

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY IN THE PORTUGUESE CRISIS. THE CANDIDACY OF D. ANTÔNIO, PRIOR OF CRATO (1578-1580)¹

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Following the disappearance of King Sebastião at the Battle of Alcácer Quibir in August 1578, Cardinal Henrique assumed the throne of Portugal. The last of the Avis dynasty, in his short two year reign the Cardinal faced the many different types of pressure: governing in the middle of the commotion of the disaster; administering the ransoming of a large part of the nobility imprisoned in Morocco; and, most seriously mediating, the delicate succession crisis which began as soon as the rumors of the disaster reached Europe. Acting as conciliator and judge, as well as administrating the various succession demands and projects, he worked directly with Rome, aiming to obtain his authorization for his marriage, seen as a necessary personal sacrifice to guarantee the legitimate and natural succession for the kingdom.

The imminent end of the Avis dynasty stimulated the various genealogical branches of the monarchy to claim the Portuguese crown. Six candidates presented themselves: from Portugal, Catarina, the Duchess of Bragança, and Antônio, Prior of Crato, both grandchildren of King Manuel by the paternal line; Philip II, King of Spain, and Manuel Felisberto, Dule of Savoy, both grandsons of *Venturoso* (as King Manuel was known), by the maternal line; Rainúncio Farnese, son of the Prince of Parma, great-grandson of Manuel, as well as Catarina de Medici, through a remote connection with Afonso III, who died in 1279.² The number of candidates and the stature of some of them indicates the importance of Portugal in the political game at the time, the various negotiations this produced, and the roles played by the diplomatic representation of the claimants in the various European courts.

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² Felipe II was the grandson of Manuel I on the part of his mother, the empress and queen of Spain, Isabel de Portugal (1503-1539); Catarina, Duchess of Bragança, granddaughter of *Venturoso* on his father's side, son of the *Infante* Duarte (1515-1540); Antônio, grandson of Manuel and natural son of Luís (1506-1555). The Duke of Savoy, Manuel Felisberto, was the son of the *Infanta* Beatriz (1504-1538) and the Duke of Savoy, Carlos III; Rainúncio Farnese, was the great-grandson of Manuel, and son of the Prince of Parma, Alexandre Farnese and the Portuguese *Infanta* Maria (1538-1577). For a summary of the judicial debates about the succession, see Mafalda Soares da Cunha. A questão jurídica na crise dinástica in José Mattoso. (dir.) *História de Portugal*. Vol.3: No alvorecer da modernidade (1480-1620). Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1993-1994.

Shortly after the first news of the defeat of Alcácer Quibir the dispute for the throne began. Three strong candidates emerged: Catarina, Duchess of Bragança (1540-1614), granddaughter of *Venturoso* on the paternal side, and Philip II of Spain (1527-1598), also a grandchild of Manuel, on the maternal line. In the rules of precedence this could have favored the Duchess, if it were not for the fact that she was a woman and younger, an important obstacle in the Iberian world at that time. However, if the clear opposition between a Portuguese and Spanish candidate was not enough, a new and unexpected pretender presented his credentials in October 1578: Antônio, Prior of Crato. Like the others, Antônio was the grandchild of the famous Portuguese sovereign by the paternal line, being the natural son or bastard of the *Infante* Luís, a well remembered prince. After 1578, and especially in 1579 and 1580, Antônio sought support inside and outside Portugal. Initially he attempted to suspend in Rome the principal objection to the legitimacy of his candidacy to the Portuguese crown – his bastardy. After 1580 he tried to involve the principal enemies of Spain in defense of his royal project.

The aim of this text is to look at the diplomatic efforts of the Prior of Crato to secure support for his candidacy to the Portuguese throne. Antônio sent emissaries to some of the principal courts of the time. His envoys were received as representatives of a royal project under construction, or as the ‘diplomats’ of a potential sovereign, which demonstrated, according to the hypothesis defended here, the capacity of his candidacy to attract the attention of the greatest rivals of the Spanish king. Between his ‘proclamation’ as king of Portugal on 19 June 1580 and his defeat in the Battle of Alcântara by Spanish troops on 25 August 1580, the emissaries of Antônio were welcomed, and his claim even considered in France and England – probably at a high price –, before being quickly discarded when it became clear that he lacked the men and arms to confront the *Rey Católico*. Even before this his name circulated in Rome, while after Alcácer Quibir the unexpected candidacy of the Prior created difficulties for the other claimants and also for the Cardinal, whether by defying him or by complicating the latter’s request for dispensation from religious vows in the Holy See. The study of his candidacy and the many paths it followed also allows the political process which led to the Iberian Union to be analyzed, as well as the debate between conquest and negotiation which still marks the study of the formation of the Dual Monarchy.

In Portuguese historiography the Prior has been treated either as a second class noble who was irresponsible and impertinent, or, in works produced between the end of the 1930s and

the 1950s,³ the time of *Salazarismo*, as a bulwark of Portuguese ‘national’ resistance. His presence in the political and cultural scene of the epoch led me to try and follow his tortuous and contradictory trail among two Iberian kingdoms in the second half of the sixteenth century. The objective was to understand the foundations and the strength of his project in this scenario, using documentation which showed the Prior of Crato to have been the most audacious opponent of Philip II in the dispute for the Portuguese crown. He had many contacts throughout Europe and the diligence of Philip II, both to dissuade him from the project and to bring him over to his side, as well as to undermine his candidacy, indicated how much his project concerned others and required measures to be taken by his Cardinal uncle, his cousin the king of Spain, and even Pope Gregory XIII. Portugal was an important kingdom in the geopolitics of the time, not only because of what it had done for the expansion of Christianity, but also for the grandeur of its colonial domains. Annexing Portugal, the cherished dream of the Habsburgs since the time of Charles V, would lead to the consolidation of the already impressive Spanish Empire and could increase the immense power of Philip II.

The rumors of the defeat in North Africa, the unbelievable disappearance of Sebastião or his death fighting the Moors, and the loss or imprisonment of part of the nobility, left the kingdom extremely fragile in relation to the Castilian offensive. The long policy of inter-dynastic marriages – Manuel married two daughters of the *Reys Católicos*, João III married the sister of Charles V, Catarina of Habsburg, the father of Sebastião, Prince João, married the daughter of the emperor, Joana – was one of the strategies adopted in this trajectory, even though it began with *Venturoso*, as Philip II would argue in his favor, almost a century later.⁴ The multiple difficulties created for any marriage contract Sebastião might sign, and the daily presence of Castilian representatives in the Portuguese Court throughout the reign of *The Desired* (as Sebastião was called), sealed with the meeting in Guadalupe to agree Spanish aid

³Amongst the many works dedicated to the Prior of Crato are the following works of references: Mário Brandão. *Coimbra e D.Antônio Rei de Portugal*. A educação de D.Antônio. Coimbra, 1939, vol.I; *Coimbra e D.Antônio Rei de Portugal*. Documentos de 1558 a 1581. Coimbra, 1945; *Coimbra e D.Antônio Rei de Portugal*. Documentos de 1582 a 1598. Coimbra, 1947; José de Castro. *O prior do Crato*. Lisboa: União Gráfica, 1942; J.M.Queiroz Velloso. *O interregno dos governadores e o breve reinado de D.Antônio*. Lisboa: Academia Portuguesa de História. Subsídios para a História Portuguesa, vol.3, 1953; Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão. *O reinado de D.Antônio, Prior do Crato*. Vol.I (1580-1582). Coimbra, 1956.

⁴ One of the arguments of Philip II about the union of the two crowns was based on the contract signed by Manoel to betroth in his son, the *Infante* Miguel, heir of Portugal and the crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1499. For an analysis of the debate about this document, see Fernando Bouza Alvarez. De archivos y antiguas escrituras en la pretensión al trono portugués de Felipe II. La unión de coronas ibéricas de un fin de siglo a otro in *Imagen y propaganda*. Capítulos de Historia Cultural del reinado de Felipe II. Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1998, pp. 121-133.

for the North African enterprise,⁵ indicate the armed web around Portugal even before the disaster in Morocco.

News of the defeat reached Lisbon almost a week after the confrontation, on 10 or 11 August 1578. On 28 August, Cardinal Henrique, the last living son of Manuel, was proclaimed king and one of the most difficult moments in Portuguese political life began. Amongst the many urgencies resulting from this disaster of incalculable proportions, the most serious was leading a succession process in a kingdom without natural heirs. In addition to being religious and celibate, the Cardinal was 66 and in delicate health. Sebastião, whose death had been presumed, had not married or left heirs. Confirming the quick and well-informed action of the Spanish king in this scenario, Cristóvão de Moura, a figure who would become a key in the process for enticing the top ranking clergy and nobility to the Castilian cause, was quickly sent to Portugal («it will be good that I go to the Cardinal, as Your Majesty stated upon hearing the news»). He was to deal with the «matter we discussed in past times», clearly referring to the right to the inheritance of Portugal. The future ambassador saw with stark clarity the possible succession paths and suggested urgent measures. In relation to the Cardinal he said: «y aunq de su edad y enfermedades se podía tener por cierto q no tendrá hijos aunq se case, tendría por más seguridad advertir a Roma luego para lo q toca a impedirle la dispensación». He was faster than the person in question, since the Cardinal's request to the Papacy was only made at the end of September, and here we are in the middle of August. Moura also called attention to the difficulty in getting the Portuguese to support the cause of Philip II, «no será muy fácil por el natural odio q naturalmente tienen todos a esta nación», though he pondered that «mas son tantas y tan grandes las comodidades q se les pueden ofrezzer q pienso q han de ser parte pra reducirillos». He stated that the right of the Duke of Parma could be excluded («because his mother had died before that of *el Rey*»), with the doubt being between «Your Majesty and the Duchess of Berganza», although among the supporters of the latter many recognized the right of the *Rey Prudente*.⁶

⁵ In the meeting between Sebastião and Philip II in the sanctuary of Guadalupe in December 1576, the Spanish king promised the aid of 5000 men and 50 galleys to go to Morocco – the Duke of Alba calculated that 15,000 was the necessary number – and in relation to the marriage of Sebastião with his daughter asked that the subject be returned to after the return of his nephew from North Africa.

⁶ *Apud* Alfonso Danvila. *Felipe II y la sucesión de Portugal*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1956, p.8. Cristóvão de Moura, Marquis of Castelo-Rodrigo from 1600 onwards, was born in Lisbon in 1538. After the marriage of Prince João de Portugal to the *Infanta* Joana of Spain in 1542, the parents of Sebastião, Moura took part of the entourage of Joana after the princess returned to Spain. He became a person of the highest trust of Philip II, and came to serve the Spanish king in the Portuguese court during the reign of Sebastião, and was appointed to various positions. After the Battle of Alcácer Quibir he was the first envoy of the *Rey Católico* to Cardinal Henrique, and began to act on behalf of Philip II. Moura kept her power even after the death of Philip II.

The Spanish king also acted quickly in relation to Morocco, dispatching a captain to negotiate the ransoming of captives with the new Sharif. At the same time, he also took measures to find out about the castles and fortresses between Andalusia and Portugal, as well as in Rome, remaining informed about the succession issue. Besides all of this, Philip II sent a representative to Portugal «insistiendo que no se hablase de otra cosa sino del sentimiento de S.M. por los últimos sucesos, del auxilio enviado a África, y lo que lo demás fueran ofrecimientos para cuanto les ocurriese».⁷ The envoy was the same Cristóvão de Moura. All possible precautions had to be taken, since not even the death of Sebastião was certain. It was only announced on 24 August. Philip II maintained intense correspondence, part of it in cipher, and was continually aware of what was happening in Portugal, of the opinion of the literati towards the union of the two kingdoms and the ability to resist a possible Spanish attack. What has to be highlighted is the speed of the Spanish king in sending agents to Portugal and Rome, the expectation of the candidacy of the Duchess of Bragança, but the lack of concern in these first weeks with the unexpected and embattled rival, Antônio, Prior of Crato.

It is not easy to identify precisely when the Prior of Crato's royal project began. In October 1578 he was defending his candidacy. Before that there were mentions of his name as an eventual heir to the Portuguese crown, as we will see, but following the trail of dates and names in service of Antônio is a challenge with almost unavoidable risks. This was because the Prior was a secondary personality, despite being present in the Iberian courts since the death of his father, the Infante Luís, in 1555. In a little more than 20 years he changed from a bastard sheltered in the court to an insolent and undesired claimant to the highest position in the Portuguese monarchy. It is possible to treat his intention as a simple reverie of an unruly man, however, after looking closer at the trajectory which led him on such an ambitious project, we can re-estimate dimension his importance. In the case being treated here, he had envoys received by the French and English kings, obtained a favorable Brief about his legitimacy from Rome, as well as being the only one of the claimants to confront his powerful cousin the King of Spain.

Between 1600 and 1603 he was Viceroy of Portugal, a position he held again between 1608 and 1612. Moura died in Madrid in 1613.

⁷Idem, p.9, Note, 16 August 1578.

Antônio was born in Lisbon on an uncertain date in 1531,⁸ son of the *Infante* Luís and Violante Gomes, who most authors see as a New Christian,⁹ daughter of Pero and Ana Gomes. The origin of the Gomes family is confused. The defenders of Antônio considered them as from the *petite* nobility. On the other hand, his critics stressed the humble background of the family to affirm the impossibility of matrimony.¹⁰ As I found no unbiased or sufficiently documented information about his mother or the maternal line of Antônio, I assume like the most plausible and widely accepted being, despite its contradictions, the Jewish origin of Violante. What should be noted here is not the complacency of the Royal family towards Luiz' 'slip' – children outside marriage were common at the time for *infantes* and heirs –, but the welcoming of this bastard *fidalgo* with Jewish blood into the court which since the 1530s had demanded the creation of a Tribunal of the Faith, with the principal target being the New Christian community. While there was no Inquisition in Portugal when the *Infante* was 'bewitched' by the *Pelicana* at the beginning of the 1530s, the Statues of Purity of the Blood had been in force since 1560,¹¹ therefore before Antônio's kingly pretensions. Why this impediment was not evoked at any time to prevent his candidacy, not even by the powerful *Rey Católico*, is still an open question. What is certain is that Antônio was separated from his mother and accepted by this father when still young, beginning his studies at the age of eight. He followed the usual route for natural sons of the high-ranking nobility. He went to Catholic schools, always carefully looked after, at the request of his father and his uncle Henrique, who assumed the guidance of his religious vocation, a common destination for bastards.¹² This decision was the cause of a long list of misunderstandings between the uncle and nephew. Since a young age Antônio showed himself to be averse to convent life, to discipline, and to the dedication demanded for religious office. In all the convents he spent time in, he created problems, not always mentioned directly, confirming the importance of his protectors. The

⁸ Like so much else about Antônio, his date of birth is controversial. Camilo Castelo Branco believes it to be 1534; Frei Bernardo da Cruz, 1536. The majority of authors admit 1531. Cf. Camilo Castelo Branco. *D. Luiz de Portugal*. Neto do Prior do Crato (1601-1660). 2a.edição. Porto: Livraria Chardron, 1896, p.128-9.

⁹ It is once again Camilo Castelo Branco who raises the hypothesis that Violante Gomes was not a new Christian, cf. *Op.Cit.*, p. 112-114.

¹⁰ A defender of this thesis, as well as the impossibility of Luís' marriage with Violante Gomes, is the Duke of Alba in *El proceso de ilegitimidad de D. Antonio, Prior do Crato y su resistencia contra Felipe II*. Homenaje ofrecido a Menendez Pidal. Miscelánea de estudios lingüísticos, literarios e históricos. Madrid, 1925, p.190-1.

¹¹ See, amongst others Fernanda Olival. Rigor e interesses. Os estatutos de limpeza de sangue em Portugal. *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas*, n.4, 2004, pp.151-182.

¹² The trajectory of Antônio could have been, with the exception of the premature death, similar to Duarte, natural son of João III, born before the king married Catarina of Habsburg. After having received a meticulous religious education, he was designated Archbishop of Braga in 1542, at a little over the age of 21, dying of smallpox in 1543. Cf. Ana Isabel Buescu. *D. João III*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2005, Chp .5: Duarte o bastardo régio, pp.174-180.

fact is that he always received privileged treatment, even being visited by his then uncle, the king, João III and the queen Catarina of Habsburg, in November 1550, in the Monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra.¹³

In 1555, before the death of his father, he appeared in Lisbon, no longer hiding his decision to abandon the religious life.¹⁴ His disagreement with his Cardinal uncle was at this time explicit, and it was impossible to imagine what happen in the future. Established in court, respected as the son of a well-remembered *infant* – and with a no less accidental trajectory in Europe at the time of the expansion of Habsburg power¹⁵ – Antônio inherited the priory of Crato and did not stop asking for favors and grants.¹⁶ After the death of João III in 1557, Sebastião became king of Portugal at the age of just three. There began a troubled period of regency, in which the profligacy of Antônio entered the center of royal and Iberian policy. The 11 years of the minority of Sebastião, when Portugal was ruled between 1557 and 1562 by the regent and queen Catarina of Habsburg, and between 1562 and 1568 by Cardinal Henrique,¹⁷ were a time of growing difficulty for Antônio, once again perplexed by ambition, followed by growing resentment. The period of the division of the court between those who were close to the Queen or the Cardinal corresponded to the maturity of Antônio: having been made heir to

¹³ Cfr. Mario Brandão. *Coimbra e D. Antônio Rei de Portugal. A educação de D. Antônio*. Coimbra, 1939, pp. 47-48. For an analysis of the relationship between the education of Antônio and his project of royalty, see Jacqueline Hermann, *Um rei cristão novo. Judaísmo, bastardia e os obstáculos à candidatura de D. Antônio, prior do Crato, ao trono português (1578-1580)*, in Ronaldo Vainfas, Georgina Silva dos Santos (edited by), *Tolerância. Religião, raça e política no mundo ibérico do Antigo Regime*, forthcoming.

¹⁴ For this brief biographical outline, see Antônio Caetano da Silva, *História Genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa*, Tomo III, Livro IV. Coimbra, Atlântica Livraria Editora, 1737, p. 216. Mário Brandão, in *Coimbra e D. Antônio Rei de Portugal*, vol. I: A educação de D. Antônio, disagrees with Caetano de Sousa and enters into documentary minutiae about the education of the future Prior of Crato. Despite the divergences, both refer to the resistance of the then young *fidalgo* to the religious life.

¹⁵ A no less controversial character, his house was one of the most important at the time, even competing with the Royal House, probable reason of the various aborted matrimonial contracts. Luís' (1506-1555) actions in the European scenario in the first half of the sixteenth century still await a more profound study. In relation to this, see Sylvie Deswarte-Rosa, *Espoirs et d'espairs de l'Infant D. Luís*, «Mare Liberum. Revista de História dos Mares», Lisboa, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, n. 3, 1991, pp. 243-298; Aude Viaud. *L'Infant D. Luís de Portugal*. Luís Filipe F.R. Thomaz (org.), *Aquém e além de Taprobana. Estudos luso-orientais de Jean Aubin e Denys Lombard*, Lisboa, CHAM, 2002, pp. 37-56, e Robert Ricard. Pour une monographie de l'enfant D. Luís de Portugal, *Charles-Quint et son temps. Colloque Internationale du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*, Comité Française des Sciences Historiques, Paris, 1958, pp. 167-175. For the relationship between the trajectory of the father and son, see Jacqueline Hermann, *Um rei cristão novo*, *op.cit.*

¹⁶ Antônio, the sole son of the *Infante Luis*, inherited only the priory of Crato, with part of his inheritance remaining for Luis' nephew, the *Infante Duarte*, son of his brother of the same name, and the other part returning to the Crown. Cf. José de Castro. *O Prior do Crato*. Lisboa: União Gráfica, 1942, p.13.

¹⁷ João III died on 11 June 1557 and Catarina assumed the regency on 14 June. Sebastião was proclaimed king two days later. The Cardinal assumed the regency on 23 December 1562, holding this until the majority of Sebastião, on 20 January 1568. For an analysis of the regency period, see Maria do Rosário de Sampaio Themudo Barata Azevedo Cruz. *As regências na minoridade de D. Sebastião*. Elementos para uma história estrutural. Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1992, 2 vols.

the priory of Crato, he began to interact with the small roll of *fidalgos* who gravitated around power. The waste of numerous and privileged opportunities transformed him into a nuisance who was always dissatisfied.

In the 1560s the most notable fact about him is the possible flight, or dispatch, of Antônio to Castile. Either at the request of the Queen to her nephew, Philip II, or searching for support from his powerful cousin, both are hypotheses which confirm the insubordinate character of the Prior. Antônio wanted an increased annuity for life, authorization to abandon convent life, and to reside in Lisbon, after unsuccessfully trying to be appointed Archbishop of Évora. Following the interference of the *Rey Católico* almost all of Antônio's demands were met, with the exception of abandoning the religious life and residence in Lisbon. Back in Portugal, after almost two years in Spain, he encountered the growing animosity of his uncle. In September 1566 Antônio wrote to his cousin Philip II thanking him for his support and stating that he was the «most grateful of all» to the Spanish king, a promise later forgotten as we will see.¹⁸

With the rise of Sebastião, Antônio had another outstanding moment. Perhaps this was because he was another opponent of the Cardinal, with whom *The Desired* had also clashed, rather than due to his own merit. In 1569 he received the commendation of the Order of Malta at the request of Sebastião, repeated by Philip II to the Pope in September of the same year, confirming his prestige and a new *oblivion* of his birth defect.¹⁹ In 1571 «he was much favored» by Sebastião. In 1572, he was again helped by the Spanish king. In a letter to the new pope, Gregory XIII, he asked for dispensation for the Holy Orders received and the use of the ecclesiastic habit, with the authorization to use, as a Friar of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the habit and sword against the infidels. Among Antônio's «agents» in Rome we can see no one less than the *Rey Católico*, though it is difficult to know if the growth in the number of sympathizers of the future *Antonista* cause with the Holy See dates from this time.²⁰

¹⁸ José de Castro. *Op.cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁹The concession of the commendations obeyed a set of old and rigorous norms and demands about origin and filiation. In relation to this, see *Comendas das Ordens Militares na Idade Média. Actas do Seminário Internacional*, Porto, Novembro de 2008. In relation to the commendation of the Order of Malta, see José de Castro. *Op.cit.*, p. 26.

²⁰ A path to be explored in relation to the possible prior knowledge of Antônio by Gregory XIII refers to the presence of the still Pontifical Legate, Ugo Boncompagni, in Spain in 1565, a period when the prior was received in the Castilian Court. It can be hypothesized that they met, the reason the future pontiff considered him in the political framework of the succession. Gregory XIII was born in Bologna in 1501 and was pope between 1572 and 1585, the year of his death, cf. José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, *Felipe II y el papado*, Tomo II (1572-1598). Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 2006, p. VIII.

The reason for the insistence on the dispensation was the imminent appointment of the prior as governor of Tangiers, which occurred in 1574. All these negotiations were an affront to the Cardinal – both due to disapproval of his nephew and the latter’s abandonment of the religious life. It also contradicted the efforts of Henrique to circumscribe Antônio a few years previously. In July 1565, after repeated complaints from the Cardinal, Antônio was even suspended in the Brief *Non sine magna* from the governorship of the priory, since «se lembra pouco da sua estirpe e pouco atende àqueles costumes e àquela honestidade de vida que convinha fosse dotado por ser constituído em Ordens Sacras.»²¹ This reprimand – and above all the suspension from the revenue of the priory – led him to seek the Castilian king, the hypothesis for the ‘flight’ mentioned previously. It should also be mentioned that the envoy sent by Philip II to negotiate with the Queen and the Cardinal on Antônio’s behalf was, coincidentally, the same Cristóvão de Moura whom we have already met. The fact is that, despite the august intervention, the military career of Antônio lasted little more than three months. He left for Tangiers in May, returning to Portugal in August, where he joined Sebastião in the latter’s first expedition to North Africa.

Between 1574 and the years preceding the expedition to Morocco, I only encountered Antônio again on the day of the departure for Africa, upset with the king, who had treated him badly on the eve. What happened between 1574 and 1576 with the Prior, when his ostracism on the part of Sebastião seems to have begun, is not yet clear. The fact is that we see him leaving for Alcácer Quibir without any important position. 1576 was decisive in various regards. The succession crisis in Morocco opened the crisis which led to Sebastião deciding to prepare the disastrous battle. In December the above mentioned ‘interview of Guadalupe’ occurred.²²

Also dating from 1576 is the first documentary reference found mentioning the possibility of Antônio becoming the heir to the Portuguese throne. This was before the disaster in North Africa. In a letter, Monsignor João André Calligari told Cardinal Como, Secretary of State of Pope Gregory XIII:

Antônio, son of the *Infante* Luís, born outside of marriage, is 42 years of age, was Prior of the Grand Cross of Malta, adorned with such vivaciousness of wit and with such experience of

²¹*Apud* José de Castro, *Op.cit.*, pp. 20-21. Something like «he remembers little of his lineage and little obeys those customs and the honesty of life that was convenient to be gifted to him for being given Holy Orders».

²²For a summary of the political crisis of Morocco and an evaluation of the decision and preparations for the Battle of Alcácer-Quibir, see Jacqueline Hermann. *No reino do Desejado. A construção do sebastianismo em Portugal, séculos XVI-XVII*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1998.

actions in the world, who was reputed by everyone as very apt to support the weight of the crown in the event that the King Sebastião should die (which God will not want) without children. (...) However, there are many difficulties because he is a bastard, deacon, friar of Malta and son of a New Christian, in such a way that Portugal could fall into the hands of the *Rey Católico* if he is alive after the death of His Majesty and even more so that he has on his side all who attend His Majesty, and I believe that the Congress of Guadalupe (referring to the meeting of Philip II with Sebastião) is concerned with nothing else.²³

We can see that the name of Antônio circulated in Rome as the possible king of Portugal! It is possible that the Prior thought he would have more time than was supposed, and was counting on his allies in the Papacy, although the king was still alive and young. Sebastião's insistence on participating in the forthcoming battle fed the murmurings about the succession in Portugal, thereby giving time for the preparation of future candidates. Based on the actions of Philip II and the mention of Antônio in 1576, these two at least considered the hypothesis of disaster and the vacancy of the throne. Nevertheless, at this time the Spanish king did not imagine his cousin, who had received so many favors, becoming his most obstinate rival. It is also interesting that Philip II did not have access to the letter of Monsignor Calligari, despite his informants in the papacy.

Antônio's claim to the Crown was announced on 12 October 1578, a few days after his return to Portugal. Like everything which surrounds the life of the Prior, his ransom in Africa had airs of farce or a fable. Wounded and captured by the Moors, he was freed thanks to the knight Gaspar da Grã and the aid obtained from the Jew Abrãao Gibre, possibly favored by Antônio in the few months he had spent in Tangiers. His release is said to have been facilitated by the habit of Malta he wore below his miserable prisoner's clothes. Gaspar da Grã, also a captive, convinced the enemy that the insignia indicated that the prior was the parish priest of a rich church, whose benefit would be extinguished at the end of the year with the replacement of the clergyman, which hastened the terms of the ransom agreement.²⁴ I was unable to discover if the Spanish king, so committed to freeing Spanish and Portuguese prisoners – he sent a captain to deal with the Moroccan Sharif and promised to help the Cardinal – participated in the release of Antônio. This is a plausible hypothesis, since he must

²³Arquivo Secreto do Vaticano, Nunz di Portugallo, Vol. 2, fol. 482, *apud* José de Castro. *Op.cit.*, p. 30-31. Emphasis added by the age of Antônio in the letter, he was born in 1534, not 1531.

²⁴J.M. Queiroz Velloso, *D.Sebastião. 1554-1578*, Lisboa, Empresa Nacional de Publicidade, 3a edição revista e aumentada, 1945, p. 411.

have expected to have in his cousin an ally for his party and there is mention to the reception of Antônio by the Duke of Medina-Sidônia, probably at the request of the Spanish king, on the passage of the Prior to Lisbon.²⁵ If the effort had been on the part of the Cardinal, the unpleasantness was no less, despite the ‘happiness’ with which he received his nephew. Cristóvão de Moura, always him, was with Antônio on the night of his arrival in Lisbon, when he gave him a letter from Philip II congratulating on his release. At this time the Spanish king and his envoy already knew of the pretensions of the Prior of Crato and had infiltrated spies among his followers, in accordance with the orders of the *Rey Católico*.²⁶

After October 1578 the candidacy of Antônio became unavoidable, preoccupying and insistent. The Cardinal and Philip II spared no efforts to dissuade him from the idea. His uncle because he would not accept his nephew’s leaving the religious life – necessary to have children, although at this time he was the father of at least one son²⁷-, and because he reproved his behavior and insolence. His cousin through the repeated attempts to ‘win him’ over to his cause.

The first and irremediable obstacle faced by the Prior, in addition to the hostility of the Cardinal, was his bastardy. Wanting to remove this impediment, Antônio started a process for the recognition of his parents’ marriage, for which he got witnesses – 48 years later! – in order to confirm the matrimony. Although an illegitimate origin had not always been an insurmountable obstacle – the dynasty of Avis and the house of Bragança serve as examples of this –, in the case of the Prior of Crato it was definitive, at least for his recognition as a possible heir.²⁸

²⁵ José de Castro. *Op.cit.*, p. 33.

²⁶ Letter from Cristóvão de Moura to Felipe II, 18 de outubro de 1578, *apud* Alfonso Danvila, *Op.cit.*, p. 34.

²⁷ Despite being impeded by the religious life, Antônio had eight to ten children, of whom the oldest Manoel de Portugal and Cristóvão, participated in the resistance and the actions in the European courts, cf. Antônio Caetano de Sousa. *História Genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa*. Tomo III, Livro IV. Coimbra, Atlântica Livraria Editora, 1737, p. 216. After the acclamation, the Prior himself granted favors to his daughters Filipa and Luísa, cfr. Veríssimo Serrão. *Op.cit.*, pp. 550-554.

²⁸ The bastard son of Pedro I and a Galega woman, João was destined for the mastership of the Order of Avis while still a child and became one of the richest men in Portugal. With the succession crisis of 1383, he confronted and defeated João of Castile at the Battle of Aljubarrota. He was proclaimed king in 1385 and started the dynasty of Avis. His image was tied to the Messiah of Lisbon and his ‘choice’ was supported by the thesis of the right of the people to elect their sovereign, returned to centuries later by the defenders of the right of Antônio. In relation to this, see Margarida Garcez Ventura, *Messias de Lisboa. Um estudo de mitologia política*, Lisboa, Edições Cosmos, 1992. The Bragança dynasty which assumed the monarchy after the Restoration in 1640, also had a bastard origin: the house emerged from the marriage of the *infante* Afonso, bastard son of João I with Brites Pereira, only daughter of Nun'Álvares Pereira. Through the marriage the daughter received a large amount of land, farms, and castles, and João equally gave his son a vast property. The house’s possessions were increased in the following years through royal favors and other privileges, until in the middle of the fifteenth century it ran into difficulties in the reign of João II, before being rehabilitated by Manuel I. The ducal house grew again and over time its ‘diluted’ [bastard origin] became the root of the Portuguese royalty lost with the

The available documentation about the subject is scarce and confused. The main references are the work of José de Castro, based on Vatican sources, and a 1925 text from the then Duke of Alba. The heir of the famous soldier analyzes the hypothesis of the secret marriage of the parents of the Prior of Crato, based on a document supposedly kept by the Archbishop of Lisbon. By order of the Duke of Alba in October 1580, the entire dossier in favor of the legitimacy of António, then in the power of the Papal Nuncio in Portugal, Alexandre Frumenty,²⁹ was to be ‘rescued’ for the *Rey Católico*. This explains why it is now in Spain, more precisely in the private collection of the Duke of Alba, where it can now be consulted.

The reference to the Nuncio and his dedication to the cause of the Prior’s legitimacy confirms the presence of allies of António in the Holy See. It is difficult to know how the Prior kept emissaries in Rome or the paths which led to Frumenty becoming one of his most important allies in the cause of legitimacy. António travelled no further than Spain in the 1560s, but was recommended by Philip II in a letter to the pontiff about his request for dispensation from the ecclesiastical habit in 1572,³⁰ before his nomination as governor of Tangiers in 1574, as we have seen. There is mention of the presence of the then Pontifical Legate Ugo Boncompagni, from 1572 onwards Pope Gregory XIII, in Spain in 1565, when the Prior of Crato was at the Castilian court.³¹ He was known and protected by important men of his time and the negotiations he led in the context of the Portuguese succession confirm his presence in the dispute. With whom and how he made his name be considered for the succession in 1576 – when the death of the heir of the other *infante*, Duarte, and the celibacy of Sebastião left the future of Portugal uncertain³² – is still unknown. We have seen that, despite the caveats (bastard, deacon and son of a new Christian), Monsignor Calligari seemed concerned with the ascension of Philip II. The qualities highlighted – «adorned with such

Iberian Union. Cfr. Joel Serrão. *Pequeno Dicionário da História de Portugal*, Lisboa, Figuirinhas, 1987, pp. 112-113. About Bragança’s House, see Mafalda Soraes da Cunha, *A Casa de Bragança, 1560-1640. Práticas senhoriais e redes clientelares*, Lisboa, Editorial Estampa, 2000.

²⁹Alessandro Frumenty or Fromento was chosen as nuncio of Portugal by Gregory XIII in November 1578, but only reached the kingdom at the beginning of 1579. As a result of pressure from Philip II he was removed from the position in August 1580, with Alexandre Riario being appointed in his place.

³⁰José de Castro, *Op.cit.*, pp. 28-29.

³¹ See note n. 20.

³² Duarte, son of the *Infante* with the same name, died on 28 November 1576, after being sick for months. Second in the line of succession after the Cardinal, he died single at the age of 35, in one more strange career of Portuguese celibates. Cf. Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, *D.Sebastião. Coleção de Reis Portugueses*, Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores, 2006, p. 252. He was the brother of the Duchess of Bragança, the Cardinal’s favorite.

vivaciousness of wit and with such experience of actions in the world»³³ –, indicated the defense of the Prior and the attention which the Portuguese succession was already attracting.

Antônio's legitimation process brought the Cardinal King unexpected problems. Since September 1578 the question of the marriage of the Cardinal had been under consideration by the Portuguese authorities as an alternative to the succession. We have seen that for Philip II this hypothesis has existed since August. The question is controversial. For some it was a request from the Council of Lisbon to the Cardinal, quickly accepted. For others a necessary 'sacrifice' required by the context.³⁴ Whatever the cause, the Cardinal was determined to «fulfill the obligations of the position of King.» He also stated in a consultation sent to his nephew and king of Spain, Philip II, that «I have even dealt with marriage, something so strange to the life I had before.» The emissaries of the *Rey Católico* prepared, at the request of Henrique, a Memorial about the question. In it Philip II stated that in times of such excesses in questions of faith, the heretics would not lose the occasion to laugh at the rigor that the Roman Church demanded from its clerics, friars and bishops, if one of them, a former grand-inquisitor, would marry. In relation to the hypothesis of children, «at a tried age and worn out with infirmities» it was natural that he would not have them, and if he did, many would question their legitimacy. At the limit, the suspicion could be a cause of discord and war, since «there are many things which in rigor can be done, but which are never done, due to the serious consequences which arise out of them.» The still veiled threat indicated the other part of the Spanish strategy to annex Portugal.

In Rome the Cardinal also met resistance. The Portuguese ambassador, João Gomes da Silva, certainly had a lot of work, but we can only discover this through the correspondence of the Castilian emissary, Juan de Zuñiga, as the Portuguese letters have disappeared. Since at least January 1579 Zuñiga knew of the intention of the pope not to grant the Cardinal's wish, as well as the visits of Silva to the Holy Father. To complicate the situation even further, Gregory XIII decided to send Antônio Maria Sauli, former nuncio in Naples, to Portugal to officially offer condolences for the death of Sebastião, and to discretely convince the Cardinal to desist from his intention to marry. The exact comprehension of Sauli's mission irritated the Portuguese king, who complained about the pro-Spanish policy of Rome. The fact was that

³³ Arquivo Secreto do Vaticano. Nunz di Portugallo, Vol. 2, fol. 482, *apud* José de Castro, *O Prior do Crato*, pp. 30-31. Emphasis added. According to the age of Antônio in the letter, he was born in 1534, not 1531. The sentence continues: «and so much that on your side are all those who manage Her Majesty, and on my part I believe that the Guadalupe Congress (referring to the meeting of Philip II with Sebastião when they agreed the help of the Spanish king for Alcácer Quibir) is not for anything else.»

³⁴ See Amélia Polónia, *D. Henrique. Coleção Reis de Portugal*, Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores, 2005, pp.205-212.

the Holy See was being pressed on all sides – Antônio's legitimacy process, the marriage of the Cardinal and the revindication and direct pressure from Philip II – and this had an unexpected result. Gregory XIII ordered an investigation into the right to the succession of the Portuguese crown, the result of which showed the intention to interfere directly in this process.

It is not easy to understand which party Gregory XIII served. In the case of Antônio, the favorable sentence of legitimacy obtained in Rome and signed by Friar Manoel de Melo on 24 May 1579, was denied by Cardinal Henrique in August. The king considered the process a fraud, with bribed and discredited witnesses. Based on this the Cardinal wrote that «everything is null and produced,» with the result that the said Antônio was a natural and illegitimate son. Antônio reacted quickly, writing directly to the Pontiff, from whom he obtained the annulling of the Cardinal's sentence! In a Brief Gregory XIII undermined the King of Portugal, denying his power to rule on the subject. He had permission to gather proof, not to judge. The Holy Father favored Antônio with this decision, irritated Philip II, and made the political scenario of the kingdom even more tense. What is certain is that the Cardinal was not favored, either with the delay in the answer to his request for dispensation to marry – never conceded -, or, and principally, by the delicate situation in which the old king was left with the annulment of his decision about the illegitimacy of Antônio. In interviews with Legate Sauli the Cardinal mentioned the intervention of Philip II with the Pope several times, upsetting still further the equally old pontiff.³⁵ Gregory XIII ordered the apostolic nuncio in Portugal, Alexandre Frumentis, and the Archbishop of Lisbon to conclude the process – in which a judgment was never given – although he was convinced of the illegitimacy of Antônio.³⁶

The result of such pressure was terrible for Antônio. In November 1579 the king expelled his nephew from the kingdom, ordering that «it be as if in these Kingdoms he was not born,» suspended all his privileges, grants and graces that he enjoyed, and threatened all who supported or protected him, who from then on were to be considered rebels and disobedient. The Cardinal gave Antônio 15 days to leave Portugal, «and if he does not obey this I will proceed against him in the manner it seems to me to be right to obey the service of God.»³⁷

³⁵ In relation to the marriage of the Cardinal, see Amélia Polónia, *O casamento do monarca – um projeto condenado*, pp. 205-213; Queiroz Velloso, *A tentativa de casamento do Cardeal-Rei in O reinado do Cardeal D. Henrique*, pp. 93-129; Antônio Brásio, *O problema do casamento do Cardeal Rei. Memórias da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, Classe de Letras, Tomo XXII, Lisboa, 1981.

³⁶ Cfr. Queiroz Velloso, p. 240.

³⁷ Queiroz Velloso, pp. 238-239.

Nothing could be more convenient for the *Rey Católico* than having Antônio persecuted and prevented from seeking support for his cause within Portugal.

Time was the enemy of the old Cardinal. Sick, he could not resist hoping. However, he not give into the pressures of the papacy to annul the sentence of Antônio's illegitimacy. Nor did he accept the candidacies of either his nephew or Philip II, despite the ostensive arguments of the latter were. I am referring to the threat to invade the kingdom which had come to overshadow Portugal since the beginning of the 'negotiations' at the end of August 1578. We have already mentioned the order to raise men and arms on the frontier between the two Iberian kingdoms, the pressure for the Cardinal to desist from marrying, as well as the direct action of the *Rey Católico* with the Pope to prevent the favoring of any of the candidates to the succession of Portugal.³⁸

In Europe the fear of annexation and the military invasion of Portugal by Castilian troops spread. In *Veneza e Portugal no século XVI*, Julieta Teixeira de Oliveira analyzes a significant set of documents from the representatives of the government of the Most Serene Republic in Portugal, an old ally in the struggle against the Turks in the Mediterranean, North African and the Orient. Allied in an expansion concerned about power over the routes dominated by the Portuguese, the reason for the careful monitoring of the departure of ships from Lisbon. Between 1570 and 1578 four Venetians were responsible for reports and business with Sebastião. They were attentive and enthusiastic about the decision of the *Desired* to make war against the Moors. The Venetian representatives were based in Madrid, giving these ambassadors a privileged place to follow the news coming from Alcácer Quibir and the subsequent succession dispute. Venice was a cosmopolitan and independent center, different from much of the Iberian peninsula disputed by 'foreigners,' the reason for the more autonomous involvement in the Iberian cause. While the movements of the Portuguese needed to be observed, the expansion of Castilian power created insecurity in the Venetian government. News about the dynastic crisis was received almost daily: the defeat of Alcácer Quibir was not just a blow for Portugal, but could have affected all of Christendom, according to the *Dispacci* sent to the Most Serene Republic. The question of the Portuguese succession occupied the reports sent to Venice between 1578 and 1580, and here I highlight what Cristóvão de Moura had already mentioned: the antipathy of the Portuguese for the Spanish

³⁸ One further example, Philip tried to prevent the appointment of Teotônio de Bragança as Cardinal, warning that this could favor the cause of Catarina, p. 101, *apud* José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, *Felipe II y el papado*, Tomo II (1572-1598).

and the preparations of Castile to invade Portugal. Using a cipher, ambassador Zuan Francesco Morosini had been reporting since March 1579 on the armada which began to surround the frontiers of the two kingdoms. António's name appeared as a claimant, as well as the measures taken in Rome about his legitimacy. The documentation produced by the Venetians is vast and deserving of special analysis, but I will mention here to indicate the perception of the hostility between the Portuguese and the Spanish, the news about the military invasion of Portugal, and the means used by Philip II to impose his candidacy in Portugal and in the other European courts.³⁹

The Venetian attention illustrates well the interest and the importance that the Portuguese succession assumed in the European scenario, in spite of the partial interpretation of events due to the secrecy which surrounded the subjects. The emphasis on the military question should be highlighted, combined with the 'negotiation' efforts led by the oft mentioned Cristóvão de Moura. Negotiating could include varied sets of stages and methods, such as Castilian participation in the ransoming of the Duke of Barcelos – son of the Duchess of Bragança imprisoned in Morocco – and 'kept' in the custody of Philip II while the 'agreement' with the Dukes of Bragança in favor of Castile had not been finalized. The Venetians informed the government of the Republic of the Bragança's complaints about the long 'retention' of the ransomed duke 'welcomed' by the Duke of Medina-Sidônia, the same stop made by António before returning to Portugal. Unlike the Prior, however, the Duke only reached Portugal in March 1580, having been 'guarded' in Spain since October 1579, a strategy which did not pass unnoticed by the grandees of Portugal.⁴⁰ Perhaps the *Rey Católico* regretted not having done the same with António, if he had played any part in the ransoming of his cousin.

Since the first news about the return of António, Philip II had been attentive to the Prior. He expected to rapidly obtain support from someone who owed him so many favors. After all it was his agent, Cristóvão de Moura, who had interceded in favor of the Prior in 1566. It was not difficult to remember how much he owed the *Rey Católico* and that this was the moment to reattribute and to recognize «the truth and reason,» Philip himself wrote to the Prior. At this

³⁹ Julieta Teixeira Marques de Oliveira. *Veneza e Portugal no século XVI: subsídios para sua história*. Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 2000, especially Chapter 3. See also the selection of sources organized by the same author, *Fontes documentais de Veneza referentes a Portugal*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1997.

⁴⁰ In relation to the rescue and «retention of the Duke of Barcelos in Anadaluzia, see Queiroz Velloso. *O breve reinado*, p. 39-47; Julieta Teixeira Marques de Oliveira, *Veneza e Portugal*, p. 126; Eadem, *Fontes documentais de Veneza*, pp. 196-200; Danvila y Burguero. *Op.cit.*, p. 184.

time, 30 December 1578, the candidacy of Antônio was recognized and despite being thankful for the favors he had received, he had been convinced by various persons that «he had much justice» on his side. Moura contested the feasibility of the intentions and alluded to the large rewards offered by Philip II, such as the priories of São João in Leon and Castile. Antônio asked for time, repeated his intention of continuing in the dispute, guaranteeing to stay on the side of Spain if his right were not recognized.

During 1579 the positions irremediably clashed with each other, especially after the interview with Moura in June, when Antônio remained firm in his refusal to make any agreement to desist from the succession. In October, seeing himself valorized by the Spanish king, he once again made demands to abdicate his ‘right.’ he asked for a lifelong and hereditary income and wanted to be perpetual governor of Portugal! He ended with the tone of an ultimatum: peace or war to bring the impasse to an end was in the hands of Philip II. Once again Antônio was bluffing and the Spanish king knew this. After the Cardinal’s order in November 1579, the Prior asked to be sheltered by his cousin (!), in a game that was complicated still further by the death of Henrique in January 1580.⁴¹ Portugal came to be governed by a *Junta* consisting of five governors, which had the mission of leading the succession.⁴²

Between February and June 1580 intense movement shook the kingdom. The death of the king, uncertainty about the succession, plague in Lisbon and the roaming of the court, helped to spread the allies of Antônio through the towns and cities of the kingdom. Continuing to insist on the sentence of legitimacy, the Prior of Crato gathered in the town of Santarém, where he had been since February, an impressive number of adherents, including no one less than the nuncio Alexandre Frumentis. The town became a political center in which the negotiations of Antônio were carried out, including – unsuccessfully – with the Braganças. In the heat of the debates and the great popular mobilization against Philip II, the proclamation of the Prior of Crato on 19 June as King of Portugal is said to have occurred in an unplanned manner at the initiative of his supporters worried about the invasion of the kingdom. Veríssimo Serrão, author of the best documented work on the events of Santarém, understands

⁴¹ In relation to Philip II’s negotiations with Antônio, see Queiroz Velloso. *Op.cit.*, especially Chapter VII, pp. 245-279.

⁴² The Board of Governors was composed of Jorge de Almeida, Archbishop of Lisbon, João de Mascarenhas, *Vedor da Fazenda* (Royal Treasurer), Francisco de Sá de Meneses, Chamberlain of the dead king, Diogo Lopes de Sousa, governor of the Civil House, and João de Telo Meneses, former ambassador in Rome, cf. Queiroz Velloso, *O interregno dos governadores e o breve reinado de D. Antônio*, Lisboa, Academia Portuguesa de História. Subsídios para a História Portuguesa, vol. 3, 1953, pp. 3-4.

that António fulfilled the wishes of the community, not acting out of vanity or rebelliousness.⁴³

To a certain extent, and taking into account the immense differences in means, the Prior of Crato sought the recognition of this right first by justice and afterwards by arms, like the Spanish king, thought the latter had favors and rewards to offer, as well as an experienced, numerous and feared army. After Santarém the situation of the Prior gained some wind outside Portugal, but it hastened and made inevitable the Castilian military advance.

From Castile to Rome and then to Venice, passing through London and Paris, not to mention contacts with authorities in North Africa, the question of the Portuguese succession mobilized Europe and affected all the commercial and political spaces in which the Iberian kingdoms had relations of cooperation or rivalry. It was, thus, an issue which went beyond peninsular interests and was related to the political equilibrium based in Europe and which had impacts in the Atlantic, the Orient and the Mediterranean.

Even before June, António had sent letters to Elizabeth of England and Catarina de Médici of France. On 10 May 1580 he asked the English queen for aid for his cause. The messenger was received in the house of the Secretary and all the discretion the subject required was maintained, due to the presence of the then ambassador of Portugal in London, António de Castilho. Loyal to the Cardinal until the latter's death, the diplomat sought to keep himself neutral until the Spanish king was in the ascendancy. Philip II was told of the presence of the envoy and the suspicion that the cause was the Prior of Crato by the Castilian ambassador in London, Bernardino de Mendoza. The Prior's representative was received by the queen herself, according to Mendoza, and asked for arms and munition, proving the preparation of armed resistance. Elizabeth did not grant his request, unwilling to confront Philip II without being aware of the potential of António's forces.⁴⁴

On 18 May another envoy from the Prior arrived in Paris with a message for Catarina de Médici. This contact was even more delicate, due to queen's own candidacy for the succession of Portugal. The French sovereign had made impressive efforts to prove her right to the inheritance of the kingdom, mobilizing jurists, and ordering propaganda pamphlets to be produced and distributed supporting her cause.⁴⁵ António declared that he respected the

⁴³ Veríssimo Serrão. *O reinado de D. António*, p. 14. The attempt to make an agreement with the Bragança is on p. 11.

⁴⁴ Cfr. J. Veríssimo Serrão. *Op.cit.*, pp. 152-154.

⁴⁵ Cfr. Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão. *Os juristas de França e a crise dinástica de 1580*. Coimbra, Separata do *Boletim da Faculdade de Direito*, 1958.

right claimed by the queen, but was afraid that military action by Philip II «would make it impossible for the one with the just right to claim the throne.»⁴⁶ Days later the French court also received letters from the Duchess de Bragança, worried about a possible, and unwanted, military solution to the impasse. The House of Bragança had the support of the Portuguese ambassador, Francisco Giralde, a strong defender of the party of the duchess. The imminent invasion of Portugal was clear and the appeals were sent to the sovereigns of France and England and to Gregory XIII to avoid this dramatic outcome.

The Portuguese ambassadors in each of the courts, defending rival candidates, stirred up rivalries in search of aid. Giralde tried to get English help, as he had been ambassador there before going to France. He argued that Henri III of France was willing to send help to Portugal, a situation capable of threatening the English. Once again it is Ambassador Mendoza who was the principal source, for Philip II and for us, about the willingness of the French «for the Portuguese things, for having given him everything that was asked for this, which was artillery and munition.»⁴⁷ It is worth making a comment here about the importance of Spanish documents for the study of Portuguese history at this time. While, on the one hand, they are fundamental, even to chronologically follow what was happening. On the other, great care is required since they are committed to the cause they defend. From what is known, the French monarch did not officially support either the Duchess or the Prior, and only assisted the latter indirectly in the adventure in the Azores, as we will see. What is important to note in Giralde's actions is that they were prejudicial to the envoys Antônio sent to France and England. Veríssimo Serrão even says that the actions of this ambassador in favor of the Braganças was an obstacle to getting support for the Prior's demands.⁴⁸ The pressure of the two candidates and the threat of the military invasion led Elizabeth I to send William Waade to Portugal to draw his own conclusions about the case. The English agent, under the orders of the queen, counseled that the Duchess and Antônio unite to avoid the actions of Spain. Both claimants were promised aid if they could provide legal proof of their right to the throne, and the Prior was offered shelter in the English court if he needed to leave Portugal.

In Portugal the scenario did not favor the Prior. On 17 July 1580, three of the five governors of the kingdom adhered to, or were convinced to recognize, Philip II as the 'natural' heir, a decision which Henrique died without sanctioning. In a long document about

⁴⁶ *Apud* Veríssimo Serrão. *O reinado de D. Antônio, Prior do Crato*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ *Idem*, p. 158.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, p. 159.

the succession, part of the Junta declared Philip II «natural king of these kingdoms.» They claimed to speak in the name of the Cardinal, «who was very close to giving the sentence for the *Rey Católico*, his cousin.» In addition, they reprimanded the insolence of Antônio, «who is condemned and unnatural.» He had also, without license and authorization, installed himself in Santarém «accompanied by seditious and rebellious people,» having himself proclaimed king, provoking great tumults, breaking the doors of the Council, from where «they took the royal flag which was in it, and in the streets had himself proclaimed king».⁴⁹

The declaration of the governors calls attention for various reasons, but here I would like to draw attention to the presumption to speak for the Cardinal, affirming what he died without recognizing: the ‘natural’ right of the king of Castile. Even threatened by the forces of Philip II, he did not cede, although he had admitted, without any other option, the possibility of recognizing the right of his nephew. The document also favored the repressive action of Philip II and made Antônio an insubordinate, repeating part of the Cardinal’s sentence against his nephew.

The news of the defeat of the forces of Antônio at the Battle of Alcântara in August 1580, completely changed the already hesitant offer of English and French military aid. The Prior of Crato’s royalty lasted only 67 days and despite emergency plans to aid him with forces which varied from 300 to 5000 men, lack of support from the higher nobility and shortages of military support and money led the English and French queens to review their positions. Simultaneously information about the Spanish contingent was circulating: around 60,000 men!⁵⁰

Data about men and weapons are always uncertain, varying according to who is reporting them. To take one example, Luís de Brito, governor of the *comarca* of Minho and ally of Antônio, directed himself directly to Henri III in search of help, days after the defeat of Alcântara! He appealed to the ancestors of the French monarchs, who «always had so much» from Portugal, hoping that the king «would grant his favor.»⁵¹ On the same day, he wrote to Francisco Giraldes, perhaps ignoring the ambassador’s opting for the Braganças. He asked for help to get men and weapons and said that Antônio, always called king after Santarém, had «twenty thousand foot and three thousand horse» or more, «untrained men, with only a few

⁴⁹ *Apud Cédula dos Governadores de Portugal nomeados pelo Cardeal-Rei D. Henrique, sobre a sucessão do Reino e Declaração de D. Antônio, Prior do Crato, por rebelde, condenando-o às penas cominadas na leis*, in Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão. *Op.cit.*, pp. 559-563. The governors who signed this document, adherents to the Philippine cause were D. João de Mascarenhas, Francisco de Sá de Meneses and Diogo Lopes de Sousa.

⁵⁰ *Idem*, pp. 161-162.

⁵¹ Luís de Brito a Henrique II, 28 de agosto de 1580, *apud*, *Idem*, p. 576.

experienced captains» although they desired to avenge the evils spread throughout the kingdom. He was referring to the actions of the Duke of Alba, «who it is said has sixteen thousand» men, and believed that the ambassador could help to get French support. «I am as lacking in all things necessary to defend these *comarcas*, as I am full of love and willing to do the utmost to preserve them.»⁵²

These letters reveal important aspects about the resistance of the *Antonistas*. Their loyalty and the importance of some of them – they tried to make direct contact with sovereigns such as Henri III! –, the decentralization of command, as well as the lack of experienced soldiers, arms, and munition to deter the Castilian offensive. In addition, they also indicate the hope to continue even after the flight of Antônio, wounded and hunted by the powerful Duke of Alba. Before Antônio's defeat became known in France on 13 September, the Prior had managed to involve Pierre D'Or, appointed 'consul' to deal with the question of aid from Catarina de Médici. Antônio almost always treated the French Queen differently from some of his allies, insisting on the possibility of desisting from his claim, once the Castilian invasion had been defeated, if justice decided for the right of the 'Most Serene Queen.' An improbably promise: the Prior had signed as king, appointed allies, asked for safe conduct for others, minted coins, exercising as much as possible the power of the sovereign.⁵³

There were many rumors about French aid to the *Antonista* resistance, but concretely the intention – if it actually existed and what was intended was to take advantage of the Prior's cause to impose themselves on Portugal, or create difficulties for Philip II – evaporated following the result of Alcântara. Perhaps it is necessary to relativize French interest in the 'royalty' of the Prior of Crato, taking into account the rapid abandonment, or indifference as Veríssimo Serrão says – after insisting on the description of the preparation for the support –, «resigned to the misfortune of Antônio and impotent to contain the might of the king of Castile.»⁵⁴ Always well informed, it is not reasonable to suppose such a drastic change in so short a time. From what it seems, they held for a time the expectation of being able to implement the queen's right and at most cogitated indirect involvement through privateers, as happened in the Azores episode in 1582.

In the English court the news of the defeat of Antônio in August caused a similar result. Bernadino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, managed to be received by the queen on 31

⁵² Idem, pp. 576-577.

⁵³ After Santarém Antônio began to sign and act as king, examples of which are the various documents published by Veríssimo Serrão in the annex of the book about the reign of the Prior of Crato.

⁵⁴ Idem, pp. 166-168.

July, before Alcântara. He defended the cause of Philip II, lied about the adhesion of all the Portuguese – while Antônio's 'royalty' was in force – and guaranteed that the Prior was only supported by «the plebian people.» He asked that the queen not help him so that «there does not leave from here one man, boat, or grain of powder» in favor of a rebel. Days later João Rodrigues de Sousa arrived in London. He was Antônio's envoy and had letters for Elizabeth I and for Secretaries Walsingham and Wilson. The mission was impossible. In addition to Mendoza, the then ambassador of Portugal, Antônio de Castilho, appointed by the Cardinal and still answering to the *Junta* of Governors, acted against the Prior of Crato.

Rodrigues de Sousa asked for 20 boats with artillery, 200 gunners with their captains, more powder and iron shot, and promised to pay after the return of them to England! The response was continually delayed until news of the taking of Lisbon by Castilian troops reached England on 29 August. Philip II reported: «much care has been taken that this conquest be achieved without blood (but) he had been forced to use it due to his obstinacy, and if people could convince Don Antonio not to cause greater damage.» The Spanish king asked that Elizabeth be informed «as someone who has to discover my good successes».

After October 1580, according to Veríssimo Serrão, the cause of the «beaten monarch no longer greatly interested France or England.» In Portugal he fled to the north, passing through Coimbra, Aveiro and Porto, until he returned to Lisbon and left Portugal through Setúbal, in May 1581. The Prior's flight received valuable support, especially from the clergy, many of whom were arrested. Convents were targeted by Philip's troops, as well as the family members of Antônio's adepts, but the Prior managed to escape and reached the port of Calais in June 1581. For around nine months he had been on Portuguese soil protected and hidden by what seems to have been a significant number of supporters. Expressive and courageous, since they had to face the inclement actions of Sancho de Ávila in the pursuit of Antônio and his followers. Trying to weaken the resistance of the *Antonistas*, Philip II granted a general pardon on 18 April, with the exception of the leaders of the revolt, now treated as the crime of *lèse-majesty*.⁵⁵

The expectation of French or English aid to return to Portugal after exile were nothing other than isolated initiatives and, it can be said, extra-official, to the extent that they counted

⁵⁵ For an analysis of this persecution and of the allies of Antônio see Veríssimo Serrão, Capítulo VI: *A vida clandestina do rei D. Antônio até sua partida para a França*, pp. 177-224. In relation to the action of Sancho de Ávila see also J.A. Pinto Ferreira. *A Campanha a de Sancho de Ávila em perseguição do Prior do Crato*. Alguns documentos de Simancas. Documentos e memórias para a História do Porto. Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 1954.

on the help of privateers or private missions – even when under the vigilance and guidance of Catarina de Médici or Elizabeth I. I refer to the expedition to Terceira in the Azores, in the Atlantic, where Antônio was also proclaimed king. The modest French help could not prevent the defeat of the *Antonistas* in July 1582. In this action the former Coronel General of the Infantry of France, Phillipio Strozzi, was killed. His military valor was well known and he had been removed from his official functions to take part in the unsuccessful expedition in favor of the *Antonistas*. English support occurred in another context. After the defeat of the Spanish in 1588 – the ‘Invincible Armada’ (!) – the Francis Drake and John Norris’ expedition to the Portuguese coast, in which Antônio participated, aimed to intercept Spanish and Portuguese ships trading between India and the Americas, with there being no evidence of effective support for the monarchical project of the Prior of Crato. The assault on the Portuguese coast was defeated in June 1589.

While Antônio’s royal project had seemed improbable since the beginning – though the original moment is still difficult to specify –, there is no doubt about the unexpected and serious developments it provoked. From the point of view of the Iberian Union, the Battle of Alcântara and the hunt for Antônio and his followers reveals another side of the negotiations which led to the ‘incorporation’ of Portugal in the Hispanic Monarchy: the violent military route of annexation, not to mention the methods used to convince, for example, the Duchess of Bragança with the prolonged ‘welcome’ of the Duke of Barcelos. According to Rafael Valladares, who defends the military character of the conquest of Lisbon, the phrase attributed to Philip II about the triumph in Portugal, «I inherited, I bought, I conquered,» should be inverted. First the conquest, afterwards the swearing of the oath of the *Cortes* of Tomar, and finally the inheritance recognized,⁵⁶ although all fronts had been used at the same time. It thus confronts Bouza Alvarez’s thesis about the negotiated character of the Dual Monarchy, an important work on this question, still little studied in Portuguese historiography.⁵⁷

However, if the focus of the conquest is plausible for the analysis of the case of Antônio, for the high ranking nobility and clergy the support constructed through compromise was fundamental for the rapid conquest of arms, although this had been in preparation since 1578.

⁵⁶ Rafael Valladares. *La conquista de Lisboa. Violencia militar y comunidad política en Portugal, 1578-1583*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2008, p. 33.

⁵⁷ Fernando Bouza Alvarez. *Portugal en la Monarquía Hispánica. (1580-1640). Felipe II, Las Cortes de Tomar y la génesis del Portugal Católico*. 2 vol. Doctoral dissertation. Madrid: Editorial de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1987.

Philip II always left it clear that he would not hesitate to invade or conquer what he believed was his by right. Antônio, misled by ambition and vanity, overestimated his capacity for leadership, perhaps fed by the auspicious trajectory among kings and popes. He died alone and poor in Paris at the age of 64.

To conclude, I have sought to indicate the many threads of the complex web which entangled the Portuguese succession in the most important politics of the era, emphasizing the importance of the participation of Antônio in the delicate scenario which resulted from the submission of Portugal to the Castilian crown for 60 years. In the heat of the disputes and the negotiations undertaken by the various claimants, the Prior of Crato's request was heard in Rome, his emissaries were received by French and English authorities, though he did not manage to receive the declared support of either side. His case mirrors the late action of parallel and autonomous diplomacy in the first half of the sixteenth century,⁵⁸ outdated in the context of the reworking of dynastic politics and the affirmation of imperial policies of the new type. The actions of the various emissaries and diplomats were part of a scenario of states that were increasingly connected, intersecting in an unpredictable manner old models and the new challenges of geography, religion and politics in the Early Modern era.

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⁵⁸ In relation to the development of diplomatic activities in Portugal, see Pedro Cardim, *A diplomacia portuguesa no tempo de D. João III. Entre o império e a reputação*, Separata do livro *D. João II e o Império*. Actas do Congresso Internacional comemorativo de se seu nascimento. Direção de Roberto Carneiro e Artur Teodoro Marques, Tomar, 2004.

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