some awareness of this background it is difficult to understand the unfolding of events which followed, and those that were perhaps the most decisive for what happened on August 14, 1385 on the fields of Aljubarrota. The main question to be answered is, thus, why and how did a Luso–Castilian alliance mutate in barely two years into a battle between the two crowns?

One of the factors was, as we have seen, Portugal's need to ensure a relatively independent political, diplomatic, economic, and maritime area for itself and this required a good relationship with England. The Anglophile party had support from the bourgeoisie of the coastal cities, perfectly aware that an alliance with Castile would mean it would

<sup>26</sup> Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chap. 160 at 555–57; Suárez Fernández, *Historia del reinado de Juan I de Castilla*, 1:125ff. The text of the marriage contract between Juan I of Castile and Beatriz of Portugal can be read in Arnaut, *A crise nacional dos fins do século XIV*, 359–60.

<sup>27</sup> Serrano, *Beatriz de Portugal*, 81.

<sup>28</sup> Lopes, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, chap. 157 at 545–46 and chap. 169 at 581–84; Arnaut, *A crise nacional dos fins do século XIV*, 341–93; Suárez Fernández, *Historia del reinado de Juan I de Castilla*, 1:127–34.



then be Castile who would ultimately control Portuguese seafaring in the Atlantic.<sup>29</sup> Another factor lies in the dynastic problem caused by Fernando's succession. The aristocracy was divided: some accepted Castilian friendship (represented in the marriage of Beatriz to Juan I); others argued for a national solution, involving the accession to the throne of Pedro I and Inês de Castro's sons, João and Dinis.<sup>30</sup> They both were progeny of a complicated relationship between Prince Pedro (then not yet king of Portugal) and a Galician noble woman, Inês, whose family was highly regarded in the peninsular political scenario of the period. Their two *Infantes* were living in Castile and, as soon as the succession problem arose in Portugal, Juan I of Castile ordered João to be arrested (as he was the eldest brother and the one who would be summoned to reign in Portugal).<sup>31</sup> The events which preceded the Battle of Aljubarrota may be explained by the interplay in this complex framework.

With the death of the king of Portugal, Fernando I, in 1383, and with his only daughter, Beatriz, being married to Juan I of Castile, a considerable number of influential Portuguese dignitaries swore immediately after this marriage "covenants and reciprocal assurances in relation to the Portuguese succession,"<sup>32</sup> in the treaty of Salvaterra de Magos. According to this treaty, the Portuguese throne should subsequently pass to an eventual child of Juan and Beatriz (or, in the absence of children, the regency should

<sup>29</sup> Russell, *A Intervenção Inglesa*, 226–27, 231–32 and 386–89.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Arnaut, *A crise nacional dos fins do século XIV*, 166–69 and 173ff.

<sup>31</sup> Pimenta, *D. Pedro I*, 281–82.

<sup>32</sup> Serrano, *Beatriz de Portugal*, 88.



Plate 1: *Morte do Conde Andeiro* (Death of Count Andeiro),  
by José de Sousa Azevedo (1830–1864).

go to Leonor Teles, the king's widow). And so we might ask why was it not possible, in political terms, to follow what was stipulated in that treaty? The question is important because the military confrontation at Aljubarrota resulted from the treaty not being capable of being implemented for political reasons.

Leonor Teles, then regent and governess of the kingdom of Portugal and the Algarve, received precise instructions from her daughter and son-in-law for Portugal to issue proclamations acclaiming Beatriz as queen of Portugal. A sharpening of social tensions based on the rapid enthronement of Juan I and Beatriz was to be expected. Nevertheless, as we have seen, there were alternatives who could have succeeded Fernando: the *Infantes* João and Dinis and also another João, master of the religious-military Order of Avis, likewise son of the same king Pedro I.

Portugal faced no easy options: opinions were polarized, pressure came from various sources with different levels of intensity, and events ran out of control. Opposition to the regent, led by the maritime cities—with Lisbon at the forefront, already in the process of economic recovery after a long period of crisis—took to the streets, and events followed each other at breakneck speed.<sup>33</sup> It is worth recalling that Leonor Teles, under

<sup>33</sup> An extensive appreciation of this important period of Portuguese history can be read in Campos, *Leonor Teles, uma mulher de poder?*, 136ff.

the terms of the Treaty of Salvaterra de Magos was entitled, as regent of the realm, to make important decisions, such as appointing mayors and other officials, convening the *Cortes*, and suchlike.<sup>34</sup> That was certainly not popular among the Portuguese. It was not surprising, then, that the Count of Ourém (believed to be the queen's lover and a known agent of foreign interests) was assassinated (in December 1383), and the *Infante* João, having taken refuge in Castile, became, as we have mentioned, the "national" alternative (which explains his immediate imprisonment in Castile) and the perfect figure to lead the opposition to Leonor Teles. Nevertheless, as he was not then in Portugal, it was the Master of Avis, his half-brother, who, in the beginning, acted as his representative. Shortly after, he accepted becoming defender of the kingdom in his own name.

As a result, within a few months, a climate of civil war had spread over the whole kingdom which, in the words of Fernão Lopes led to a "strong and deadly war seeing some Portuguese individuals wishing to destroy others, and those born from the womb and brought up by the land wish to kill themselves willingly and sprinkle the blood of their parents and relatives!"<sup>35</sup>

The main currents of opinion and the corresponding Portuguese pressure groups were divided as to a response to this crisis. The Anglophile party found fulsome support in the bourgeoisie and the maritime cities. But the aristocracy was divided. Some accepted Castilian friendship, which, through the marriage of Beatriz to Juan I of Castile, contained uncertain guarantees regarding Portugal's independence; others argued for a "national solution" by continuing the royal lineage through Inês de Castro's heirs. Various factors underlay preferences for one or other of the two options within the nobility. For example, some noblemen were constrained by internal issues within aristocratic families (resulting from inheritance problems), or economic interests of various forms, such as Portuguese landowning overlapping with Castilian territory, among others. For the upper Portuguese nobility, a Castilian solution probably seemed an attractive model. Further study is needed on this point. In addition, there were destabilizing elements of various types, including the *emperegilados* group (immigrants in favour of the former King Pedro I of Castile who died in 1369 and who were opposed to the successor Trastámaran dynasty), which, through controlling some key positions, acted unreliably, oscillating between a positive attitude towards England and a hazy attitude towards Castile.

Simple explanations which divide groups into "patriots" and "traitors" do not work. The seriousness and complexity of the problems, the major internal and external implications of the options at play, and the interplay of many familial, economic, and even strategic factors, suggest we should be prudent in our judgements. Western Europe, in general, and the Iberian Peninsula, in particular, faced, in the 1380s, a delicate situa-

**34** All these decisions were of crucial significance, especially the convening of the *Cortes*. First known in Portugal since 1254 in Leiria, the *Cortes* were reunions where representatives of cities and urban communities gathered, at the request of the king (for the majority of occasions). Best seen therefore as representative assemblies (Armando de Sousa, *As cortes medievais portuguesas (1385–1490)* (Porto: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1990), 48), they dealt essentially with finance, the signature and ratification of treaties, setting prices, taxation, and, as happened in Coimbra, 1385, with the choice of the future king of Portugal.

**35** Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom João I, Parte Primeira*, chap. 68, 116.

tion in which the rupture of the balance between the traditional powers was expressed in the difficulty of achieving new political and diplomatic outcomes which successfully replaced previous, but ineffective, ones. And everything had an effect on foreign relations. Thus, without fear of exaggeration, it may be said that *different futures* for Portuguese society were at stake. These implications, of which the protagonists on both sides were perfectly aware, transformed a difficult problem of a dynastic succession into an open conflict, creating the civil war to which we have already referred.

The person ultimately responsible for this process was the Master of the Order of Avis, João, chosen as “Regent and Defender of the Kingdom.” On December 6, 1383, as a consequence of a violent encounter with the Count of Ourém (someone very close to the widowed queen, Leonor Teles), he took the first major step in defining what would then take place. This decision can be considered as precipitous, with totally unpredictable consequences, with the Master assuming full political responsibility, having to deal with the inevitable military attack led by the King of Castile, who entered Portugal that same month, ready to reclaim the throne. Indeed, that December, Juan I of Castile invaded via the region of Guarda, laying siege to Coimbra, and then headed for Santarém, to meet Leonor Teles, his mother-in-law. The ease with which the Castilian monarch was able to do this is explained by the chronicler Fernão Lopes, who wrote: “It is fitting that we should speak of the places which listened to and obeyed him, to see how he had much of the kingdom under his control.” However, he added an important rider: “Notwithstanding that the people dwelling in those places obeyed him not through their own will, but the mayors [...] listened to his words and forced the commoners to obey.”<sup>36</sup>

As a result, the widowed queen, under pressure from the king of Castile and in total disagreement with the provisions contained in the aforementioned Treaty of Salvaterra de Magos, ceded the regency of the kingdom to her son-in-law.<sup>37</sup> She was thus removed from this “new” political scene and imprisoned in the monastery of Tordesillas.<sup>38</sup> As rightly pointed out by Olivera Serrano, Juan I of Castile used this opportunity as justification for people in Portugal to understand that “the revolt against the tyrant and his wife was fully justified.”<sup>39</sup>

After this episode, the possibility of war now loomed and the Master of Avis had to quickly rethink his strategy and activate precautionary measures which he had established a few months previously. Examples were the appointment of Nuno Álvares

**36** Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom João I, Parte Primeira*, chap. 68, 116.

**37** Juan I swiftly “ordered the coining of money in Santarém, collected the jewels which Leonor had inherited from King Fernando, and received a service worth 30,000 pounds from the good men of the district” (Coelho, *D. João I*, 43).

**38** Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom João I, Parte Primeira*, chap. 84, 141–42. The points of view of the widowed queen, which have generated some disagreement among Portuguese historians, can nowadays be assessed in detail. See also Isabel Pina Baleiras, “The Political Role of a Portuguese Queen in the Late Fourteenth Century,” in *Queenship in the Mediterranean: Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras*, ed. Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 97–123.

**39** “La revuelta contra el tirano y su mujer estaba plenamente justificada.” Serrano, *Beatriz de Portugal*, 94.



Pereira to assure the defence of the frontier position in the Entre Tejo-e-Guadiana region (spring 1384) and the sending of ambassadors to England in order to obtain English support (not only military, but also political, in February 1384). While it is true that this first approach by the Master to the English crown did not lead to immediate success for Portuguese diplomacy, the commitment of the future King of Portugal to a Luso-English alliance would eventually bear its desired outcome.<sup>40</sup>

In spring, 1384, making use of the resources still at his disposal, and at the head of an army of fifteen hundred men, Nuno Álvares Pereira blocked the Castilian advance at Atoleiros, near Fronteira, a region where the Order of Avis was in charge of the local government.<sup>41</sup> As João Gouveia Monteiro described:

It was in Fronteira that Nun'Álvares slept on that night of 6 April, surely relishing his first great military victory. Of course this seems to have been facilitated by the poor performance of the adversary, who did not properly reconnoitre the terrain, and which erred in not using its archers (who could have been very useful during the initial stage of the combat to break up the Portuguese formation and put it into disarray), its light cavalry and infantry soldiers, betting everything on a cavalry charge which took place on soaked land and an unfavourable slope. The Castilian chancellor himself [Lopez de Ayala] recognized the disastrous hastiness: "[...] and due to bad ordinance they were foiled." But this should not detract from the merit of the tactical model drawn up by the winning army. This is because from the outset they dared to take the initiative in the combat and were able to attract the other army to a terrain that was clearly favourable to them. Secondly, because they were able to adapt their resources to the battlefield, making full use of the capacity and effect of their crossbowmen and the slingers, which proved to be an absolutely decisive factor in slowing down and disorganizing the powerful Castilian heavy cavalry charge. Thirdly, in opting for combat fought completely on foot, Nun'Álvares's risk was rewarded: it balanced the fortunes of the men involved and their chances of survival, and in so doing removed an important psychological effect, mainly for those less used to fighting and who, with unmounted armed men at their side, received a moral boost which must have raised their confidence considerably.<sup>42</sup>

However, in spite of this defeat, the king of Castile advanced on Lisbon on May 26, 1384, with a fleet of forty ships and thirteen galleys.<sup>43</sup> Juan I of Castile set up his troops (on land and at sea) in an ostentatious manner with a group of men that the chronicler Fernão Lopes described as being: "five thousand lancers [...] and one thousand light cavalrymen [...] and many good crossbowmen who were at least six thousand [...] and many foot sol-

<sup>40</sup> However, it was only in July 1384 that Richard II of England gave a positive response to the two emissaries, Fernando Afonso de Albuquerque, Master of the Military Order of Santiago, and to the Chancellor Lourenço Anes Fogaça, in terms of authorizing the cooperation of English troops on the side of the Master of Avis. See also Fonseca, *O essencial sobre o tratado de Windsor*, 50; Monteiro, *Aljubarrota* 1385, 23–24 and Monteiro, "As campanhas que fizeram a história," 262.

<sup>41</sup> João Gouveia Monteiro, "A Batalha de Atoleiros (6 de Abril de 1384): ensaio geral para Aljubarrota?" *Revista Portuguesa de Pedagogia* suppl. issue (2011): 321–35, <https://impactum-journals.uc.pt/rppedagogia/article/view/1325/773>; Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom João I, Parte Primeira*, chap. 95, 158–61.

<sup>42</sup> Monteiro, "A Batalha de Atoleiros," 332–33.

<sup>43</sup> Monteiro, "As campanhas que fizeram a história," 265.

diers, excluding those that came in the fleet.”<sup>44</sup> The Portuguese urgently needed to start taking measures, particularly in terms of supplying and fortifying the city. Miguel Gomes Martins listed some of the measures taken, namely the following:<sup>45</sup>

- Tax advantages for those selling food in Lisbon, a measure with little success, given that the main cities (Óbidos, Torres Vedras, Sintra, Cascais, Alenquer, and Santarém) were in favour of Beatriz, which made the movement of goods and individuals difficult.
- Forced requisition of goods.
- The sending of boats and skiffs to the Ribatejo region which brought back dead cattle for salting.
- Nuno Álvares Pereira leaving for Sintra on February 6, 1384 with three hundred lancers to collect supplies.
- A successful attempt to capture six Castilian vessels with supplies.

Incidentally, since the 1370s, King Fernando, already having encountered several problems with Castile,<sup>46</sup> had had a new wall built around Lisbon. As Martins wrote, “it was precisely the fact that the city was well protected by this new structure which enabled it to successfully resist the siege of the besieging armies in 1384.”<sup>47</sup> In addition, a barbican of more than three hundred metres was constructed and action was taken to “reinforce the more than seventy towers with wooden pergolas well supplied with arms,” besides ensuring a thorough check of the “heights of the wall.”<sup>48</sup> For João Gouveia Monteiro: “As for the more than thirty doors and gates of the city, twelve remained open during the day, and were controlled by men of arms who slept at their posts.”<sup>49</sup>

Despite all these precautions the Castilians retained the upper hand. At sea, Portugal only had one fleet, arriving from Porto, of seventeen ships and seventeen galleys. They clashed on July 18, with the Portuguese losing three ships. They passed the enemy blockade, but they were rapidly surrounded by the Castilian fleet: “our fleet was like the city: surrounded.”<sup>50</sup> Controlling Lisbon in a situation like this would dictate the outcome. And indeed, despite various unsuccessful attempted solutions, nothing seemed to work.

<sup>44</sup> Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom João I, Parte Primeira*, chap. 114, 192.

<sup>45</sup> Miguel Gomes Martins, “Abastecer as cidades em contexto de guerra,” in *Alimentar la ciudad en la Edad Media*, ed. Beatriz Arízaga Bolumburu and Jesús Ángel Solórzano Telechea (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos Nájera / Ayuntamiento de Nájera, 2009), 139–41.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, as already mentioned in this chapter, between 1369 and 1371 King Fernando, led a series of military interventions in the neighbouring territory. Enrique II of Castile responded, in 1372, when he “advanced on Lisbon without practically facing any opposition, surrounded the city and devastated great part of the houses outside the wall,” A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *Portugal na Crise dos séculos XIV e XV* (Lisbon: Presença, 1987), 515.

<sup>47</sup> Martins, “Abastecer as cidades em contexto de guerra,” 137n26.

<sup>48</sup> Monteiro, “As campanhas que fizeram a história,” 264–65.

<sup>49</sup> Monteiro, “As campanhas que fizeram a história,” 265.

<sup>50</sup> Duarte, *Aljubarrota. Crónica dos anos de brasa*, 78.

However, plague attacked the Castilian soldiers (in its final phase, two hundred men were killed by this disease), and together with the Portuguese defence of the city, the Castilians withdrew on September 4, 1384. This brought most of Portuguese society behind the Master of Avis. His formal recognition as king of Portugal took place at the *Cortes* of Coimbra, which met on April 6, 1385.

### The Cortes of Coimbra, 1385: The Master of Avis Becomes King João I

Portuguese historians have always devoted great attention to the study of these *Cortes*<sup>51</sup> since, following the arguments of the distinguished man of law, João das Regras, the Master of Avis became legally able to accede as king of Portugal, the first monarch in the new dynasty of Avis. At the outset of the *Cortes*, when considering the actions and commitments made by the soon to be king João I, no other outcome might be expected. However, the matter was and always has been complex and deserves thorough examination.

When the *Cortes* assembled the throne was not vacant insofar as “there being not one, but many” possible heirs.<sup>52</sup> More precisely, four: Beatriz (for all intents and purposes, queen of Portugal), the *Infantes* João and Dinis (children of King Pedro I), and the Master of Avis, also son of the same king. The speech made by João das Regras would try to reverse this situation, proving that none of the candidates was a legitimate heir, as Maria Helena Coelho has explained in detail.<sup>53</sup>

João das Regras alleged that the *Infantes* João and Dinis, sons of Inês de Castro and King Pedro I, had been born without their parents being married; that João, Master of Avis, was the fruit of an extra-marital relationship of the same king with Teresa Lourenço, and that Beatriz (daughter of King Fernando and Leonor Teles) had also been an illegitimate child since the mother became wife of the king of Portugal while still married to João Lourenço da Cunha. These circumstances, with a vacant throne and all the candidates having been reduced to the status of bastards, opened the path for the Master of Avis to be listed as a bastard, certainly, but of all four the best choice.

He argued that the Master of Avis had been present at the most critical moments of Portugal in the last few years. When he agreed to become the “Regent and Defender of the Kingdom” he had acted, not for his benefit and fame, but always in the name of his elder brother, João. Moreover, the various military episodes in which Beatriz (through the actions of her husband, Juan I of Castile) had raised arms against Portugal, and her closeness to the Church of Avignon, made the oratorical task of João das Regras easier when presenting the arguments favouring the Master of Avis.<sup>54</sup>

Let us not forget too the presence of Nuno Álvares Pereira at the *Cortes* of Coimbra; from the outset he radically and vehemently expressed his support for the cause of the

51 Caetano, *História do Direito*; Sousa, *As cortes medievais portuguesas*; Coelho, *D. João I*.

52 Coelho, *D. João I*, 62.

53 Coelho, *D. João I*, 62–67.

54 André Madruga Coelho, “Ecclesiastical Support to the Master of Avis: An Analysis from the Acclamation Act of 1385,” *En la España Medieval* 40 (2017): 147–62.





Plate 2: *Portrait of King João I of Portugal*, anonymous, early fifteenth century.

Master. This was an intimidating factor of some weight, along with the political and legal arguments presented by others.<sup>55</sup> It has been rightly observed that “this decisive change of political power was due to the continued pressure of Nuno Álvares on the noblemen, often with insinuations concerning the possible use of arms, and the considerable knowledge and legal and oratorical mastery of João das Regras. Two strong men, two cornerstones, of the Master and King of Avis, who complemented each other.”<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, João was duly elected king of Portugal. At the time, he was also bound by his vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as Master of the Order of Avis; however, he sought papal dispensation and on February 2, 1387 he married Philippa of Lancaster.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Coelho, *D. João I*, 65.

<sup>56</sup> Coelho, *D. João I*, 67.

<sup>57</sup> See Maria Cristina Pimenta, “A Ordem de Avis durante o Mestrado de D. Fernão Rodrigues de

As a result, Lisbon received “at least six hundred and forty English mercenaries [...] [and] another rather small Anglo–Gascon contingent.”<sup>58</sup> As well as the military help provided to the new king of Portugal, this collaboration clearly pointed to the values argued for by the Portuguese bourgeoisie and their emphasis on making maritime trade with Northern Europe possible. This reflected Portugal’s foreign trade interests in the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>59</sup>

With the closing of the *Cortes* of Coimbra, which politically legitimized a new king for Portugal, it would be expected that 1385—“the year of all decisions”<sup>60</sup>—forced the Castilians to respond. One would not have presumed any less from Juan I and Beatriz, his wife who, being in Castile, could not have averted the *Cortes’* decision. Expecting some response, now as King of Portugal, João I and his Constable Nuno Álvares Pereira set about reorganizing their position in those northern Portuguese cities that had shown themselves sympathetic to Beatriz, bringing Neiva, Viana, Caminha, Vila Nova de Cerqueira, Monção, Guimarães, Braga, and Ponte de Lima under their command.<sup>61</sup>

The Castilians started a new series of attacks, simultaneously on various fronts: launching a fleet off Lisbon, crossing the border near Elvas (which the monarch himself besieged), and sending noblemen who entered central Portugal in the region of the Beiras, as a prelude to the Battle of Trancoso on May 29, 1385.<sup>62</sup>

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Sequeira,” *Militarium Ordinum Analecta* 1 (1997): 178–80. This marriage was another step in the dynastic ambitions of John of Gaunt, begun the moment when he, some years before (in 1371), married Constance, daughter of the late king Pedro I of Castile. Due to this marriage, he became directly involved in Castilian politics, seeking to ascend the throne. Despite never achieving this objective, the founder of the House of Lancaster maintained a continuing interest in the Iberian Peninsula, especially expressed in the support given to D. João, Master of Avis. See, Peter Russell, *Spain and the African Atlantic, 1343–1490*, 170–75 and more recently, Manuela Santos Silva, “John of Gaunt, duque de Lancaster, rei de Castela e Leão: a “praxis” de vida de um cavaleiro durante a Guerra dos Cem Anos,” in *A guerra e a sociedade na Idade Média, VI Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de Estudos Medievais*, ed. M. Helena C. Coelho, Saul Gomes, and António M. Rebelo, 2 vols. (Coimbra: Sociedade portuguesa de estudos medievais, 2009), 1:159–71.

**58** Monteiro, “As campanhas que fizeram a história,” 268.

**59** Luís Adão da Fonseca, “As relações comerciais entre Portugal e os reinos peninsulares nos séculos XIV e XV,” in *Actas das II Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de História Medieval*, 4 vols. (Porto: INIC, 1988), 2:541–61. This choice took place diplomatically through the signing of the Treaty of Windsor in May 1386. See Fonseca, *O essencial sobre o Tratado de Windsor*, where it is stated: “In 1386, Portugal defines four great coordinates for its foreign policy: proclaims to defend the freedom of sea routes; defines the Channel as its northern strategic frontier (just as, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, it had defined Gibraltar as its southern strategic frontier); and enters the fifteenth century with a pro-English alignment, and, consequently, anti-Castilian.”

**60** Barbosa and Gouveia, *A Batalha de Trancoso*, 9.

**61** Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom João I, Parte Segunda*, chaps. 5 to 16, 12–31. For a more detailed description of these military assaults, see the classic study by Humberto Baquero Moreno, “A campanha de D. João I contra as fortalezas da região de Entre-Douro-e-Minho,” *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História* 2 (1985): 45–58 and, above all, Monteiro, “As campanhas que fizeram a história,” 267–68, Coelho, *D. João I*, 74–76, and Duarte, *Aljubarrota. Crónica dos anos de brasa*, 87–92.

**62** Monteiro, “As campanhas que fizeram a história,” 268–72 and Barbosa and Gouveia, *A Batalha de Trancoso*.

Gradually, Portugal united around the new monarch, João I and the new dynasty. The House of Avis was born in fragility and the secret of its incomparably successful popularity can be found within this very fragility. Among many examples to justify this statement, Aljubarrota turned a kingdom still seen as a tasty meal to satisfy the King of Castile's hunger into a great victorious afternoon that would, in various ways, presage future glories of the Portuguese.

At Aljubarrota, both warring parties played all their trump cards. The Castilians asserted justification through the wishes of a Portuguese queen married in Castile denied the opportunity of expressing her prerogatives at the *Cortes* of Coimbra and also the possibility of a future heir one day governing both crowns. But also Castile was launching an offensive against the entente reached between Portugal and England, of which the marriage of the new monarch to a member of the House of Lancaster was but the most explicit expression of a broad plan involving political and economic collaboration. On the Portuguese side, besides the obvious need to defend its territory, throne, and people, it was also essential to channel a combination of national forces in this battle who, when faced with the enemy, would understand the need to unite around a single cause, a feeling which had not been possible to entirely establish at the *Cortes* of Coimbra, when people were still divided. Therefore, on this field of battle, the kingdom was making peace with itself, expressing its allegiance to João I.

What happened will be the theme of the following chapters.