

STATE FINANCE, WAR AND REDISTRIBUTION IN PORTUGAL, 1249-1527

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Abstract

This thesis aims to relate thirteenth- to sixteenth-century state finances in Portugal to the models of 'tribute state', 'domain state' and 'tax state' and to test the assumption that changes within and between these stages are essentially expenditure-driven and related to warfare. These two problems are tested by means of a pre-post case study that observes Portuguese state finances before (1249-1369) and after (1369-1527) a period of nearly constant warfare that started in 1369. The observation is centred in four aspects: the revenues and the economy, the rules regulating the acquisition of more income (fiscal constitution), the funding of warfare and the autonomy of the state. This requires the combination of both quantitative and textual sources, including previously unpublished data, and the systematisation of hitherto dispersed materials.

The thesis argues that the concepts of 'domain state' and 'tax state' adequately describe the fiscal systems of the two phases studied but also that the role of warfare varies according to the fiscal system. While under the 'domain state' strong constitutional and fiscal limitations hindered military confrontation, voluntary expansionist wars were a feature of the 'tax state.' Thus, military activity appears revenue-driven rather than the opposite. Furthermore, the analysis of the expenditure of the 'tax state' shows that two-thirds of the royal revenues were allocated to redistribution.

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Author's Declaration

A paper, entitled *Finanças Régias e Reconquista. Em torno de uma Hipótese de Iria Gonçalves*, in Portuguese, containing the argument of chapter 1 and some of its data was sent in January 2005 to the commission organising the Festschrift of Iria Gonçalves which is forthcoming by the Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

The broad argument of part I was sketched in two papers publicly presented: '*Les Finances de l'État*' (part of the session '*Construire l'État au Portugal: processus et agents 1300-1500*') presented in September 2005 in the conference 'State-building from below: Europe 1300-1900' (Mont Verité, Ascona) and '*The Hundred Years Peace. War and Portuguese Finances from the 'Reconquista' to the Fernandine Wars*' presented in September 2006 at Conference of the Historians of Medieval Iberia (St Andrews).

The argument of chapter 4 was first sketched in the paper '*Fiscal Cells: the Portuguese Almojarifado on a Comparative Perspective (13th-15th centuries)*' presented in November 2006 at the 26th Congress of the Portuguese Association of Economic and Social History (Ponta Delgada).

Section 5.1 derives from a paper entitled '*A Burden Devoid of Reason' or a Lesser Evil? Sales taxes in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-century Portugal*' presented in July 2007 at the International Medieval Congress – Leeds.

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In 2006 I contributed to the project *Les Mots de l'Impôt dans les Villes de l'Occident Méditerranéen. Glossaire Critique de Fiscalité Médiévale* (CSIC-Barcelona and U. Lyon 2; funded by the Comité pour l'Histoire Economique et Financière de la France) by writing the entries '*Dez Reais de Ceuta, Empréstimo (I and II), Finta, Monetágio, Monopólio da Moeda, Pedido (I and II), Sisa (I, II and III), Sisa dos Ingleses and Talha*'. These texts incorporate a few of the original contributions present in this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

The present work concerns the finances of the Portuguese monarchy from the thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. Portuguese state finances, however, will not be studied for their intrinsic relevance alone. Besides being an important, as well as a neglected, element in the country's history, the finances of the Portuguese crown constitute a useful instance for testing and assessing the hypotheses and problems of a growing field of historical enquiry: fiscal history. The role of section 0.1 is to expose the broad problems addressed in this thesis and to argue why this particular case can be of some relevance for those questions. Subsequent sections will be more concrete. While section 0.2 will examine the potential of the existing historical sources for tackling the problems exposed earlier on, section 0.3 will present the methodologies used and the structure of the thesis.

The Case for this Case Study

Case studies have a long and illustrious tradition in the history of state finances. For historians throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe finance history was intrinsically connected with the problems of state- and nation-building. As national historiographies and 'public finances' grew together finance history became intrinsically connected with the triumph of the state. For those nation-centred historiographies, state finances were one aspect in the evolution of the country they studied towards state formation and were embedded in each country's singular institutional and political history.¹ Thus, in 1967, while studying the financial institutions of Northern France, England and Flanders, Bruce Lyon and Adrian Verhulst criticised 'the lack of scholarly efforts

¹ English historiography incorporated fiscal themes in its traditional constitutional history. In Spain, the finances of Aragon, Castile and Navarre were studied separately as individual cases. In France, where the fall of absolutism coincided with a great fiscal crisis, fiscal changes were associated with regime change. Bonney, Richard and Ormrod, W. Mark, 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions and Self-sustained Growth: Towards a Conceptual Model of change in Fiscal History', in Ormrod, W. Mark, Bonney, Margaret, Bonney, Richard eds., *Crises, Revolutions and Self-sustained Growth. Essays in European Fiscal History, 1130-1830*, Stamford, 1999, pp. 1-2.

to ascertain the similarities and diversities of central and local institutions in the principal states of medieval Europe.²

Yet, the most important research on fiscal issues focused on the origins and developments of the doctrines, practices and institutions of each of the nation–states' finances kept a common orientation. Medievalists such as Gerald Harriss, Miguel Angel Ladero Quesada and Jean Favier explored the emergence of 'public finances'.³ These historians detected in thirteenth–century monarchies the birth and development of principles familiar to public finances: the need for consent for taxation, the justifications based on the doctrines of Roman Law, the notion of a common, 'national' interest as opposed to the mere will of the prince. These were the principles that marked the emergence of a system of public finances.⁴ Similar views were held by Portuguese historians, namely Iria Gonçalves, A. H. de Oliveira Marques, V. Magalhães Godinho, José Mattoso A.. L. de Carvalho Homem, who addressed state finances in their accounts dedicated to state-building.⁵

Dealing with many states rather than a single one, German-speaking and Italian historiographies were more prone to generalise and compare the experiences of the different states within their national fields of study.⁶ A crucial influence would stem from the former in the form of the *Finanzsoziologie* whose rich perspectives remain fresh after nearly a century. The term *Finanzsoziologie* was introduced by Rudolf Goldscheid, a heterodox Marxist historian who studied extensively the history of Prussian finances and the financial effects of the World War I and whose ideas and the very term were adapted and adopted by the influential economist Joseph Schumpeter.⁷

² Lyon, Bruce and Verhulst, Adrian, *Medieval Finance: a Comparison of Financial Institutions in Northwestern Europe*, Bruges, 1967, p. 9.

³ Favier, Jean, *Finance et fiscalité au Bas Moyen-Âge*, Paris, 1971; Harriss, G. L., *King, Parliament and public finance in Medieval England to 1369*, Oxford, 1975; Ladero Quesada M. A., *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla (1252-1369)* Madrid, 1993.

⁴ Harriss, *King, Parliament*, p. 509.

⁵ See *infra* pp. 106-8 and 146-8.

⁶ On Italian historiography on finances, see the survey by Waquet, Jean-Claude, *Le Grand-duché de Toscane sous les derniers Médicis: Essai sur le système des finances et la stabilité des institutions dans les anciens états italiens*, Rome, 1990, Chapter 1 and Pezzollo, Luciano, 'La storiografia più recente sulla finanza italiana della prima età moderna: gli studi sulla fiscalità,' *Rivista di Storia Finanziaria*, vol. 10, Napoli 2003, pp. 33-77.

⁷ On the origins of *Finanzsoziologie* in English see Witt, Peter-Christian, 'Introduction: History and Sociology', in Witt, Peter-Christian, *Wealth and Taxation in Central Europe. the history and Sociology of Public Finance*, Leamington Spa, 1987 and Backhaus, Jürgen, 'Fiscal Sociology. What For?' *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 61, n. 1, 2002, pp. 55-77.

Goldscheid's analysis drew attention to a factor that legal-minded historians typically neglect – group interest – and also to the effects of war in transforming the state.⁸ In his analysis of World War I, Goldscheid considered that the state went to war resorting to credit, supplied by 'capital', instead of simply relying on the services and goods, supplied by 'labour' or tax-base. By doing so, in what appeared to be a rational decision, the state became indebted and its tax-base physically exhausted by war.⁹ For Goldscheid, World War I merely destroyed what another war had built. Indeed, for the German economist, the Thirty Years War had destroyed an autonomous state based upon landed patrimony to build a revenue-maximising administration that simultaneously fostered economic development and taxed it according to an optimal point of taxation.¹⁰ States were vulnerable because the rise of taxation for military purposes brought by seventeenth-century wars led to what Goldscheid called the 'dispossession of the state.'¹¹

Similarly, Schumpeter's study of imperialism suggested that the states operated not on the grounds of rational calculation, let alone public interest, but in obedience to a strong drive (*Trieb*). Aiming at unreasonable goals, states never acknowledge the true impact of their fiscal policy and often overstate its common benefits. This he called 'fiscal illusion', after the earlier work of an Italian economist. Indeed, Schumpeter's analysis and his emphasis on the negative impacts of war were decisive for changing the classical legal and political thinkers' view of the state as a rational organiser of society which handled 'public finances' as a 'political instrument' to act upon society.¹² In short, Schumpeter regarded state finances as the link between economic and political power. State finances could not be intelligible as a separate set of 'public' institutions acting upon society; rather they epitomized the whole society

⁸ On Goldscheid, I follow Goldscheid, Rudolf, 'A Sociological Approach to Problems of Public Finance', in Musgrave, Richard A., and Peacock, Alan T., eds., *Classics in the Theory of Public Finance*, London, 1962, pp. 202-213 and Backhaus, 'Fiscal Sociology. What For?' pp. 62-66.

⁹ Thus, the state diverted the revenues of taxation to the pockets of the capital owners on whom the state depended. Indeed, war did not affect the creditors, since credits are a claim and thus survive conflicts, whereas 'physical' resources or services become extinct through death or destruction. This explanation was largely drawn to justify why the state had embarked on the long and costly First World War, something Goldscheid believed would never have happened had the human and material costs been apparent.

¹⁰ See Goldscheid, Rudolf, 'A Sociological Approach to Problems of Public Finance', in Musgrave, Richard A., and Peacock, Alan T., eds., *Classics in the Theory of Public Finance*, London, 1962), pp. 202-213.

¹¹ On the process of 'dispossession of the state', see Goldscheid, 'A Sociological Approach', pp. 203-5.

¹² Schumpeter agreed with Goldscheid in that World War I would never have taken place, had the exhaustibility of the tax-base when confronted with military effort war been visible to the taxpayers and states.

and their changes and transformations directly reflected the social dynamics upon which states were built. This fundamental insight diverted the focus of 'public finances' from the state to the ideology and to the divisions present in society which the state reflected rather than created.

The works of Schumpeter and Goldscheid inserted state finances in a wider field of intelligibility that supersedes the angle offered by state-centred historiographies looking for the emergence of 'public finances' as one dimension of 'state-building.' Indeed, this latter view fails to address essential questions. To Jean Favier the priority of the demand over revenues is the distinguishing feature of 'public finances': public financial systems are those where the revenues depend on goals chosen by the state, whereas in private finances the amount of the receipt is a contingent factor and needs are permanent.¹³ This implies that whereas the goals of each particular person are defined by their income, a 'public' institution can formulate and pursue new goals independently from the current income and resort to its prerogatives to increase the receipt according to its goals. This view resounds of the bravado of François I when asked by a Venetian emissary how much he could extract from his subjects: '*tout ce dont j'ai besoin, selon ma volonté.*'¹⁴

The axiomatic priority of demand over income rests on two assumptions that will be debated in the historical scenario studied here: a) the state autonomously chooses, formulates and pursues its 'needs', with little concern for constitutional and economical limitations; b) by considering expenditure merely as the pursuit of the monarchy's interests, non-state interests (which are ultimately the recipients of expenditure) are excluded from the fiscal system.

The perception of the fiscal system as a direct emanation of the state prevents the discussion of the key problem brought by *Finanzsoziologie*: the autonomy of the state. Indeed, as Jean-Claude Waquet claimed in his study of Tuscany, finances consist of the 'transformation of public resources into private ones and vice-versa, combining the interests of both public and private

¹³ Favier, *Finance et fiscalité*, p. 12; Favier, Jean, 'Introduction', in Comité pour l'Histoire Économique et Financière, ed., *L'Impôt au Moyen Âge. L'impôt public et le prélèvement seigneurial. Fin XI^e- début XVI^e*, vol. 1, *Le droit de imposer*, Paris, 2002, p. 1.

¹⁴ Quoted Guéry, Alain, 'Les Finances de la Monarchie Française sous l'Ancien Régime', *Annales. Economies. Sociétés. Civilisations*, Année 33 (1978) vol. 2, p. 223.

entities.’¹⁵ In fiscal activity there is no simple, one-way relation between a state which ‘builds up’ a tributary system upon a passive ‘private’ tax-base. Fiscal systems are negotiated by the state with other social powers which had its important agendas that conditioned or even determined the outcome. Recently W. Mark Ormrod drew attention to the tendency ‘for fiscal systems to outlive their periods of productivity and come to serve the interests not of the State but of its subjects’.¹⁶

In the historically observable practices and doctrines of state finance, ‘fiscal systems’ still answer to the older and wider problem of exchange and redistribution of resources. In a classic article on the cultural background of the finances of the French monarchy in the *longue durée*, Alain Guéry regarded the crown finances from the angle of the distribution of gifts in which the monarch participated and upon which the monarchy built its political eminence.¹⁷ Drawing largely on anthropological inference and non-administrative sources, Guéry noticed that the finances of the monarchs remained involved in a network of non-commercial exchanges, in which the seemingly unilateral bestowing of objects, lands and services by a king assured him that he was the recipient of a transfer of power. Ultimately, monarchical supremacy stemmed from a subtle, tacit transfer of powers from his subjects to him whereof the gifts to his closer subjects were the counterpart.

The idea that the power of the monarch was founded upon its liberality, and hence that the monarch was forced to give, prospered within the European dynastic states, including Portugal. According to Fernão Lopes, Pedro I of Portugal claimed that in the days in which he did not give, he did not really reign.¹⁸ The notion of gift as the prime duty of the monarch was clearly articulated in 1418 by Portugal’s *infante* Pedro (1392-1449) who wrote that ‘the princes ought to share what they have by granting privileges as it is their duty,

¹⁵ “Les finances [publiques] réalisent la transformation des ressources publiques en privées et des ressources privées en publiques. Elles se décomposent en un ensemble de processus d’acquisition et de cession qui, mis en œuvre par des sujets eux-mêmes publics et privés, exercent les uns sur les autres une influence réciproque”. Waquet, *Le Grand-Duché de Toscane*, p. 175.

¹⁶ Ormrod, W. Mark, ‘Finance and Trade under Richard II’, Anthony Goodman and James Gillespie (eds.) *Richard II. The Art of Kingship*, Oxford, 1999, p. 186.

¹⁷ Guéry, A., ‘Le roi dépensier: le don, la contrainte, et l’origine du système financier de la monarchie française d’ancien régime’, *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, Année 39 (1984) vol. 6, pp. 1241-1269.

¹⁸ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter I, p. 5. As the *Songe du Vergier*, political treatise in verse, put it in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, *Les rois sont donataires et par conséquence ils sont seigneurs*. Guéry, ‘Le roi dépensier’, p.1243.

since it was for this that God gave them power and it was for this that men consented to their [the princes'] lordship and their [the princes'] persons received sufficient goods'.¹⁹

On the other hand, the capacity for giving had to be matched by a concentration of wealth in the hands of the monarch. As such, the first examples of taxes were comprehended within this culture of gift-exchanging, rather than as emanating from public authority and obligation. This was certainly not exclusive to the French monarchy; as Harriss remarked for the Plantagenet period in England, words designating taxes such as 'benevolences', 'loans' and 'aids' were more than gracious terms devised to mask direct demands. These words conveyed the precise nature of the tax, according to the widely shared doctrine of the mutual duties between the crown and its subjects.²⁰ This long-term perspective offered by Alain Guéry highlights expenditure and redistribution, instead of focusing mainly on the income side of the budget and the correlative expansion of 'public' authority. It reminds us that tax-collection and expenditure are closely interrelated and that redistribution was certainly a, arguably the, *raison d'être* for the conservation and permanence of the fiscal powers of the state. If these reflections are accepted, the historical field of fiscal problems is far wider than the idea of 'public finances' would suggest.

The last decades saw the development of 'fiscal history' as a relatively well-defined field of historical study, for which comparison between European states was an essential instrument. This trend became particularly visible worldwide through a few collective works in the 1990s directed under the label or 'fiscal history'.²¹ The direct origins of these collective works are to be sought

¹⁹ 'Mais devem os principes partir o que teem fazendo a todos mercees segundo que devem, que por esto lhes outorgou Deus o regimento, e os homeens consentirom que sobre elles fossem senhores, e receberom cousas sobejas aas suas pessoas para poderem partir com aqueles que vivem minguados.' Pedro, *Infante de Portugal, Livro da Vertuosa Benfeytoria*, ed. A. Almeida Calado, Coimbra, 1994, Book II, Chapter IX, p. 78.

²⁰ Harriss, G. L., 'Aids, Loans and Benevolences', *Historical Journal*, 6 (1963), pp. 1-19. Like gifts, taxes were voluntary. Unlike gifts, though, they resulted from the initiative of the receiver. Like gifts, they required to be reciprocated but in France the compensation for the aids and subsidies conceded to the monarch was hardly tangible, often vague and sometimes simply neglected.

²¹ Bonney, Richard, ed., *ESSF, RFS and Ormrod*, Bonney, M. and Bonney, R., eds. *Crises*. This strand of research is to be associated the project 'Origins of the Modern State', funded by the European foundation for Science, which is responsible for Genet, Jean-Philippe and Le Menet, Michel, eds., *Genèse de l'Etat Moderne. Prélèvement et Redistribution*, Paris, 1987. The label 'fiscal history' was developed by Charles Tilly in the 1970s. Tilly, Charles, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, 1975. Other important collective works oriented towards comparative study are Sanchez Martínez, Manuel, ed., *Corona, Municipis i Fiscalitat a la Baixa Edat Mitjana*,

in a European-wide project on the 'Origins of the Modern State' which reunited historians and data from different historiographical backgrounds. The various projects that have claimed the label of 'fiscal history' have worked to transcend the nation-oriented approach. Their more recent advocates have proposed comparative study as the ground where the hypotheses on fiscal history could be tested and verified.²² The approach in these works was not entirely new. The name 'fiscal history' itself had been adopted from Tilly's proposals from some twenty years earlier and, ultimately, the problems tackled were very similar to those of the *Finanzsoziologie*. Faithful to the comparative stance of the original project, the 1990s 'Fiscal History' propounded the study of the evolutions of different European pre-modern fiscal systems within the conceptual horizon provided by Schumpeter's tax-state/domain-state opposition.²³

The central ambition of these volumes was to conciliate the scholarly research on state finances developed by authors from different historiographies with the problems set by *Finanzsoziologie* and other economic theorists. Yet it claimed to be detached from the sociology of finances in two important aspects. Firstly, the comparative stance adopted by the editors of the 'Fiscal History' collective volumes brought forth a more case-sensitive view of the twin concepts of domain-state and tax-state. Eventually, these were further revised so as to fit a larger quantity of cases than those envisaged by the *Finanzsociologie*, which had remained largely a German and Scandinavian affair.²⁴ Secondly, political decisions and factors were considered decisive and Bonney and Ormrod stressed that transitions from one fiscal system to another were also moulded by non-financial factors.²⁵ These two developments are central to the present work.

Lleida, 1997; *La Fiscalità nell'Economia Europea. Secc. XIII-IV. Atti*, 2 vols., Florence, 2008, pp. 131-51; Comité pour l'Histoire Économique et Financière, ed., *L'impôt au Moyen Âge. L'impôt public et le prélèvement seigneurial. Fin XII^e-début XVI^e*, 3 vols., Paris, 2002. Mention should be made also to the term 'New Fiscal History' claimed by Philip T. Hoffman and Kathryn Norberg in opposition of an 'older literature' whose authors 'fail to connect taxes and government borrowings to political development' and 'overlook the reasons behind the seemingly quaint fiscal practices of early modern monarchies' (Introduction', *Fiscal Crises, Liberty and Representative Government, 1450-1789*, Hoffman, Philip T. and Norberg, Kathryn, eds., Stanford, 1994, p. 2).

²² Bonney, Richard, 'Introduction', *ESSF*.

²³ Bonney, Richard, 'Introduction', *RSF*, pp. 1-17.

²⁴ Bonney and Ormrod, 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions', p. 1-2.

²⁵ Bonney and Ormrod, 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions', p. 19.

The models drawn by Bonney and Ormrod expanded Schumpeter's original transition from the patrimonial state to the tax state into four different models of fiscal system: tribute state, domain state, tax state and fiscal state.²⁶ Each of these models stands for a stable form of interaction between the essential processes of borrowing, revenues and expenditure. The set of models proposed by Bonney and Ormrod attempt at relating changes in the economy as well as changes in the state organisation.²⁷

As said, the other difference from the *Finanzsoziologie* was the attention dedicated to 'political factors.' None of the 'political factors' was deemed more influential than war. Richard Bonney provocatively declared that the financial war effort worked as a '*primum mobile*' for changes within fiscal systems.²⁸ The extreme financial demands caused by war implied a great deal of innovation within fiscal institutions, a more intensive exploitation of the existing resources and the development of new revenues. In theory, these changes were provisory and intended only to meet the sudden expenditure caused by wars, but observable cases show that inflated wartime budgets failed to return to their pre-war levels. This is what economic historians call 'displacement (or ratchet) effect'.²⁹

On the whole, this was the argument developed by historical sociologist Charles Tilly whose views on state-building accord an important place to the relationship between war, 'coercion' applied to an external enemy, and 'capital', or monetised, mobile economic resources.³⁰ The state, with its internal apparatus and its capacity for mobilizing yet more capital, was a by-product of the violent interaction between states.³¹ Finance became relevant in the process of state-building when 'war and preparation for war involved rulers in

²⁶ *Crises*, pp. 1-19.

²⁷ Indeed, unlike the direct opposition between patrimonial state and tax state by Schumpeter and developed later within the German-speaking and Scandinavian scholars, Bonney and Ormrod proposed, for instance, that a state based on large-scale borrowing should be distinguished from a state based on direct taxation. Indeed, these different types of income are coherent with different degrees of state responsiveness to the possessions of its subjects but also with the dominant economy, being the 'fiscal state' unthinkable without the availability of liquid capital which not all economies or countries could dispose of. Despite the importance attributed to economy, the authors underlined that the transitions between fiscal systems are not determined by economy. *Crises*, pp. 1-19.

²⁸ Bonney, 'Introduction', *ESSF*, p. 13; Bonney and Ormrod, 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions', p. 2.

²⁹ Bonney, 'Introduction', *RSF*, p. 8.

³⁰ Tilly, Charles, *Coercion, Capital and European States. AD 990-1992*, Cambridge MA, 1992, *maxime* chapter 3, 'How War Made States and Vice Versa.'

³¹ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, pp. 27, 54-61.

extracting the means of war from others who held the essential resources [...] and who were reluctant to surrender them without strong pressure or compensation'.³² Beforehand, according to Tilly, the relations between state-building and finances were marked by 'patrimonialism,' when states could only count on temporary armies and similarly limited rents and tributes, as functions of low monetization and low state capacity for surveillance.³³

While 'Fiscal history' saw the fiscal demands caused by wars as a prime factor in the changes undergone by fiscal systems, its empirical studies have made clear that for the period before the sixteenth century the relationship between the increasing demands caused by warfare and the evolution of the fiscal system was considerably more complex than simple, direct causation.³⁴ The demands of warfare triggered dramatic changes, but there are enough empirical indications suggesting that the relation between the construction of a fiscal system and war as reciprocal.³⁵ The opposing paths of England and France after the Hundred Years War are eloquent enough: while the French crown after long decades of desperate, short-funded defence, saw its fiscal prerogatives and revenue reinforced and soon a policy of territorial enlargement would follow,³⁶ for England, the fiscal outcome of the Hundred Years War was a state devoid of war subsidies and increasingly dependent on the royal domain.³⁷ Indeed, wars recall the problem of the autonomy of the state, or of the 'public finances' and the non-public aspects of fiscal systems, mainly redistribution. Possibly, the landed crowns of the peaceful thirteenth century were more autonomous from the redistributive pressures coming from the military nobility,

³² Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, p. 15.

³³ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, pp. 29, 86-89.

³⁴ As Ormrod and Bonney declared, 'ratchet effect' is not a necessary consequence of long-term warfare. Bonney and Ormrod, 'Introduction', p. 3. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, p. 89.

³⁵ In a period where the most profitable forms of taxation were extraordinary, outright war was the only means of securing revenues in most European monarchies. At least in England and France, see Henemann, 'France in the Middle Ages', p. 110; Ormrod, W. M., 'The West European Monarchies in the Later Middle Ages', in Bonney, Richard, ed., *Economic Systems and State Finance*, Oxford, 1995, p. 150.

³⁶ Ormrod, 'The West European Monarchies', pp. 149-151. It should be added that the mobilization of the political support in parliament ultimately led to the evaporation of the tax-base. Ormrod, W. Mark, 'The domestic Response to the Hundred Years War', in Curry, Anne and Hughes, M., eds. *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War*, Woodbridge, 1994, p. 101.

³⁷ On the eve of Poitiers, after six decades of stop-and-go conflicts with England and Flanders, the Valois kings were still living pragmatically, having not managed to ensure anything like a permanent revenue base, despite renewed attempts in that direction. Henneman Jnr, John Bell, 'France in the Middle Ages', *RFS*, pp. 110-1; see also for details Henneman, John Bell, *Royal Taxation in Fourteenth Century France. The Development of War Financing. 1322-1356*, Princeton, 1971, pp. 80-90.

only too eager to get wages, grants and patronage. Monarchies involved with war and benefiting from abundant taxation saw themselves more vulnerable to group interests or, in the case of more bureaucratised monarchies, developing a group of interest of their own. Circumstantially, late fourteenth-century nobility was deeply affected by the post-Black Death erosion of rents and thus the king's patronage became more essential.³⁸ By contrast, many states had relatively developed fiscal systems without direct influence of war.³⁹ At any rate, the perception of warfare as an 'independent variable' must be attenuated. Indeed, as it will be argued, war is not a *deus ex machina* extrinsic to the fiscal systems, it is part of it. The forms and finances of warfare vary along the fiscal systems.

The present dissertation aims to test the models of and the transition between them in a concrete instance - the Portuguese state from the thirteenth to the early sixteenth century; hopefully, in the process, historical Portuguese finances will be constructed as a comparable case. While the understanding of the dynamics of fiscal history does not depend on the simple accumulation of the quantity of cases, there are good arguments to claim that that a study of Portugal will do more than solely expanding the number of instances explored.⁴⁰ If questioned along the lines thus presented, the Portuguese fiscal history will also contribute towards a more representative sample of European fiscal systems.

The more comprehensive comparative attempt in fiscal history yet, the set of studies presented in *The Rise of the Fiscal State* in 1999, aptly represents the diversity of European fifteenth-century fiscal systems and different political

³⁸ This point was made by W. Mark Ormrod for England. Ormrod, W. Mark, 'England in the Middle Ages', *RSF*, p. 46. The argument appears developed in 'The Politics of Pestilence: Government in England after the Black Death', in Ormrod, W. Mark and Lindey, P., eds., *The Black Death in England*, Stamford, 1996, pp. 162-7. On the the pressure exerted by the nobility on the expenditure of a specific Portuguese monastery in 1365, see Amaral, Luís Carlos, *São Salvador de Grijó na Segunda Metade do Século XIV*, Porto, 1994, pp. 169-176.

³⁹ On the weak direct influence of war in shaping the fiscal system of the kingdom of Navarre see Carrasco Perez, Juan, 'L'Impôt dans la Fiscalité Royale en Navarre. Les Politiques de Philippe Le Bel (1284-1305)', in Comité pour l'Histoire Économique et Financière, ed., *L'impôt au Moyen Âge. L'impôt public et le prélèvement seigneurial. Fin XII^e- début XV^e*, vol. I, *Le droit de imposer*, Paris, 2002, pp. 177-201.

⁴⁰ Indeed Two maps depicting European states in two equally authoritative works, the *Philips Atlas of World History* ('c. 1400') and the *Westermanns Atlas zur Weltgeschichte*, show how controversial, if not meaningless, it is to count the number of states in late fourteenth-century Europe ('Europe c. 1400', in O'Brien, Patrick, ed., *Philips Atlas of World History*, London, 1999, p. 106; 'Europa 1402', *Westermanns Atlas zur Weltgeschichte*, Berlin, 1963, p. 71). The former draws the borders of twenty-two political units for Europe c. 1400, whereas the latter identifies thirty-three 'states' in 1402, excluding fourteen that lie within the imperial boundaries.

scenarios. Whereas the fifteenth-century kings of Poland had to defend the country simply with the resources of their landed domain,⁴¹ the fiscal revenues of the Low Countries were assigned to the foreign policies of the Burgundian and Habsburg dynasties.⁴² In the Swiss Confederation, by contrast, there was no central financial system and each republic had independent fiscal and external policies.⁴³ In the lands of the Holy Roman Empire the situation was even more complicated, with a multitude of autonomous fiscal systems, be those of territorial principalities, the free or imperial cities or the Northern autonomous towns. Throughout his lands, the emperor could in theory dispose of some permanent sources of revenue but the permanent ones were for the most part pledged whereas the implementation of occasional taxes was severely conditioned by the strong autonomy of the principalities. As a result, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the emperor depended on his familiar lands in order to subsidise an external policy. Fifteenth-century papal finances were served by three main different sources of revenue, all of them derived from a different political relation: revenues from the pope's own Italian 'state', revenues from 'vassal' kingdoms and a series of obligations payable by the clergy all over Christendom.⁴⁴ In all these cases, the connection between the fiscal system and the 'state' (in the strict sense of an entity with an autonomous external policy) is loose in comparison with the more compact cases of Venice, England, Castile or France (at least, after 1356).

These cases differ starkly when relationships between the sovereign and the state institutions are considered: Venice, France, England and Castile⁴⁵ are opposed to other states, either non-dynastic (Switzerland, Papal States) or part of a multi-state dynastic expansion (Burgundian Low Countries, Jagellonian Poland). With its strong connection between territory, dynasty and administration, Portugal was closer to the former group. However, Portugal was considerably different from Castile, France, Castile and Venice, both in terms of sheer demographics and landmass and in terms of military activity. Castile and England were states whose projects of war 'implied resources far greater than

⁴¹ Filipczak-Kocur, Anna, 'Poland-Lithuania Before Partition', *RFS*, pp. 448-9.

⁴² Blockmans, Wim, 'The Low Countries in the Middle Ages', *RFS*, pp. 297-9.

⁴³ Körner, Martin, 'The Swiss Confederation', *RFS*, pp. 347, 353.

⁴⁴ Partner, Peter, 'The Papacy and the Papal States', *RFS*, pp. 359-60.

⁴⁵ In the thirteenth century, Castile incorporated by conquest Muslim states with autonomous organisations.

those possessed' (W. Mark Ormrod)⁴⁶ while Venice had to fund its 'constantly expanding empire' (Jean-Claude Hocquet).⁴⁷ In the French case, expansionist ambitions were less continuous but in the reigns of Philippe III (1270–85) and Philippe IV (1285–1314) a series of offensive expeditions which spread the royal hosts throughout Languedoc, Aragon, Aquitaine and Flanders took place and the later stages of the Hundred Years War implied the conquest of lost territory.⁴⁸

While considering the comprehensiveness of the *Rise of the Fiscal State*, chronology is also important. Indeed, it happens that in the cases covered there is clearly also a chronological imbalance, as the period before the fifteenth century remains insufficiently explored. The finances of the Low Countries were only observed from 1384 onwards, the Polish union with Lithuania dates from 1387, while authority in Papal Italian lands was re-established in 1420. Only the articles about France, England, Venice, Castile and, to a lesser extent, the Empire⁴⁹ pay substantial attention to the previous times. The cases are too few to authorize generalisation for this period as a whole, as all, bar the Empire, were expansionist states. The fact that the countries whose thirteenth- and fourteenth-century finances were included are expansionist powers significantly limits the spectrum of the cases so far analysed. In all these cases, offensive, and to a lesser extent defensive, war decisively determined that the development of the fiscal system would be an expenditure-driven.

Given the importance of war for research on the history of fiscal systems, Portugal represents a critical instance to understand the influence of the military factor. Indeed, from a state carrying little weight in wider European power struggles in the thirteenth century, Portugal evolved into a major world power c. 1480. In the former period, it can be argued that the country fittingly represents a host of other under-represented participants in late fourteenth-century European state system, namely those which did not harbour consistent

⁴⁶ Ormrod, 'The West European', p. 123.

⁴⁷ Hocquet, Jean-Claude, 'Venice', p. 383.

⁴⁸ A distinctively offensive rationale would prevail in some stages of the Hundred Years War, namely it came to conquer lands long held by the Plantagenet or even to attack England by sea. Similarly, the kings of France actively supported with men and monies the kingdom of the Scots, of the Trastámara dynasty in Castile and the Welsh rebellion of Owen Glendower. Henneman, John Bell, 'France in the Middle Ages', *RFS*, p. 105. Henneman, *Royal Taxation*, pp. 27-38.

⁴⁹ Isenmann, Eberhard, 'The Holy Roman Empire', *RFS* pp. 243-70. Although Isenmann took a synchronic perspective, most of the concrete information is dated from the fifteenth century.

expansionist goals: Granada,⁵⁰ Navarre, Scotland, the Republics of Florence and Genoa, not to mention the realms threatened by the Ottomans, including Hungary. By contrast, when regarded in its imperial period, Portugal appears as expansionist state.⁵¹ This dramatic change provides an intriguing testing ground for the transition between fiscal models.

The Archives

So far, emphasis has been laid broad interpretations and models. Few references have been made to what actually constitutes the intrinsic problem that separates history from all other scientific enquiries: the sources. Indeed, in this respect history follows a different track from the perspectives offered by the founders of Fiscal Sociology. Goldscheid claimed that 'the whole of the socio-economic order concerned is nowhere else as clearly reflected as in public accounts' and that 'the state cannot be constituted differently from its budget,'⁵² while Schumpeter famously declared that 'the political life but also the spirit of the people, its cultural level, its social structure, the deeds its policy may prepare – all this is written in its fiscal history, stripped of all phrases'.⁵³ Although these grand statements are often quoted as a plea to the study of fiscal history, they ignore practical heuristic and hermeneutical questions of historiography. Indeed, not all fiscal systems are expressed in budgets, *latissimu sensu* 'Public accounts' or 'budgets' are by no means self-evident; as any other source, they pose to the historian thorough heuristics and challenging hermeneutics.

The aim of this section is to present the sources that are available for the historian. This, however, cannot be done without close reference to the system

⁵⁰ The knowledge of the finances of the Grenadine Kingdom is very patchy. See the forthcoming overview 'La fiscalidad andalusí: terminología, balance y perspectivas' by José Molina Sanchez for the 2006 Malaga Congress.

⁵¹ It is hard to classify Portugal within Tilly's dichotomy of capital-intensive and coercion-intensive states. As a territorial and dynastic state with an efficient centralisation of the means of coercion and a little-integrated market, it appears as a coercion-intensive. However, as it was centred on a dominant trading city metropolis, it could employed capital in the build-up of armies and navies (Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, pp. 27, 54-61). This problem will be addressed in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

⁵² Quoted in Witt, 'Introduction: History and Sociology of Public Finance,' pp. 7-8.

⁵³ 'The Crisis of the Tax State', *International Economic Papers*, vol. 4, New York, 1954, p. 7. Quoted in Braun, Rudolf, 'Taxation, Sociopolitical structure and state-building: Great Britain and Brandenburg-Prussia, in Tilly, Charles, *Formation of national states in Western Europe*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1975, p. 327.

of accounting that produced and, sometimes, preserved them. Indeed, in spite of the very origin of European archives being inextricably connected with fiscal records,⁵⁴ their survival has proven to be highly contingent. In Europe in the period studied, not every single stage of the fiscal process was recorded. Records were produced in view of audit which was primarily a judiciary rather than financial procedure. It mattered less to see the whole of the state accounts than those of the individual officer. For thirteenth- to fifteenth-century administrations, unlike the accounting of contemporary states, royal records neither primarily intended to draw a balance, nor aspired to being transparent to the taxpayers or to the crown. Most of the written documents at the disposal of present-day fiscal history were developed for administrative purposes and for asserting the permanent rights of individuals and of the state.⁵⁵ In the European states of the period, there were certainly general accounts comprising either the revenues or expenses or even the balance of both.⁵⁶ However only seldom were the records of royal finances produced and preserved according to a budget-driven rationale.

Thus, budgets are not self-explanatory. While their systematic features make them extremely useful for historian, their significance to the fiscal system can only be grasped if the various institutional practices that brought them to life and watched for their very preservation are understood. These institutional practices determine what can and cannot be said about any country's fiscal history and what its accounts actually stand for. The correct interpretation of sources can only take place after an enquiry into the reasons for their production and eventual survival and the processes of selection, in one word - on the archive. These questions raise the problem of the 'archive', understood

⁵⁴ Eventually the careful preservation of fiscal series attracted other documents whose safeguarding was deemed necessary. The English Exchequer, for instance, got a custodial function for documents produced in other 'departments' such as the Chancery, the Wardrobe, the Council and, latterly, the secretaries of State. Clanchy, *From memory to written record*, pp. 70–71. In Portugal, historians have long related the constitution of a central archive with the primitive records of expenditure and revenue. The first to point to this circumstance was eighteenth-century diplomatist João Pedro Ribeiro in his *Memórias Autênticas para a História do Real Archivo*, Lisbon, 1819.

⁵⁵ In fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England, to quote Anthony Steel, 'individual accounts with the crown could be, and usually were, strictly audited, but there was no conception of balancing royal or national revenue against expenditure as a whole'. *The Receipt of the Exchequer, 1377-1485*, Cambridge, 1954, p. xxiv.

⁵⁶ Guéry, Alain, 'Les Finances de la Monarchie Française sous l'Ancien Régime', *Annales. Economies. Sociétés. Civilisations*, Année 33 (1978) vol. 2, pp. 219-223.

here as the set of motives, practices and rules behind the production and preservation of the records and memoranda.⁵⁷

Natural causes have decisively intervened to reduce the scope of Portuguese archive. The fires that burst in the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake consumed the old building of the royal accountancy institutions (*Casa dos Contos*) along with all its documentation.⁵⁸ With the same catastrophe, the paperwork of the neighbouring agencies (the *Casa da India* and the *Casa da Mina* which dealt with African and Asian incomes and expenditure) disappeared, while the chancery records and some collections of the royal household, kept in São Jorge Castle, survived and formed the core of the actual Portuguese National Archives or *Torre do Tombo*. The complete destruction of the archive of the *Casa dos Contos* has evidently discouraged historians from studying the kingdom's financial organization based upon the scanty, disperse evidence that chancery records, stray survivals, occasional copies or the information of chroniclers afford. Thus, it is not surprising that a comprehensive study of the evolution of fiscal institutions of this period is entirely lacking, despite the works on affiliate fields by Henrique da Gama Barros, Anselmo Brancaamp Freire, Virginia Rau, Iria Gonçalves and A. L. de Carvalho Homem. In spite of occasional interest by some nineteenth- and twentieth-century institutional historians on state finances, the study of the fiscal processes and of their documentation has been neglected and the integration of the dispersed surviving documents with their 'archive' remains to be done.

To make sense of such dispersed and diverse sources they ought to be understood as fragments of coherent, if lost, archives. Within the period studied in this dissertation, it is important to distinguish three different periods with contrasting rules and practices for the production and, crucially, the preservation of documents; in other words, to identify three different 'archives'.

⁵⁷ The concept of 'archive' used here should not be mistaken by the far wider sense that Foucault attributed to this word. However, the concept used here retains the notion of the archive as a set of rules, previous and independent from the research, that regulate what can and cannot be researched, instead of a passive deposit of 'objective' documents: '*L'archive, c'est d'abord la loi de ce qui peut être dit... c'est aussi ce qui fait que toutes ces choses dites ne s'amassent pas indéfiniment dans une multitude amorphe.*' Foucault, Michel, *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Paris, 1969, p. 170.

⁵⁸ Rau, Virginia, *A Casa dos Contos*, Coimbra, 1951, pp. 133-134.

From the end of the twelfth century to the reigns of Afonso III (1248-79) and Dinis I (1279-1325), the primary interest of Portuguese monarchs was the accumulation and transmission of their vast treasuries. At least from 1216 onwards, royal wills were composed after a reckoning of the money entering the treasuries – the *Liber Mei Repositi*. Thus, for most of the period, kings' wills, even if discontinuous in time, can be used as indicators of royal fortunes, provided they are read carefully and their sums accounted with knowledge of the coins and weighs used. But, however eloquent these testaments might be about the apex of the system, they are only the tip of an iceberg. From 1216 there is documentary evidence about the existence of a central register (*Libri de Recabedo Regni*) that recorded the expenses assigned to the sources of revenue and that was used to audit the officers. As no excerpt, let alone an original, of this register has so far been found, its actual content remains open to debate. At any rate, the volumes of receipt and expenditure for this period remain totally opaque and can only be the object of some informed speculation.

The loss of the *Recabedo Regni* books cannot be compensated by the charters and letters produced at the royal chancery, as these are far too scarce to represent the actual workings of the crown's departments.⁵⁹ Obviously, a considerable deal of royal letters can be found in the national archive's miscellaneous collection of *Gavetas* as well as in the monastic collections. These documents have a very varied scope and some of them are related to the crown's management (acquisition and leasing of properties, orders to custom officers, pawning of chattels). Except for the exceptional copy of a score of letters relating with the Coimbra treasury that were found among the documentation of Santa Cruz abbey⁶⁰ and other rare findings, already

⁵⁹ It is doubtful that a formal chancery register existed in the reigns of Afonso I (1128-85) and Sancho I (1185-1211) and thus present-day historians have to rely on modern collection of diplomas, almost all of them dealing solely with transfers of land to monasteries. The chancery register of Afonso II (1211-23) is vastly incomplete and in 1226, during the reign of his son Sancho II (1223-48), the practice of recording charters was discontinued, only to return with Afonso III (1248-79) and his son Dinis (1279-1325). On the Portuguese chancery registers, see Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho and Armando Luís Gomes de Carvalho Homem, 'Origines et évolution du registre de la chancellerie royale portugaise (XIIIe-XVe siècles)', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto. História*, II series, vol. XII, Porto, 1995, pp. 47-76.

⁶⁰ *T. III*.

published,⁶¹ these documents contain very little useful information on the revenues and nearly nought on the expenses, of which some were more or less systematised.⁶²

On the whole, available quantitative information is diffused and limited to the central treasury. The randomness of their survival and the scarcity of quantitative information plainly condemn any attempt of systematising the data and figures contained in them. In part, this is because their chancery registers did not keep their integrity. Although the Portuguese departmental collections of these periods have been depleted by various factors, it can be argued that the king's grasp of his finances was not very clear. Indeed, given that the *Casa dos Contos* only appeared around 1296 and that there is no documentary or narrative indication of general accounts, the monarch could only obtain a notion of the cash-flow of the central treasuries and nothing else. Possibly, the *Recabedo Regni* books could provide a notion of who held the royal lands and other sources of revenue. However, it could hardly have allowed for a comprehensive overview of the system that allowed the monarchs to amass their carefully accounted treasures.

This pattern of source survival seemingly limits the historian to the institutional description of the financial administration of Afonso III and Dinis I. At best, historiography can correlate the changes shown by the accounts of the treasuries, as narrated by the wills and other occasional survivals, with those institutional developments.

⁶¹ Crucially, the 1280 letter of quittance issued to a high-treasurer. *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 8, p. 345.

⁶² Very possibly, redistributive payments, like the *maravedis* and *contias* (payments to keep up the military capacity of the nobles) were recorded, like the surviving 'accounts of the household of Prince Dinis' from 1278. This document, however, cuts a lonely figure as no other register of expenditure seems to have subsisted. 'Inventário e Contas da Casa de D. Denis (1278-1282)' ed. Anselmo Brancaamp Freire, *Arquivo Historico Portuguez*, vol. X, Lisbon, 1916, pp. 41-59.

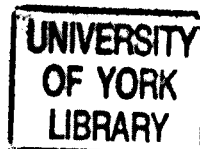
In the fourteenth century, the central treasury lost importance to a system of local treasures headed by *almoxarifes*. It was through these treasures, fed by a given set of revenues, that the crown commanded both redistribution and hoarding (in the form of payments of the central treasury). At least once a year, they had to report the income they collected to the central *Casa dos Contos* (c. 1290). Detailed accounts of the revenues of each *almoxarife* and the expenditure thereof were entered by the auditors in the books of the *Contos*, which were divided by regions.⁶³ Once completed and inserted in the adequate book, this entry or *recadação* had full legal value. Unlike England, where audit sessions were annual, officers, or their heirs, were audited in the end of the functions.

Audit was entirely based upon written documents. As we know from various passing references, it consisted essentially in comparing the entry of the delivery annually sent to the *Contos* by the scribe with the proofs of expenditure thereof (the *conto*).⁶⁴ The integrity of these documents was possible because each *almoxarife* was controlled by a scribe who witnessed and recorded the ins and outs of the local treasure in the office's ledger (*Livro da Receita e Despesa*). Similarly, the scribe had to update the register of fixed rents of each district (*Livro do Estado or Tombo do Almojarifado*)⁶⁵ and produce authenticated notes of receipt of the money paid in. In an audit session, the *almoxarife* had to produce both the orders for expenditure - letters known as *alvarás* in paper issued by command of the king - and the receipts of his disbursements (practical expenditure, pensions and transfers to the central treasuries). The scribe's *Livro da Receita e Despesa* would be checked against the original orders of expenditure and against the expected income contained in the *Tombo do Almojarifado*. While most of this paperwork was likely destroyed

⁶³ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. III, doc. 374, p. 266 (24 April 1342).

⁶⁴ TT, *Chanc. Dinis*, Livro 3, fols. 131-131v (1320).

⁶⁵ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. I, doc. 74, p. 95 (30 May 1326).



after the audit sessions, a record with the summary of the receipt and payments thereof was kept.

As the archive of the *Contos* burnt with its building in 1755, this documentation exists no more. The knowledge of the crown's transactions is limited to indirect information in other source collections. Stray survivals in the vast miscellaneous collections of the *Torre do Tombo* (National Archives), mainly the *Gavetas* and the *Núcleo Antigo*, would be a remote possibility. Indeed, orders of expenditure, receipts and even the summaries of the audit were in paper rather than parchment. It is very likely that they were destroyed after the authoritative *arrecadação* had been entered in the *Contos* books. Only one *Livro da Receita e Despesa* survived.⁶⁶ This random survival provides an important insight in fiscal recording: it was in paper, not parchment. Besides its inferior durability, paper, reflected the low importance ascribed to operational accounts for the men who preserved documents, in contrast to the solemn and elaborated parchments that claim and secure perennial rights.⁶⁷

The laborious book-keeping of the *Contos* was designed to control the royal officers, not to produce annual balances. This concern appeared in the middle decades of the fourteenth century, when the office of Overseer of the Finances (*Vedor da Fazenda*) was created. This officer was dedicated to the central management of the king's resources and had to compile totals of the annual income which were presented to the king. According to Fernão Lopes, the goal of these accounts was to grasp the net receipt of each source of income and direct it to the central treasury. None of such balances survived, but the figures quoted in the Chronicle of Fernando I appear to have derived from them.⁶⁸ Given that a large part of the revenues at the disposal of the Portuguese monarchs were fixed and that tax-farming was commonplace, there is no reason to doubt that they were technically attainable after the creation of the *Vedor da Fazenda* in 1340.⁶⁹ Moreover, the survival of a list of the annual

⁶⁶ TT, Mesa da Consciência e Ordens, Ordem de Cristo/Convento de Tomar, maço 1, doc. 16. It relates to the lands of the Templars held by the crown in the time of their extinction. For this reason, it was kept in the archive of Military Order of Christ that inherited the patrimony of the Templars.

⁶⁷ The loss of the current accounts that were committed to paper and the conservation of the parchment instruments and grants also affects research on monasteries and other institutions.

⁶⁸ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5.

⁶⁹ See *infra* pp. 138-51 and 284-87.

fees paid by the notaries, dated c. 1290,⁷⁰ and the mention to books where special dues were recorded⁷¹ testify that it was possible to obtain a workable notion of the yearly receipt. Presumably, these memoranda allowed the monarch to spend in accordance with the predictable receipt and allocate the cost of extraordinary expenses to the right sources of revenue.

Hoarding retained all the importance it had in the previous phase. However, as no balance from this phase survived, the rates of saving are not available to the historian. Indeed the revenues that were not spent were converted into metal ingots and directed to the royal treasuries, of which no document of any sort survives. Another likely destination of the valuables collected by the *almoxarifes* would be the royal mint (*Casa da Moeda*). Notwithstanding the archive of this institution holds no records anterior to the radical array ordered by Manuel I.

The burning of the *Casa dos Contos*, the rare survival of the paperwork, the informal nature of the general accounts, the sixteenth-century array of the royal mint by Manuel I and even a fifteenth-century intentional destruction of documentation in the re-organisation of the *Torre do Tombo*, all concur to bar a direct knowledge of the financial dealings of the monarch. How far can documents from other departments help to fill this vacuum?

A few municipal archives kept some details on the negotiations on extraordinary taxation, especially Lisbon and Porto, but on the whole, the utility of such subsidiary documentation for this period is limited. Miscellaneous collections – the *Gavetas*, the *Corpo Cronológico* and the *Núcleo Antigo* – stem from the *Torre do Tombo* and thus do not contain documents from the *Contos*. The administrative paperwork of the religious orders, noble households and municipalities was not the object of careful preservation by these institutions, and only occasional dealings between the latter and the crown subsist in some municipal archives. The strong notarial culture dictated that entitlements to permanent property rights– contracts, sales, exchanges, judicial agreements and sentences, wills– were judged worthy of parchment, whereas everyday transfers of monies were committed to paper.

⁷⁰ Published in Marques, A. H. de Oliveira, *Ensaio da História Medieval Portuguesa*, 2nd ed., Lisbon, 1980, pp. 76-81.

⁷¹ Book of the *collectae*: TT, Gav. VII, maço 7, doc. 7; book of the *moeda* [tax paid in regions where Leonese money circulated]: *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. II, doc. 131, p. 229, vol. III, doc. 173, p. 267.

The only coherent documentary collection produced by the central administration that survives from this period is the royal chancery registers (known simply as *Chancelarias*). However, these do not keep their pristine integrity. They consist of excerpts of the charters and royal letters deemed relevant a few generations later. Presumably, the originals were destroyed, leaving only their discontinuous and incomplete versions. Again, priority was awarded to property rights and solemn agreements between institutions. In these records, only eight letters of quittance surfaced and even less tax-farming contracts.

1400-1520

The prospects of quantifying fifteenth-century finances are less bleak. Obviously, the burning of the *Casa dos Contos* affects the knowledge of the crown's financial situations for this period as strongly as for the previous stages. Similarly, the absence of a register for orders for payment, the absence of accounts of extraordinary expenses, the insufficient knowledge about the loans and debt-servicing remain formidable obstacles to quantification. However, the rate of survival is, on the whole, considerably better. The better preservation of the chancery registers for the reigns of Afonso V (1438-1480) and João II (1481-95) and the complete conservation of those of Manuel I (1495-1521) is particularly important, as it allows us to get hold of some specific items of expenditure by adding up their orders for payment. Moreover, audit became bi-annual in the reign of Manuel and, accordingly, letters of quittance appear more often.

However, the former appear very different from what the others would have looked like, as the late fourteenth century brought considerable change to royal finances. The rise of the sales taxes as the mainstay of royal finances changed the face of the *Vedor da Fazenda's* financial management. With the sales taxes and frequent extraordinary taxation, the amount of the revenue became more contingent and thus harder to anticipate. As, on the other hand, the rise of permanent redistributive payments made expenditure more predictable, the situation was the inverse of the previous phase. In this new fiscal context, the main function of the *Vedor da Fazenda* was the compilation of

annual lists of authorised expenditure distributed among the local *almoxarifes* and tax-receivers to make their payment out of the resources they were entrusted with.⁷² These records of assignments (*Caderno de Assentamentos*) were kept by the *almoxarifes* or receivers and then destroyed or thrown away, once the audit was completed. Only a set of 211 records from 1499-1521 survived and Anselmo Braancamp Freire, their editor, does not provide an explication as to why they escaped destruction.⁷³ There is also a list of all the standing annuities for 1523 (*Livro das Tenças*), although there are indications that these records were not regular, as this one seems to have been especially commissioned by King Manuel I.⁷⁴

The fifteenth- and sixteenth-century records were oriented towards expenditure, rather than revenue. The condition of the archive is reflected in a dozen or so memoranda which attempt to map the crown's payrolls (annuities granted for services, 'gracious' annuities, crown's lands permanently assigned to nobles).⁷⁵ Furthermore, the quantitative data present in these memoranda can be complemented by other surviving sources. The near-complete survival of chancery registers from Duarte I onwards makes it possible to grasp the burden posed by the annuities whose payment required a royal letter from the chancery. This information can be added to a notice of the new household annuities introduced by Afonso V from 1460 to 1473.⁷⁶ Other permanent redistributive expenditures, like the annuities paid in the court (which encompassed a substantial part of the nobility), can be known through the regulations about the household payrolls of which a few survive, inserted in later memoranda.⁷⁷ The first comprehensive map of the fixed expenditure is from the

⁷² These documents state what expenses should be covered with the money and what to do with the rest. They explicitly forbade the payment of any writ drawn by the *Vedores* or even by the king himself! Freire explains that this was to show how kings circumvented untimely request for monies. The receipt was estimated either by means of a contract of tax-farming or by a simple average of previous years. The Portuguese verb for calculating the average is *orçar*, hence *orçamento*, the Portuguese word for budget.

⁷³ *AHP*, vol. VI.

⁷⁴ *AHP*, vol. II.

⁷⁵ Household regulation of 1405 or 1406 (*RED*, doc. 5); Household expenditure with knights and squires of the royal household from 1414 (*RED*, doc. 7); Household regulation of 1473 (*RED*, doc. 23); annual payroll of household annuities in 1462-81 (*RED*, doc. 8); Summary of the ordinary expense (with particulars) in 1473 (*RED*, doc. 8); Map of set-up expenditure for 1473 (*RED*, doc. 8); expenditure made in 1477 (*RED*, doc. 25); budgeted expenditure for the year 1478 (*RED*, doc. 25); Household regulation of 1478 (*RED*, doc. 26).

⁷⁶ *Relazione*, 8.

⁷⁷ *RED*, doc. 5 (from 1405 or 1406) 7 (from 1414) 23 (1473) and 25 (1478).

year 1473.⁷⁸ Thus, considering other European cases, let alone the previous period, the dimensions of permanent expenditure might be relatively well known, in spite of the lack of audit records. However, the real significance of the expending dynamics can only be understood in relation to the permanent income.

As in the previous period, the knowledge of the revenues depends mostly on occasional and scattered records – negotiations with the municipalities, tax-farming contracts and, most of all, letters of quittance. The nearly complete condition of the chancery registers, assures that more of these records survive, especially of the latter two. Regrettably, the letters of quittance recorded in the chancery appear not to have followed a stable model and the rationale guiding their inclusion in the present chancery registers remains unknown. Indeed, whereas they are rare in the folios of Duarte I's chancery books, those from Afonso V include at least eighty-two of these, and in the chancery record of his short-reigning son João II forty-seven of these are issued.⁷⁹ For the following reign, that of King Manuel I (1495-1521), a sizeable set of seven hundred and fifty letters of quittance accorded to *almoxarifes* and other tax-collectors can be found in the chancery registers.⁸⁰ Thus, except for the last two decades of the fifteenth century, the information of the letters of quittance is rather patchy and discontinuous. Contracts of tax-farming remain sparse, but they are more encompassing than those of the previous times, as the contractors often tax-farmed kingdom-wide revenues.⁸¹

The survival of a few general accounts radically changes the prospects of the research. Indeed, most of all for the period after the 1470s, present-day historians have access to a few discontinuous but comprehensive general accounts: of 1402, 1473, 1477, 1511, 1526 and 1527. These memoranda differ in many details and cannot be simply put into sequence, as their relations with

⁷⁸ RED, doc. 8.

⁷⁹ In her index of the João II's chancery register, Manuela Mendonça include forty-seven 'charters of quittance'. However, the author makes no distinction between the audit-related document from the letter given officer for any outstanding debts and the privileges, also called *quitação*, of quitting a job in the royal or municipal administrations or the letter stating the permanent relief from a standing payment (normally a rent).

⁸⁰ Published in AHP, vols. 1-10.

⁸¹ It should be added the availability contracts with tax-farmers, which so seldom appeared in the previous epoch, concern wider revenues. The 1398 –tax-farming contract for the customs and the mint (RED, doc. 4) and the tax-farming contract for the kingdom-wide *sisas*, or sales-taxes (RED, doc. 6).

the archive are not identical.⁸² The first one is simply a rough summary of the king's planned receipt, copied by a chronicler.⁸³ Those of 1473, 1526 and 1527 are abridgments of the all-important 'summary book' yearly compiled by the *Vedor*.⁸⁴ This document combined the predicted revenue with the standing expenditure.⁸⁵ That of 1477 is a proposal of reform aiming at lowering down the burden of some items of expenditure for 1478; as such it provides the value of the effective expenses. For all their differences, these accounts deal mostly with common categories of revenues and broadly similar categories of expenditure.

The emphasis on the execution and accounting of set-up expenditure should not obliterate the fact that this period certainly saw a great development of extraordinary expenditure, mainly military. Fortunately, an excellent memorandum dated 1473 provides a summary of all the royal military expeditions, embassies and other financial operations since 1415. This document was copied from the entries (*recadações*) recorded in the *Contos* books.⁸⁶ For other periods, the variations of the volume of extraordinary receipts cannot be known because the audit of the subsidies' collectors took place in the *Casa dos Contos*. However, as the application and the amounts of direct, kingdom-wide taxes were negotiated in *Cortes*, parliamentary documentation provides some information that can be combined with some ordinances concerning these taxes copied in the chancery records.

Hypotheses, Methodologies and Structure

The goal of this research is both to use the 'Fiscal History' models to make Portuguese fiscal experience intelligible and to use this case as a test to the applicability of these models. This section will briefly explain how this will be attempted with the scarce and discontinuous sources at the disposition of the

⁸² On the Portuguese early sixteenth-century budgetary technique, see Pereira, João Cordeiro, 'A receita do Estado Português no Ano de 1526. Um Orçamento Desconhecido', *Estudos de História de Portugal. Homenagem a A.H. de Oliveira Marques*, vol. II (Lisbon, 1983) pp. 13-55. For a comparison with the budgetary technique in the neighbouring kingdom, see Ladero Quesada, Miguel Angel, 'Castile in the Middle Ages', *RSF*, pp. 180-6.

⁸³ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, vol. II, chapter CII.

⁸⁴ Pereira, 'A Receita do Estado Português,' pp. 15-18.

⁸⁵ *RED*, docs. 8 and 25

⁸⁶ At least such is the opinion of editor Jorge Faro. *RED*, doc. 8.

historian. Heuristic contingency will exert a considerable weight on the methodological choices.

The destruction of the *Casa dos Contos* and other documentary losses cannot be compensated. Most phases of the various stages of the whole process of collection and spending will remain totally opaque and quantitative evidence will be at best fragmentary until the last quarter of the fifteenth century. In face of this 'broken' but relatively vast archive, the only adept heuristic strategy is to examine a great deal of potentially relevant primary sources. The chancery records of each individual king from Sancho I (*r.* 1185-1211) to Manuel I (*r.* 1495-1521), published or not, provide an adequate starting point. The second stage is to resort to the chronicles and comprehensive thematic collections that were published in the last two centuries order to track other sources. Monographs, dissertations and other works on affiliated fields will also provide indications for more documentation, published or not (see bibliography).

The present approach, based on the combination and systematisation of disperse sources, requires a strong deductive element. Indeed, the starting point for the enquiries of parts 1 and 2 will be practical, period-specific models that can be used as hypothetical frames for incorporating the dispersed documentary information supplied by the Portuguese archive. Although records are scarce and fragmentary, they are still eloquent enough to 'test' whether the hypothesis employed is or is not consistent with them.

Thus, the argument of the thesis will be guided by two accounts written by two very different observers of the Portuguese kingdom: the royal chronicler Fernão Lopes (1380?-1460) and the Venetian agent Lunardo Da Ca Masser who stayed in Portugal between 1504 and 1506. The first in his capacity as 'keeper of the royal records' and chronicler composed between 1419 and 1452 the chronicles of Kings Pedro I (*r.* 1357-67), Fernando I (*r.* 1367-83) and João I (*r.* 1383-1433), by commission of Prince Duarte, of whom he was secretary.⁸⁷ These texts were written with the more or less open purpose of presenting the new dynasty of Avis as a God-sanctioned saviour of the country against the might of Castile. Yet, for all his overt partisanship for the dynasty he personally

⁸⁷ Excerpts of his work are published in English. See Lopes, Fernão, *The English in Portugal, 1367-87. Extracts from the chronicles of Dom Fernando and Dom João*, eds. Derek W. Lomax and R.J. Oakley, Warminster, 1988.

served, Lopes' perspective is far from superficial or one-dimensional. Robert Southey even deemed him to be 'beyond all comparison the best chronicler of any age or nation'. Indeed, he combined a wide usage of memoirs and narratives sources, including oral testimonies, coupled with a judicious handling of formal records, as much as it would be expected from a head archivist.⁸⁸ By contrast, our second observer, Lunardo Ca Da Masser was commissioned by the Most Serene Republic to stay at the Portuguese court and provide a full account on this emerging commercial and military power which threatened the Venetian domination of the spice trade. In other words, he came to spy.⁸⁹ The Venetian agent excelled in his duties sent to the Doge his *relazione* containing the product of two years of close observation and intelligence-gathering.⁹⁰

Amongst the arguments presented to elevate the new dynasty, Lopes laid the claim that Fernando I, the last king of the previous dynasty, had been an inept monarch. The management of royal finances is an important part of this argument, as Lopes unambiguously critiques Fernando I's treasure-squandering in opposition to the prudent 'ancient kings' who preferred to accumulate their resources. Indeed, Fernando I had started his reign as the richest king that ever ruled Portugal, for he had inherited the 'hard to believe' treasuries accumulated by his father and predecessors.⁹¹ The crown's prosperity, however, was broken by the wars that Fernando I kept with Castile

⁸⁸ His in-depth knowledge of the royal archive allowed him to capture very well the dominant ideas in the time of the 'old kings', namely those articulated by the *Cortes*. Like the popular representatives, Fernão Lopes also mentions constantly the 'kings of old', repeats their commonplace of the 'richest king that ever liveth in the kingdom' and also commends the hoarding policy of the former kings (Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, p. 125). His description of the ways devised by kings of old in their relation with the people, the kings gauged that it was their service and profit that everybody was rich, thus they could have many and abundant revenues (Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5) is an abridgement of the royal answer to the article 38 in the 1331 *Cortes* (*Cort. Afonso IV*, p. 45). The idea was also repeated by a 1340 law which was included in the early fifteenth-century legal collection, the *Livro das Leis e Posturas* (*Cort. Afonso IV*, p. 117). On Lopes' method and historiographical technique, see the studies 'On the Sources of Fernão Lopes', 'Fernão Lopes and the Treaty of Santarém' and 'Archivists as Historians: the case of the Portuguese fifteenth-century royal Chroniclers' by Peter Russell all included in Russell, Peter, *Portugal, Spain, and the African Atlantic, 1343-1490: chivalry and crusade from John of Gaunt to Henry the Navigator*, Aldershot, 1995.

⁸⁹ '*Per vedere et intendere quelle navigazioni di quello Serenissimo Re nell'India novamente navegata. he fatto un discorso per esser al proposito alla nazione nostra di entender ogni particolarità di quello pó succeder de quell viaggio.*' *Relazione*, § 1. He was arrested and briefly confined to a dungeon, under the accusation of working for the Ottoman Sultan. On the stay of Lunardo Da Ca Masser, Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães, 'Portugal no começo do século XVI: Instituições e Economia. O Relatório do Veneziano Lunardo da Cà Masser', *Revista de História Económica e Social*, n. 4, Lisbon, 1979, pp. 75-88.

⁹⁰ The report (*relazione*) was included as an appendix in late-nineteenth-century edition of a letter from King Manuel I by Italian Lusitanist Peragallo (*Relazione*). On Venetian diplomatic *relaciones*, see Oliveira, Julieta Teixeira Marques de, *Veneza e Portugal no século XVI: Subsídios para a sua História*, Lisbon, 2000, pp. 32-6.

⁹¹ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5.

which entailed inordinate expenditure, commercial recession, taxes and unsound coinage.⁹²

By contrast, 'old king's were more cautious than warlike Fernando. According to Lopes, ancient kings were informed by their *Vedores da Fazenda* of all the income from royal renders and rights and of what remained, after all expenditure, 'not only on embassies but also on everything else', had been deducted.⁹³ Then, it was ordered that 'in certain cities and towns' the remainder should be traded for gold and silver and brought to a custom-built tower in the Lisbon castle and to other places. Lopes adds that the amounts concentrated in these places were stated in the public proclamations of the king's death 'and the more the late king had hoarded, the more his goodness was praised'.⁹⁴ The chronicler claimed that it was more honourable to add to what his predecessors had hoarded than to spend it without putting in more valuables. King Pedro had neglected these practices until warned out by the one of his officials who found that the king could spare up to 60,000 *l.* each year so he could 'add up to what his father and grand-father had already amassed.'

In the view of Fernão Lopes, the hoarding by the Portuguese kings and the curbing of 'the king's and the kingdom's expenses' were not avarice. Pedro I is presented as a lavishly liberal king who had raised the nobles' annuities and

⁹² These topics – most of all the conservation of the coin fineness by Pedro I and Fernando's poor coinages, the accumulation of treasures by the former and their subsequent spoiling by the latter – occur in a few other instances in the works of Fernão Lopes. Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XI; Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XLV, XLVIII and LV; Lopes, *Cron. João I*, vol. I, chapters XLVIII and XLIX.

⁹³ The first section where royal finances are addressed is in the chapter entitled 'On the Manner the Kings Used to Amass Their Treasuries and to Increase Them,' inserted in the 'Chronicle of Lord King Dom Pedro'. The manner used by the king to stockpile riches are presented by the chronicler as the re-introduction of an old practice that young Pedro I had neglected until warned by his counsellor João Esteves around 1360. He had been a part of Pedro's princely household and reached in 1356 the office of overseer of the chancery (*Vedor da Chancelaria*). When Pedro I ascended the throne he had a career as magistrate of the royal courts (*Desembargador*) from 1357 to 1361 and became the kingdom's *Vedor da Chancelaria* in 1361–65. A. L. Carvalho Homem highlights that he survived the 1361 reform of the king's justice, and even suggests that he was its mentor. For his micro-biography, see Homem, *O Desembargo*, pp. 337-338. Thus, Lopes' claim has some independent support. The account leaves unclear whether the procedure was an innovation or a mere renewal of an old practice neglected by King Pedro until advised by João Esteves. The episode is possibly based upon an informant close to him, intending to highlight the role of that counsellor in the central administration. João Esteves had indeed been one of the royal legal officers who seized a relevant role after the wide reforms of the central departments in 1361. João Esteves is the first witness of the ordinance concerning bribes and the ordinance on appeals he is assigned, together with Lourenço Esteves, the permanent dispatch of fiscal litigation. Homem, A. L. C., 'Subsídios Para o Estudo da Administração Central no Tempo de D. Pedro I', *Estado Instituições, Sociedade Política*, pp. 96-9. Fernão Lopes has indeed some connection with Esteves but the chronicler might just as well have composed this chapter resorting to departmental traditions he became familiar with while a clerk working in the *Contos*. João Esteves had a four-year spell as chancellor until replaced by Álvaro Pais around whom the chronicler centres the events of 1383, someone Lopes is very well informed about. On F. Lopes' brief career in the central departments, Homem, *O Desembargo*, p. 302.

⁹⁴ 'E quanto cada huum rei em ellas mais poinha, tanto lho contavom por muito moor bondade'.

year after year set aside jewels, ingots and other valuables to grant to his courtiers and visitors. Similarly, he did not alter the coins' alloy 'for greed of temporal gain' but cast a prestigious gold coin. Crucially, to hoard was as much a question of dynastic pride as it was part of the royal service kings have towards their peoples. The purpose behind the accumulation of treasuries was, as Lopes claims, 'to defend the people'. The chronicles suggests that those kings of old thought that the richer the king was the better he could defend the kingdom and wage war, if he needed, without overloading his people.⁹⁵ Moreover, by piling up the riches he could maintain the rights of the people 'without imposing further burden not taking what did not belong to him'. Instead, counting with the monies of the Lisbon and Porto customs, old kings sought that 'all [of the realm] were rich, so that kings could have great and vast renders'.⁹⁶

A century and half later, things had changed beyond measure. From the report sent to the Doge it is possible to extract a coherent picture of Portuguese finances and of the king's financial dilemmas and choices in terms of military projects and royal patronage in the time of Manuel (*r.* 1495-1521). At the centre of these questions were the plan designed by the king's inner circle to 'wrestle the spice trade from the hands of the Moor'.⁹⁷ Yet, the profit generated by the royal control of the sea routes was not an ultimate goal, but rather an instrument of loftier designs: the destruction of the Mamluk Empire, the blockade of Mecca, the financing of more Portuguese crusades in Morocco and the conquest of Jerusalem.⁹⁸

For the crown, as Lunardo noticed, the resources of the Indian route were at the service of a military project, and not the other way round, as he no-doubt did expect. While he did not provide overall figures for the expenditure, the agent was adamant that the empire was run at loss.⁹⁹ The African strongholds held by the Portuguese, another pillar of the Emmanueline ambitions, entailed another drain of the king's wealth. 'Of those lands [the king]

⁹⁵ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XII.

⁹⁶ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p.5.

⁹⁷ Thus asphyxiating the Mamluks of Egypt whose wealth depended on the customs over the spice trade. Plans for a crusade for the Reconquest of Jerusalem were drawn in 1505-7, precisely when Da Ca Masser stays in Portugal. Thomaz, Luis Filipe, 'L'idée Impériale Manueline', in Aubin, Jean, ed., *Le Portugal, la Découverte et l'Europe*, Paris, 1990, pp. 41-44.

⁹⁸ Thomaz, 'L'idée Impériale Manueline', pp. 49-50, 53.

⁹⁹ *Relazione*, § 32.

obtains neither profit nor revenue, but rather incurs continuous expenditure to protect them from the Moors'.¹⁰⁰

Expenses in India and Africa were made heavier by the permanent expenditure with the nobles, a key theme in the observations sent to Venice. 'For a small king and one of such lowly income', Lunardo Da Ca Masser noticed, the king was a lavish patron of his nobles to whom he bestowed 'great grants and prizes.'¹⁰¹ Allowances paid by courtiers, which Lunardo estimated at 44,000 ducats, alone exceeded the whole profit of the newly-found Indies.¹⁰² The importance of the king's disbursements emerges clearly out of the *relazione* when its author notes that no matter how large their income, the Portuguese nobles he met were short of money and 'all lived off the revenues of the king' without deeming anything but warfare a honest occupation. Although the *relazione* clearly implies that the crown could not avoid the expenditure with the nobility, it nonetheless presents the reverse of the medal: the king was compensated by the free military service from his warlike nobility. In case of invasion, the defence of the kingdom relied on the free service of the nobles, as the African strongholds already did.

For the crown, military activity was the instrument of lofty imperial plans, to which its wealth was subordinated. The state was not a commercial venture. Thus, the monarchy kept a firm grip on its monopoly of the commerce, indifferent to the possibility of a potentially more lucrative policy of free trade, as Lunardo suggested. In war the interests of monarchy and nobility coincided. For the nobility, war was a means of securing profit, either through sheer plunder or through royal patronage, while non-noble contribution to warfare would be minimal and limited to the defence of the realm. War entailed a strong mutuality between the crown and the privileged. Indeed, redistribution of the state revenues (most of whose came from the kingdom rather than from the conquests) implied the military effort of the nobles and knights in order to contribute to the imperial projects.

¹⁰⁰ *Relazione*, § 0.

¹⁰¹ *Relazione*, § 32.

¹⁰² *Relazione*, § 32.

Although the players remain the same -the king, the subsidised, non-taxed nobility and the non-noble tax-base- the two fiscal systems described appear remarkably diverse. The key difference concerns the place of war. Whereas in the early sixteenth-century kingdom military confrontation was permanent and costly, in the period of the 'old kings' wars were merely a possibility. This is a crucial difference: while Pedro I and his predecessors could amass the revenues from their customs to accumulate impressive treasures on behalf of future, eventual wars, Manuel I had to employ his resources to maintain the fighting capacity and motivation of his nobility and keep on pursuing his grand imperial ambitions. This varying relationship between war and finances was captured by Charles Tilly's dichotomy distinguishing coercion-intensive and capital-intensive states. Whereas the former grow applying coercion to concentrate capital, the latter grow by resorting to capital to acquire coercive means.¹⁰³

The transformation of an accumulation-oriented system to one where redistribution and offensive war are intrinsically connected appears as the decisive transformation operated in Portuguese state finances. To Lopes the dissolution of the system of the 'old kings' had to be found in the conflicts sustained by King Fernando with Castile. However, Lopes did not regard the so-called Fernandine Wars as a *primum mobile*. Instead, he emphasised the patronage of Castilian nobles in the Portuguese court and the unprecedented distribution of lands and other sources of income led by queen Leonor (Fernando's wife).¹⁰⁴ If the hypothesis of Fernão Lopes is right, in the Portuguese case it was the fiscal strength of the monarchy that brought war as a form of redistribution.

At any rate, the origins of the redistributive monarchy that Lunardo described in 1506 are to be found in the Fernandine Wars (1369-71, 72-4, 1381-2) and in the subsequent conflict with Castile, which is traditionally called the 'War of Independence' (1383-1411). Together these conflicts broke a long period of peace which had coincided with minimal taxation (see Appendix 1). By contrast the End-of-Century Wars initiate a period with higher frequency of taxation and, crucially, the establishment of a permanent tax, the *sisas*, in 1387

¹⁰³ Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XXV, p. 89; chapter XXVII, pp. 93-5, Chapter LVII, pp. 197-8.

(see section 5.1 *infra*). The chronology presented in Appendix 1 suggests that the relation between warfare and changes of the fiscal system should be addressed in the long-run. Indeed, the two periods display distinctive military and fiscal features. In between lays a series of conflicts which allegedly constituted the causes for profound changes. This argument, clearly laid by Fernão Lopes in his 1430s chronicle of King Fernando I, appears remarkably close to the present consensus of fiscal historians about the role of warfare as the driving force behind the transformation of fiscal systems.

In order to test the importance of warfare in changing fiscal systems, this dissertation will resort to what sociologists call a 'pre-post case study', that is to say, a study of a given instance before and after the occurrence of a 'critical event.' A 'critical event' is one which, considering the theories that are to be tested, would be expected to impact significantly on the observed case.¹⁰⁵ In the present case, late-fourteenth-century conflicts, the Fernandine Wars and the ensuing War of Independence, divide two hypothetically very different periods and as such provide the obvious boundary between the 'pre' and the 'post'.

The two parts are designed to be mutually comparable. Each of them parts will have four chapters broadly parallel chapters dealing with the same problems: taxation and the economy (chapters 1 and 5), the political and constitutional limitations (chapters 2 and 6), the relationship between war and state finances (chapters 3 and 7) and, finally, the differing rationales of state finances in the two periods (chapters 4 and 8). Even if parts I and II follow the same structure and respond to essentially the same questions, chapters will retain a great deal of autonomy vis-à-vis their counterparts. This choice was dictated by two factors, namely the specific conditions of the Portuguese 'archive' and the dearth of specialised research in this field in Portugal. The former makes it impossible to construct series or samples to pin down the quantitative changes wrought by the wars. The latter demands that even seemingly elementary questions of institutional history must be solved. The want of specialised studies means that both institutional and quantitative questions have to be addressed from primary sources which, being non-serial and imprevisible, could not allow a tighter structure. Indeed, a great deal of the

¹⁰⁵ Berg, Bruce L., *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, 5th ed., Boston, 2004, p. 256.

work done here was to systematise and confer some intelligibility to disperse data. Thus, the comparison between the 'pre' and the 'post' will rely on methodologies specific to each pair of chapters which will be explained throughout the text.

A final problem remains to be addressed: that of the chronological limits of this thesis. As section 1.1 will show, the end of the Portuguese Reconquest (early thirteenth century or, to use a date, the conquest of Faro in 1249) provides a meaningful starting point. Thus, part 1 will comprise the years ranging from 1249 to 1369 which can be regarded as those of consolidation of a domain state. It is harder to find a date that is fit for ending part 2. Two extremely important fiscal changes take place in the first decades of the sixteenth century: in 1523 the monarch resorted to a large-scale sale of perpetuities (*juros*), an expedient that had been very sporadically used in 1500 and 1521 but that would dominate Portuguese expenditure well into the eighteenth century; by contrast, in 1538 the monarchy, under the pressure of the *Cortes*, devolved the administration of the country's only permanent tax to the municipalities. Close in time as they were, these two changes stand for a break with previous practice and previous problems, making this period an adequate end for the research. The date chosen, 1527, has most of all heuristic significance, as it is the date of a very comprehensive abridgement of a general account that allows the historian a rare foray into a lost archive.

PART I – THE HUNDRED YEARS PEACE (1249–1369)

The capture of Faro by newly-crowned Afonso III in the spring of 1249 was the final act of the Portuguese *Reconquista*. This event was also the starting point for what can be seen a 'long century' of peace punctuated by short-lived conflicts until it ended with the epoch-turning Fernandine Wars of 1369-71, 1372-3 and 1380-2.

Considering the role that recent work on Fiscal History has ascribed to military conflicts, it would be expected that thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Portugal lagged behind its more bellicose counterparts. Conversely, the present part, comprising chapters 1 to 4, will argue that despite the lack of military stimulus, the Portuguese state developed into a functional 'domain state.' The first chapter will address the early thirteenth-century transition from the institutional, constitutional and military settings of the *Reconquista* to an entirely different scenario. The remaining chapters will explore the three defining features of this 'domain state' from 1249 to 1369: the permanence of a 'fiscal constitution' (chapter 2), of a stable military and diplomatic orientation (chapter 3) and the existence of a system of institutions deployed to serve a definite rationale (chapter 4).

Chapter 1 - Death and Transformation of a Tribute State

This first chapter will try to address the end of the *Reconquista* from the perspective of state finances. As section 1.1 will demonstrate, twelfth-century and mid-thirteenth-century Portugal was a tribute state plunged in deep crisis, as changes in the economy and warfare of the Reconquest deprived the monarchy of some of its traditional revenues. Somehow, by 1320 the monarchy seems to have recovered some of its accumulated wealth. Sections 1.2 and 1.3 will address the two responses to this negative conjuncture: monetary manipulations and institutional reforms.

Section 1.1 War and Prosperity

Four decades ago, in the most significant work on the origins of Portuguese finances, Iria Gonçalves argued that the emergence of direct taxes was directly related to the end of the *Reconquista*.¹ According to her hypothesis, the Portuguese occupation of Faro and of the last Muslim positions in the Algarve in the spring of 1249 would have implied the end of predatory income to the monarchy, as henceforward no land or town was laid open to expansion, extortion or plunder. Deprived of these resources, Afonso III (1248–1279) had to look for alternative forms of income, notably the extraordinary taxes of 1254, 1261 and 1266. According to Gonçalves, the drive towards general taxation was a response to the collapse of plunder and tribute. In other words, the extinction of an aggressive frontier entailed a fully-fledged ‘fiscal revolution’.² This hypothesis remained unchallenged in the few paragraphs dedicated to royal finances by the general histories of the period³ and its explanatory power untested by the scarce quantitative data available.

¹ PEP, pp. 11-15.

² Bonney, Richard and Ormrod, W. Mark, ‘Introduction: Crises, Revolutions and Self-sustained growth: Towards a Conceptual Model of Change in Fiscal History’, *Crises*, p. 9.

³ Mattoso, José, ‘Dois Séculos de Vicissitudes Políticas’, *História de Portugal*, vol. II, Lisbon, 1994, pp. 113-124. Homem, A. L. de Carvalho, ‘A Corte e o Governo Central’, *Port. Defini.*, pp. 537-8. Both historians preferred highlighting the restoration of royal authority by Afonso III, following the death of his unruly brother, the *rex inutilis* Sancho II in 1248. On Sancho II in English, see Peters, E., ‘*Rex Inutilis*. Sancho II of Portugal and thirteenth-century deposition theory’, *Studia Gratiana*, 14, 1967, pp. 253–305.

The argument advanced by Gonçalves was perfectly consistent with the notion that Portuguese kings drew heavily on the profits of the military activity. Indeed, material gain had been dominant in the Christian kingdoms' fight with the Islamic powers. As a military leader, the king himself could gather his own spoil or cause his army to be bought off by an enemy town or province. Furthermore, the fifth of the booty obtained in 'private' raids against the enemies of the faith belonged to the monarch, under the title of an adopted Muslim practice.⁴ War with the infidel was also the occasion for collecting payments in lieu of military service, either applied to some non-noble landholdings (*fossadeira*) or upon municipalities *qua* vassals (*excusatio exercitus*).⁵ Likewise, the king was entitled to the tenth of tolls and of custom charges which constituted likely sources of precious metals.⁶ The combination of these factors contributes to explain the great quantities of ingots and gold coins that can be found in the royal wills of 1179, 1188 and 1210 (see *infra* Fig. 1). The geography of the royal treasures, revealed in the will of Sancho I in 1210, is indicative of the weight of the frontier in the crown's revenues: the monastery of Alcobaça, the castles of Belver (Knights of St. John) and Tomar (Templar), Leiria and Évora were all key military bases, and even Coimbra, while no longer a border town, was still far from the northern primitive core of the kingdom where most of the king's lands lay.⁷

The negative effects of the conquest of the Algarve on the crown's finances become clearer when the Portuguese situation is compared with that of Castile–Leon. Here the *Reconquista* had also come to a halt after the contemporary conquest of Seville (1248) but borders with either tributary or vulnerable Muslim states were kept. Even without significant plunder, tribute assured the Castilian kings the continuation of the old flow of metallic and

⁴ Marques, Maria Alegria Fernandes, 'A Viabilização de um Reino,' *Port. Defini.*, p. 58. Still in use in 1224. SS, doc. 15, p. 191.

⁵ On the *fossadeira*, see Martins, Miguel Gomes, 'Fossadeira', *Les Mots de l'Impôt dans les Villes de l'Occident Méditerranéen. Glossaire Critique de Fiscalité Médiévale* (www.mailxxi.com/fiscalitat/Glossairelist.asp accessed in June-July 2007); the *excusatio* is only mentioned in a letter of quittance of 1253, as having been collected for the Algarve expedition in 1249 (TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 3).

⁶ TT, Chancelarias Régias, Chancelaria de Afonso III, Livro 1, fols. 34v-35 and fols. 76-76v.

⁷ According to Marreiros, most of the royal lands were situated in the present-day districts of Braga, Porto and Viseu, all North of Coimbra. Marreiros, Rosa, *Propriedade Fundiária e Rendas da Coroa no Reinado de Dom Dinis: Guimarães*, vol. II, Coimbra, 1990, p. 456. In the second will of Sancho I there is a mention to a northern burgh in the heart of the king's landed patrimony, Guimarães. Significantly, however, it is not about coins or metals but about pieces cloth: *habeat (...) pannos meos de Vimaranes* (DS, doc. 194, p. 297).

monetary resources from Muslim Africa to the North.⁸ Unlike post-1300 monarchies, for whom war implied severe financial strains, military activity and profit were integrated in the so-called *Reconquista*. Additionally, the frontier with the Almohad Empire integrated the kingdom with gold-rich commercial routes, unavailable before. Like plunder, a share of the trade was absorbed by the monarchy.

Heuristic contingency determines that the impact of the 'Reconquest' on the financial condition of the thirteenth-century Portuguese monarchy can only be approached via two types of indirect evidence: the contemporary royal testaments⁹ and changes of intrinsic value in the currency, as systematised by Gomes Marques.¹⁰ Wills have been long used as rough indicators of the monarchy's financial situation¹¹ but it is when combined with a closer look at coinage issued that their implications for thirteenth-century royal finances become clearer.

As historical sources, royal wills have severe drawbacks: they are scarce and discontinuous, they display different systems of account and they do not conform to a formal standard. The absence of reliable price series for the period makes it impossible for us to gain a notion of the king's purchasing power.¹² To make things even worse, the published royal documents do not provide any reference to the hypothetical key elements of expenditure: military wages and fiefs-de-bourse. However, for all the shortcomings, the king's testaments allow for a broad diachronic perspective on royal treasure. Some of their expressions and bequests clearly hint at an assessment of the wealth accumulated in the king's treasures or about to leave the mint at the moment of composition. From the wills' own terms, it is possible to see whether they tend to overestimate or

⁸ The most notorious example is Grenade which agreed in paying a yearly tribute of 150,000 *maravedís alfonsis* in 1246. To provide a reference, the total receipt of Castilian crown in 1315 was 1,600,000 *maravedís*. Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, pp. 47-52. For the second figure, Ormrod, W. M., 'The West European Monarchies in the Later Middle Ages', *ESSF*, p. 125.

⁹ Of 1179, 1188, 1210, 1214, 1221, [1226], 1279, 1299 and 1322. For references, see Fig. 1. That of 1226 has been critically dated by Fernandes, Hermenegildo, *D. Sancho II*, Lisbon, 2006, pp. 141-3. The testaments of 1218, 1248 and 1324 do not convey quantitative data.

¹⁰ *HMMP*

¹¹ Notaby Azevedo, João Lúcio de, *Épocas de Portugal Económico*, 3rd, Lisbon, 1973, pp. 34-9; Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães, 'Finanças Públicas e Estrutura do Estado', *DHP*, vol. 3, pp. 20-40 and Ferro, Maria José Pimenta, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Fernando,' *Estudos Medievais*, n. 2, Porto, 1982, pp. 7-9.

¹² Prices recorded by Oliveira Marques indicate a rough inflationary trend throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but are too disparate and patchy to provide any sort of usable reference. Marques, A. H. Oliveira, 'A Circulação e a Troca de Produtos,' *Port. Defini.*, pp. 521-22.

play down the actual wealth disposed of. While in their 'poor' wills kings Afonso II, Sancho II, Afonso III and Dinis (in 1299) are cautious enough to point to alternative methods of payment, should the monies be insufficient to match the bequests, nothing of the sort happens in the texts of the well-off Afonso I and Sancho I.¹³ This difference suggests that eventual exaggerations of the wills indicate a sense of wealth rather than mask poverty. Importantly, the sums reckoned in the wills reflect the monies and precious metals gathered by the individual kings rather than an inter-generational transmission of valuables. Indeed, the riches were to be distributed among many heirs, including the prince, who inherited the most valuable of the bequests: the *regnum*. From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, the king's *thesaurus meus* was far from being something like a *thesaurus regni*, an element congenial with the throne. As a consequence, its balance can be used as a proxy to the financial conjuncture of each reign.

Thus, for all their diversity, royal testaments can provide reliable notional values of the royal treasure at a given moment. However, a diachronic comparison of the wills is made difficult by their usage of distinct gold and silver currencies and even of non-minted precious metals. In order that these wills convey an intelligible trend it is necessary that the different valuables bequeathed – marks of silver or marks of gold, *morabitini, d.* and *muzmudis* – be quantified in a single unit. Two reasons qualify the mark of gold for this role: gold, minted or not, was preferable to silver for hoarding and gold coinage was still dominant in the Peninsula.¹⁴ Additionally, in regard to its silver counterpart, the gold mark has the practical advantage of being expressed in lower figures. In order to convert the different values into this chosen unit, currencies will be first reduced to their metallic content and added up to the metals expressed in bullion. Sums expressed in *morabitanos* were understood as relating to those coined by the monarch who issued the testament.¹⁵ Sancho I's 1188 will was also written in the probable year of his first gold coinage.¹⁶ Coinages and

¹³ *DR*, doc. 334, p. 436 and *DS*, doc. 194, pp. 297-301.

¹⁴ The gold mark was also a meaningful unit for substantial international transactions, such as the *census* of two golden marks that Afonso was obligated to pay the pope. Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, vol. I, Lisbon, 1981, p. 97.

¹⁵ The relationship between minting operations and issuing the testament is very clear in the will of Sancho II who explained that his bequests would be paid by his minters (*monetarii*). *SS*, doc. 44, p. 240.

¹⁶ *HMMP*, p. 36.

testaments could have been part of the archetypical occasion for a monarch to issue a will: the preparation for an offensive campaign. The testament of 1188 was made on the way to attack Serpa, whereas that of 1226 was regarded by Hermenegildo Fernandes as part of the preparation to the incoming siege of Elvas.¹⁷ For the conversion of silver into gold, the divisor used was 9.1, which corresponds to the average cost of gold in silver terms in the peninsular market during the thirteenth century.¹⁸ Indeed, although the relative values of gold and silver have noticeably varied along the period focused, the data on them are too patchy to be applied to the each single testament. These relatively artificial devices enable a diachronic comprehension of the totals in absence of price data, even if in very different terms from the way contemporaries would have understood the accounts. The results can be seen in Fig. 1.

¹⁷ Fernandes, *D. Sancho II*, p. 141.

¹⁸ *HMMP*, p. 21.

Fig. 1 – Valuation of Bequests in Royal Wills, 1179–1367

| Will | Valuables bequeathed | Equivalence in Portuguese marks of pure gold (229.5 g) |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 1179 Afonso I | 170,000 <i>morabitanos</i> and 10,575 <i>muzmudis</i> | 2711 ¹⁹ |
| 1188 Sancho I | 123,630 <i>morabitanos</i> , 386,000 s., 837 [fine] silver marks, 13,202 <i>muzmudis</i> , 97 <i>meales auri</i> | 2187 ²⁰ |
| 1210 Sancho I | 738,200 <i>morabitanos</i> , 195.615 [fine] gold marks, 1,400 [fine] silver marks | 9955 ²¹ |
| 1214 Afonso II | 78,000 <i>morabitanos</i> (money of account) | 829 ²² |
| 1221 Afonso II | 42,000 <i>morabitanos</i> (money of account) | 446 ²³ |
| 1226 Sancho II | 37,600 recently-coined <i>morabitanos</i> , 3,000 old <i>morabitanos</i> [of Sancho I?] | 367 ²⁴ |
| 1271 Afonso III | 69,400 <i>l.</i> (money of account) | 405 ²⁵ |
| 1299 Dinis I | 57,200 <i>l.</i> (money of account), 500 [fine] silver marks | 325 ²⁶ |
| 1322 Dinis I | 350,000 <i>l.</i> (money of account) | 2013 ²⁷ |
| 1367 Pedro I | 871,000 <i>l.</i> (money of account; min. value) | 5009 ²⁸ |

Sources: Azevedo, Rui de (ed.) *Documentos Medievais Portugueses. Documentos Régios*, doc. 330 (will of 1179); Azevedo, Rui de, Costa, Avelino de Jesus da, Pereira, Marcelino Rodrigues (ed.) *Documentos de D. Sancho I*, doc. 30 (will of 1188) and 194 (will of 1210); Veloso, Maria Teresa Nobre, *Afonso II. Relações de Portugal com a Santa Sé durante o seu reinado*, Coimbra, 2000, pp. 277-9; *Provas*, vol. 1, part 1, docs. 19 (will of 1221) and 28 (will of 1271) and part 2, docs. 11 (will of 1322) and 32 (will of 1367); SS, doc. 44; Brandão, Francisco, *Quinta Parte da Monarchia Lusytana que Contem a Historia dos Primeiros 23 annos delRey D. Dinis*, doc. XXXIV, fol. 329-331v (will of 1299).

When converted to a uniform measure, the changes withstood by the royal treasury become intelligible. Accumulated wealth appears to have grown

¹⁹ The multiplicator was 3.5235 corresponding to the quantity of pure gold contained in one 4.05 g *maravedí/morabitano* of Afonso VIII of Castile, the standard Christian currency in the Peninsula since 1172 (Francisco Olmos, José María de 'El Maravedí de Oro de Afonso VIII. Un Mensaje Cristiano Escrito en Árabe', *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, vol. 8, n. 1, Madrid, 1998, pp. 283-301. The multiplier of the *muzmudis*, which correspond to half the Muslim Almohad *dobra* was 2.2 g, see Pellicer i Brut, J., *Repertorio Paramétrico Metrológico Medieval de los Reinos Hispánicos*, Barcelona, 1999, pp. 85-6 and 144.

²⁰ The multiplier for the *morabitano* is 2.865 grams, obtained by multiplying the 750 per 1000 quantity of gold in each *morabitano* coin of Sancho I which weighted of 3.82g. The value of the *meales auri* remains enigmatic and it was not included. On the metrology of Sancho I's *morabitano*, see *HMMP*, p. 39. On the dating of Sancho I's first coinage before 1188, see *HMMP*, p. 129.

²¹ See the previous note. Possibly, the *morabitanos* expressed here belonged to the second minting of Sancho I.

²² = 78,000 *morabitanos* * 3.69 g (weight of *morabitano*) * 0.66 (maximum Au content in Afonso II's *morabitanos*) : 229.5g (mark of pure Au) = 827 marks of pure Au.

²³ = 42,000 *morabitanos* * 2.4 g (average Au content in Afonso II's *morabitano*) : 229.5 (mark of pure Au)

²⁴ = 37,600 *morabitanos novos* * 2.0 g (average Au content in Sancho II's *morabitano*) : 229.5 (mark of pure Au) + 3,000 *morabitanos velhos* * 2.8 g (average Au content in Sancho I's *morabitano*) = 364.2

²⁵ = 16,656,000 *d.* / 1.(3) (nominal value of the *dinheiro novo* of 1264) = 12,812,307 *dinheiros novos* * 0.066 Ag g (Ag content of 1 *dinheiro novo*) = 845,612 g Ag : 229.5 = 3,684.585 marks of pure Ag : 9.1 (conventioned Ag : Au ratio) = 404.899 marks of pure Au

²⁶ = 13,728,000 *d.* / 1.(3) (nominal value of the *dinheiro novo* of 1264) = 10,296,257 *dinheiros novos* * 0.066 = 679,552.962 g Ag : 229.5 = 2961 marks of pure Ag : 9.1 =

²⁷ = 84,000,000 *d.* = 5,544,000 g Ag = 2,4156.863 pure silver marks = 2,684.0959 pure gold marks.

²⁸ = 156,780,000 *d.* = 10,347,480 g Ag = 45,087.058 pure silver marks = 2,684.6732 pure gold marks.

fast between 1179 and 1210. Although the values for 1188 were lower from those for 1179, it should be noted that Afonso I died in 1185 and hence the crown had to start a new cycle of accumulation with Sancho I. By contrast, Afonso II did not prove able to start a similar accumulative cycle. After enduring the dispersion of his father's remarkable wealth, Afonso II saw his hoardings decrease and neither Sancho II (1223-48) nor Afonso III (1248-79) halted the decline that had started under their father.²⁹ The modest values handled by the latter in 1271 are particularly telling, since the will was issued after two decades of political stability, of improvements in the administration and even after benefiting from, unknown until then, general taxation. Furthermore, the monies bequeathed by Afonso III were not hoarded but rather assigned to Lisbon revenues.³⁰ However, in the reign of Dinis I the crown seems to have achieved a remarkable recovery after decades of seemingly troubled finances. The value bequeathed in the 1322 will is similar to that of the first two wills. In sum, royal fortunes underwent a steep increase between the last two decades of the twelfth century peaking in 1210 which was followed by a severe plunge, first detectable in 1214 continuing up to 1299 at least; in 1322, a recovery which brought back the treasury hoards to values closer to their 1179 and 1188 levels. Is it possible to relate these trends with the military context?

Under Afonso I (1140–1185) and Sancho I (1185–1211) the monarchy led a nearly-continuous fight against Islamic states. For a long period, it obtained success in major operations – the conquests of Santarém and Lisbon (1147), of Évora (1157) and Alcácer do Sal (1158). Nonetheless, after the Almohad Empire established its hegemony in the Peninsula (c. 1160-1210), Portugal's frontier became largely stationary. While expansion and conquest became more difficult, Afonso I and, most all, Sancho I continued to wage war against a superior enemy, as the sack of Seville (1176), the attacks on Serpa (1188), the capture of Silves (1189) and the collaboration with Castile in Alarcos (1195) reveal. These expeditions and countless smaller incursions could not

²⁹ In the very phrasing of the 1221 and 1226–31 testaments it is possible to detect traces of liquidity crisis. Whereas Sancho I's 1210 will refers to monies effectively hoarded in his several treasuries, Afonso II orders the sums bequeathed in 1221 to be taken 'from my movables found in the time of my death, that is to say, grain in granaries kept, *morabitanos*, pence, all gold and silver, chattels and many other valuables.' *Provas*, vol. I, part 1, doc. 19, p. 44. About ninety per cent of the modest values assigned in Sancho II's will were to be taken out of his *morabitano* coinage that was still on the make. *SS*, doc. 44, p. 240.

³⁰ *Provas*, vol. I, part 1, doc. 28, p. 72.

have failed to produce some economic benefits for the crown, either in form of ransoms, booty, tribute or even taxes in lieu of military service. Hypothetically, the great sums accumulated before 1210 derive from such military activity against a more powerful and richer enemy.

Kings Afonso II (1211-23) and Sancho II (1223-48) ruled in a more favourable strategic setting, as the Almohad Empire which blocked Portuguese expanding ambitions started to crumble in the wake of the battle of Navas de Tolosa (1212). Seemingly, Afonso II 'The Fat' ignored this opportunity and took no active part in the *Reconquista*. Enjoying favourable military circumstances, spurred by papal injunctions and, unlike his father, unhindered by physical problems, Sancho II is only known to have organised and personally led two expeditions: Elvas (1226) and Ayamonte (1238 or 1239). In this period, advances in Portuguese frontier were mostly due to the military orders and to their occasional municipal and noble allies. Of the best prizes at hand – Alcácer do Sal, Silves, Mértola, Tavira, Faro – only the conquest of the last was the doing of a monarch: Afonso III in 1249.

At first sight, the decreasing military role of the monarchy under Afonso II and Sancho II coincided with the decline in the accumulation of assets. But can we infer that the impressive hoardings of Sancho I were due to his military activity? The hoarded values revealed in the wills of 1188 and 1210 demonstrate that Sancho I had the capacity to store gold and silver reserves but do not reveal whether they were taken by force or not. After all, the period of steepest growth of hoardings from 1188 to 1210 was relatively peaceful, except for the two sizeable expeditions held in 1188 and 1189 (capture of Silves) and for the desperate defending of 1190 and 1191. The well-known circumstances of the capture of Silves, with Sancho I trying to buy out his crusader allies with monies from his own treasury, coupled with the twelfth-century chronicles' omission of any type of plunder,³¹ suggest that Sancho I's occupation of the Western Algarve in 1189-1191 was unlikely to provide significant booty. After the Almohad recovery of the Algarve and devastation of south of the country in 1191, a five-year truce endured until 1196 and, for the rest of his reign, king Sancho I would not challenge the Almohad hegemony. In sum, the fivefold

³¹ The chapters dedicated to Sancho I's military enterprises in the 1419 *Crónica de Portugal* mention looting. However, the chronology of these sources remains unknown. Calado, Adelino de Almeida, 'Introdução', *Cr. 1419*.

augmentation of the treasury by Sancho I was independent of his conquests. As such, assuming a direct relationship between the plunder from royal conquests and the wealth of the royal treasuries is inconsistent with the available data.

In what appears to be a contradiction, the period of Almohad hegemony (1191-1212) was beneficial for the treasures of the Portuguese kings. This paradox, however, can be explained when the military and economic features of the Almohad Caliphate are considered.³² The protection of the Iberian Muslims by means of frequent and intensive 'holy war' in the Peninsula was, in the words of Fernandes, 'the very condition for the survival of the empire.'³³ Firmly in control of the routes to the African gold sources and commanding the immense manpower of Berber tribesmen, the Almohads were able to fund powerful offensive campaigns and to sustain the frontier defences against the peninsular Christian kingdoms. Regardless of their grand strategic aims, the economic effect of the Almohad campaigns was the supply of gold to the Christian half of the Peninsula. Thus, while the caliphate stood, there would be a northbound flow of gold of which kings like Sancho I could benefit by collecting taxes over trade and/or by pillage or by organising plundering raids.³⁴ By contrast to his father, who had to cope with the Almohad Empire at its height, Afonso II watched its waning. After the battle of Navas de Tolosa in 1212, never again did the Almohad emperor cross the strait and the payment, reinforcement and leadership of his peninsular garrisons and allies became increasingly difficult. Although favourable from a strictly military viewpoint, the disappearance of the gold-rich caliphate meant that raids and operations were less attractive than before. Far more important than his want of military virtues, the decadence of the Almohad deprived Afonso II of the metallic flow that allowed his father to amass his impressive treasure. This hypothesis is consistent with the abrupt decline of the amounts managed in the royal wills from 1214 onwards.

In sum, if there is any association between projects of conquest and availability of money, the inverse hypothesis seems more reasonable:

³² On the Almohad empire, see Fernandes, Hermenegildo, *Entre Mouros e Cristãos*, Lisbon, 2000.

³³ 'Trazer a jihad aquém-estrito é a própria condição de sobrevivência do sistema de relação que sustenta a construção imperial.' Fernandes, *Entre Mouros e Cristãos*, p. 184.

³⁴ On this flow, see Kassis, Hanna E., 'The Circulation of Almoravid and Almoravid-type coinage in Christian Europe' in *Homenagem a Mario Gomes Marques*, Sintra, 2000, pp. 261–273. It can be pointed out that the arsenic-rich silver used to mint the *d.* coins of Sancho I differs from that of his predecessor and successors, according to the chemical analyses presented by Gomes Marques (*HMMP*, p. 146). This suggests that Sancho I's immense wealth was based in wholly different monetary and metallic economy from that of his peers.

Portuguese royal claiming of territories lagged behind on account of the monarchy's financial troubles. In the 1210s and 1220s Portuguese kings could not assemble the resources to occupy the neighbouring lands. The enigmatic desertion of Sancho II by the magnates in the siege of Elvas in 1226 might be thus explained.³⁵ Conversely, the regular presence of Portuguese knights in Castilian and Leonese hosts suggests that the king was not able to patronize his fighters accordingly and/or that the Western front was less attractive.³⁶

A brief reference to the situation in Castile–Leon can be enlightening. Here early thirteenth-century *Reconquista* involved the systematic claiming of land, rather than profitable predatory raids.³⁷ The power vacuum in the Muslim-held lands of the Peninsula abandoned by a declining empire changed the nature of the warfare: instead of clinical, predatory marauding against a stronger and wealthier enemy, the Christian kings had to take the initiative and enter into money–exhausting, protracted campaigns and sieges. As the military historian Garcia–Fitz reckons, Fernando III's campaigns were aimed at territorial occupation and thus old-time concerns with profit were abandoned.³⁸ The Castilian–Leonese offensive led by Fernando III and Alfonso IX of Leon from 1226 onwards was all but self–subsidising and the monarch had to turn to loans to obtain the money required for wages and purveyances.³⁹ Though this southwards advance into the Andalusian cities and principalities cannot have failed to produce some spoil or tribute, it was funded mainly by the *pedido*, a property tax which redeemed the king's right to debase the currency.⁴⁰ Still, Castile was more fortunate than Portugal in the sense that, while the Portuguese border faced de–populated or at least de–urbanised tracts of land which only the well–paid Almohad garrisons kept under the banner of Islam,⁴¹ the opulent cities of Seville and Cordoba and a web of middling towns lay just across the Castilian frontier. Such conditions make understandable the difficulties of Afonso II and most of all Sancho II in launching expeditions with

³⁵ For an alternative thesis, see Fernandes, *D. Sancho II*, pp. 148–54.

³⁶ Fernandes, *D. Sancho II*, p. 22.

³⁷ On the economic rationale for war in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see García Fitz, Francisco, *Castilla y León frente al Islam*, Seville, 2001, pp. 74–89.

³⁸ Garcia-Fitz, *Castilla y León*, pp. 121–5.

³⁹ Grassotti, Hilda, 'Un empréstito para la conquista de Sevilla', *Miscelánea de Estudios sobre Instituciones Castellano-Leonesas*, Bilbao, 1978, p. 231.

⁴⁰ Grassotti, 'Un empréstito para la conquista,' pp. 228–234.

⁴¹ Fernandes, *Entre Mouros e Cristãos*, p. 213.

the intensity of their forebears. The plains south to the Tagus would eventually be occupied by the efforts of the ideologically-motivated professionals of the military orders.

Thus, royal testaments reveal the monarchy's incapacity for retaining the wealth in its treasuries from the ascent of Afonso II to the end of the fourteenth century.⁴² When read in combination with the military history of the period, it becomes evident that the gradual decline of the treasures can be associated to the end of self-subsidising warfare and to the contact with a wealthier, more powerful adversary. The abundant gold, in coins or otherwise, bequeathed in the royal wills reflects that royal finances benefited from an economy which, peacefully or not, was linked to the gold-rich areas of the Southern Mediterranean, rather than from the resources of the kingdom.

In these terms, Iria Gonçalves was right pointing to the relationship between the end of the *Reconquista* and the financial difficulties for the crown. However the explanation for these difficulties lies not in the absence of land to conquer and/or plunder but rather in the collapse of the Almohad Empire four decades before the conquest of Faro. Given that the empire acted as the provider of gold to the bimetallic systems of the Christian kingdoms, it is important to ask whether the decay of royal fortunes did not involve monetary, rather than purely military, factors.

Section 1.2 - Bimetallism

In a bimetallic currency system, gold and silver currencies are interchangeable according to their facial values. Gold and silver coins had very different usages. Silver pence (*d.*) were used for ordinary transactions as everywhere else in Europe, although unlike countries like England who kept the penny strong in intrinsic terms, Iberian bullion currency tended to have a very low silver content, seldom exceeding 20% and often affected by severe debasements. Thus, fractional coins were unusual as the purchasing power of individual specimens was much weaker than their English counterparts. By contrast, bulkier transactions and hoarding were expressed and performed

⁴² In a passing reference to the treasury he was bequeathing, King Dinis refers to it as the 'wealth that I have assembled' (*este aver ... pera que hu eu hi juntei*). *Provas*, vol. II, part 2, doc. 11, p. 130.

through the Muslim gold coins minted by the Almoravid and Almohad empires. These, from 1087 onwards, flooded the Peninsula with their abundant *dinars* of impeccable gold, minted to pay off the wages of their plethoric armies during seasonal campaigns.⁴³ This coinage, when transferred to Christian hands, kept the name of their original makers: *morabitino* or *maravedi* (both names meaning from the Almoravids). Its popularity and relative abundance made the *morabitino* the money of account used for more high-profile, prestigious transactions: land sales, one-off grants, ransoms, bequests and political compensations.

Bimetallism, as practiced in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Portugal, has an important consequence for the crown's finances. In indirect taxes, renders and other fiscal transactions, one can assume that whenever possible payments the crown would be redeemed in the weakest currency. In other words, the effects of the so-called Gresham's Law would prevail. Unless coercion intervened, debtors to the king would resort to the weakest tender available. However, for the crown, on account of the higher scale of his transactions, this was not always possible. Indeed, in the concrete settings considered here, some of the crucial expenses affecting the crown were expressed in *morabitanos*: knightly stipends (significantly called *maravedis*), bequests and other bulky transactions (donations to churches, compensations for the civil war). In consequence, debasements in gold and silver coins would have different effects. When threatened by high standing expenditure, the crown would debase the *morabitanos*, however, in order to keep the revenues flowing in, the crown would avoid debasing its pence, as these were the likeliest means of payment. Knowing that twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Portuguese kings enjoyed complete monopoly of coinage within their territory and that they could change its intrinsic and facial values, it is time to ask :whether these policies were followed.

Portuguese coinage up to the fifteenth century has been the object of a comprehensive synthesis by Mário Gomes Marques. Thorough, critical analysis of dates, attributions, standards and the chemical constitution of the main series are all provided in this work.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, for all the information provided in

⁴³ Kassis, 'The Circulation of Almoravid.'

⁴⁴ HMMP.

those areas, the present state of knowledge does not permit to date the different minting operations with more precision than the reign. Such broad intervals capture only long-term changes. Worse still, there is no certainty about the face values in *d.* imposed upon the different gold coins (*morabitanos*) at the time of their introduction.⁴⁵ This makes difficult the correct understanding of the specific purposes of the different minting policies. Nonetheless, given that bimetallic systems were dominant in South-West Europe, the relationship between gold and silver coinages is the key to make monetary problems intelligible.

Fig. 2 – The Portuguese Bimetallic System, 1140–1279

| Reign | Coinages | Bullion | | Gold Coins (<i>Morabitanos</i>) | |
|------------|----------|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| | | Pure Ag/ <i>d.</i> (av.) | Change | Pure Au/ <i>morabitano</i> | Change |
| Afonso I | 5 | 0.1635 | – | – | – |
| Sancho I | 2 | 0.095 | -42 % | 2.8 | – |
| Afonso II | 2 | 0.0925 | -2 % | 2.4 | -14 % |
| Sancho II | 6 | 0.05 | -46 % | 2 | -17 % |
| Afonso III | 2 | 0.066 | 32 % | – | – |

Source: HMMP.

The minting of the gold *morabitano* by Sancho I, which took place between 1185 and 1188,⁴⁶ responded to minting of the *maravedís* by the kings of Castile (1172) and Leon (1177). Far more than a sign of sudden prosperity, this new coinage can be regarded as an attempt to regulate the real value of their disbursements with court and army. Additionally, the abundant *morabitanos* minted by Sancho I were used as a form of hoarding as his two wills suggest.⁴⁷ King Sancho I also severely diminished the metal content of the *d.* minted to his name. In face of the prosperity of the royal treasuries, this strong depreciation

⁴⁵ Gomes Marques deducts the nominal value of Sancho I's golden coin as 15 *solidi* based in their conversion to *dinheiros* in 1253. HMMP, p. 39.

⁴⁶ HMMP, p. 36.

⁴⁷ The surviving number of Sancho I's *morabitanos* is much higher than those of Afonso II. A single *morabitano* from Sancho II survives. HMMP, p. 39.

defies complete explanation.⁴⁸ However, it hints at the fact that Sancho I did not fear the negative effects of spreading poor coinage in the market. Indeed, as argued above, his revenues depended on the circuit that linked Portugal with the gold-rich Mediterranean trade.

Both the successors of Sancho I struck debased *morabitanos* at 15%. Their debasements, dated 1218 and 1226,⁴⁹ coincided with their difficulty to assure a regular flow to their seemingly depleted treasure. As discussed, Afonso II and Sancho II endured the withdrawal of the gold-rich Almohads from the Peninsula. Similarly, Castilian and Leonese crowns ceased minting golden species in 1221.⁵⁰ It is possible that the issuing of debased *morabitanos* responded to the need of more money supply in response to the successive episodes of dearth that broke between 1217 and 1227.⁵¹ Nonetheless, as it will be argued (see *infra* section 1.3), extraordinary expenses surged after the death of Sancho I. The relationship between debasing the *morabitano* in order to meet concrete expenses is clear in the case of Sancho II's puny gold coin whose output of 37,000 *morabitanos* mentioned in his testament of 1226 appears directly related to the impending campaign against Elvas.⁵²

In view of the considerations set above, the depletion of the gold coinage made perfect sense as a form of alleviating standing expenses. By contrast, the depreciation of the silver coinage would harm royal revenues which, according to Gresham's Law, would tend to be redeemed by weaker *d.* Possibly guided by this principle, Afonso II minted silver coin with the same precious metal

⁴⁸ The question is further complicated by chemical evidence that he employed a different source of silver than both his father and son. *HMMP*, p. 146. This debasement shows that he benefited from his minting prerogatives, whereas his Castilian and Leonese contemporaries enjoyed less discriminate powers. On the curtailing of royal minting prerogatives in Castile and Leon, see 'Callaghan, Joseph F., 'The Beginnings of the Cortes of León-Castile,' *American Historical Review*, n. 74, Washington DC, 1969, pp. 1517-23.

⁴⁹ Dates are inferred from *Portugaliae Tabellionum Instrumenta. Documentação Notarial Portuguesa, 1214-1234*, ed. Bernardo de Sá-Nogueira, ed., Lisbon, 2005, docs. 19-21, pp. 38-41 and SS, doc. 44, p. 240. A 1221 charter (TT, Gaveta I, maço 7, doc. 15) mentions 'old' *morabitanos*, implying that 'new' ones had already been minted.

⁵⁰ Pellicer i Bru, *Repertorio Paramétrico*, p. 124.

⁵¹ In the absence of price series and being current price lists few and patchy, it is for the moment impossible to go little beyond Oliveira Marques' broad conclusions: Portugal underwent a strong inflation in the turn of the twelfth to the thirteenth century, affecting mainly grain. Marques, 'A Circulação e a Troca,' p. 521. Recently, however, a careful sieving of Muslim chronicles by Fernandes has shown that the price behaviour in both sides of the Straits changed suddenly with the dearth of 1213-14. Fernandes, *Entre Mouros e Cristãos*, p. 167. In the same year the See of Braga asked for help to the king on account of its sudden poverty. *Liber Fidei*, ed. Avelino de Jesus da Costa, vol.III, Braga, 1990, doc. 878, pp. 313-4. Further dearth in 1220, 1227 and 1237 in Maghreb and Andalus is recorded. Fernandes, *Entre Mouros e Cristãos*, Table between pp. 167 and 168.

⁵² SS, doc. 44, p. 240. Gomes Marques admits that the *morabitano* of Sancho II was issued in very low quantities: only one *morabitano* of king Sancho II has been found so far, in contrast with the far commoner findings of *morabitanos* struck by his father and grand-father. *HMMP*, p. 39.

content as his father. The conservation of the fineness of the silver currency fits Afonso II's coherent attempts at improving the collection and management of his revenues.

The financial policy of Sancho II appears to have been less coherent than his predecessor's. By contrast with the reign of his father, silver currency was strongly and repeatedly debased under Sancho II. Very likely, his erratic monetary policy can be explained by the well-known crisis of royal authority that dominated his whole reign until he was dethroned by his brother Afonso III in the civil war of 1246-8. Whatever the precise motivations, the severe depletion (-46%) of the silver content of the *d.* cannot have failed to deteriorate the crown's revenues. Although examples for an increasingly stringent coercion for payments might be found in scattered documents,⁵³ the surviving royal charters give no evidence of Sancho II having attempted reforms similar to his father. The fact that six different editions of the *d.* were minted to his name indicates that seigniorage and debasement were his major reactions to the decrease in his wealth revealed by the wills. Indeed, while Afonso II apparently made the right choices, politically weaker Sancho II mismanaged the recession of gold and resorted to the ultimately self-defeating expedient of debasing the coinage. This might have played a part in the dissent of the nobility which so powerfully contributed to the overthrowing of Sancho II.⁵⁴ At any rate, the difference in the values hoarded between Afonso II is coherent with these contrasting policies.

It comes as little surprise that unlike all his three predecessors, Afonso III did not mint gold coins under his name. In order to improve the metallic value of his revenue, Afonso III poured abundantly into circulation his 'new pence' (*dinheiros novos*), whose silver content was fortified (0.066 g) in relation to the previous currency (0.05 g) which saw its facial value decrease accordingly. This complex policy which will be analysed *infra* (see section 2.2) clearly inverted that of his brother and predecessor. By then, the apparent rarity of gold had given the mortal blow to the bimetallic system. The king recognised that the gold flow that characterised the wild days of the *Reconquista* was lost for good. Moving farther apart from regional tradition and recent past, Afonso III adopted

⁵³ Mainly those relating to the abuses over the Lisbon Jewry in the 1240s and to harsh fiscal demands imposed upon Coimbra in 1238-44. TT, Sé de Coimbra – Primeira Incorporação, maço 12, docs. 36 and 40; maço 13, doc. 12, 34 and 35. I thank Filipa Roldão for informing me about this latter set of documents.

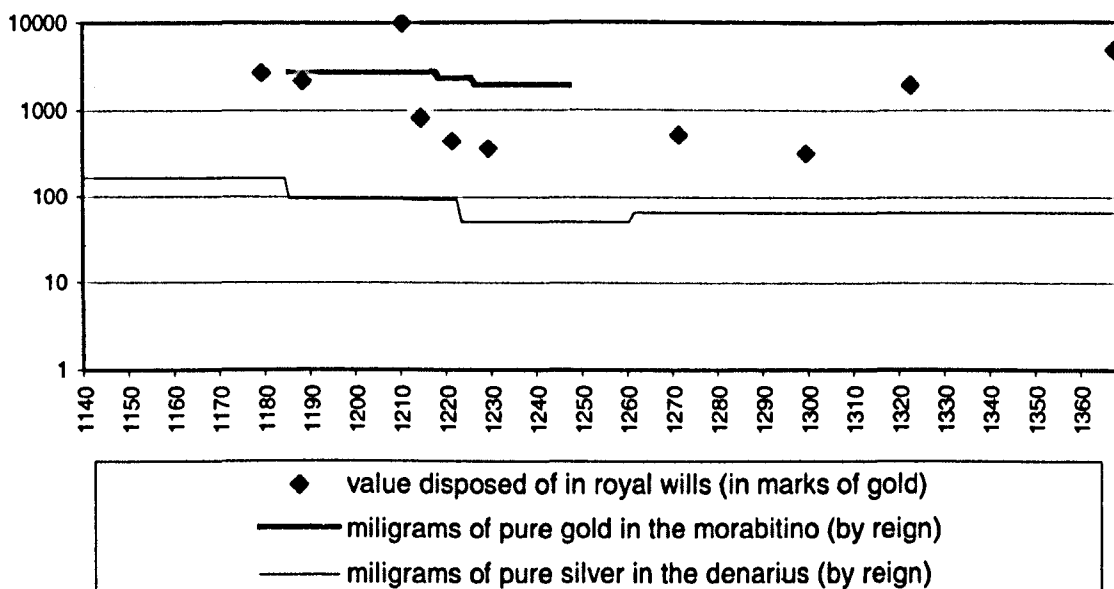
⁵⁴ Fernandes, *Sancho II*, p. 242.

the 'European' system of reckoning in *l. s.* and *d.* (the equivalent of pounds, shillings and pence). As the royal wills already hinted at, under Afonso III Portugal was entirely dissociated from the economic circuits dominated by the African gold. Henceforward, and up to 1457 at least, monetary decisions would affect simultaneously revenues and expenses.

Section 1.3 - Decreasing Revenues or Mounting Expenses?

The combined representation of the value of royal wills and metal contents in the regnal coinages in Fig. 3 shows that the slump in the royal treasuries of Afonso II (1211–23), Sancho II (1223–48) and Afonso III (1248-79) was paralleled by the weakening of both coinages. Conversely, the recovery of the latter by king Dinis (1279-1325) was accomplished after a long period without changes in the silver currency. At first sight, this suggests that the whole process could be described as a crisis of revenues, aggravated by monetary deficiencies. The incapacity to accumulate assets revealed by the wills dated between 1214 and 1299 can be interpreted as reflections of decreasing revenues, while coinage suggest that the strains undergone by Afonso II and Sancho II were also related with expenditure. Is this broad description coherent with other, less systematic sources?

Fig. 3 – Disposable wealth and intrinsic value of coinage, 1140-1368 (logarithmic scale)



Sources: Fig. 1 and 2.

If near-permanent war of attrition with the Muslim powers supplied the royal treasury, the collection of revenues within the borders of the realm also depended on some form of coercion and/or arbitrariness. On his deathbed, Sancho I sent to the municipality of Lisbon promising not to force again the tolls' personnel to tax-farm the sources of revenue as he had done throughout his lifetime.⁵⁵ Days later, Sancho I solemnly promised to the men of Lisbon that he renounced the collection of taxes he imposed on trade and abusive extraordinary demands (*pedidas*).⁵⁶ He exacted from the church of the realm prerogative, informal contributions with the pretext of defending the frontier.⁵⁷ Moreover, like their Leonese and Castilian neighbours, Afonso I and Sancho I exploited their minting prerogatives by issuing debased bullion (Fig. 2), a device which could not fail to boost their incomes at least temporarily. The itinerancy of the first monarchs with their highly mobile retinues⁵⁸ was also the pretext for abusive exactions from villages, towns and monasteries.⁵⁹ Indeed, throughout the country stood an ancient but well-oiled logistical system at the service of the peripatetic kings, securing their living and the upkeep of their households without the intervention of money.⁶⁰ Itinerancy allowed twelfth- and early thirteenth-century kings and their retinues to live off the country and spared the monetary costs of a standing court. Under Sancho I royal visits were an integral part to his rule.⁶¹

The diversity of more or less forceful means to which Sancho I resorted testifies how arbitrary exercise of power contributed to increase royal treasuries. After all, this voracious and unchecked exploitation of the resources of the realm matched the accumulation of riches by means of war. The concept of 'tribute state' reflects both what happened within and without the borders of the

⁵⁵ DS, doc. 195, pp. 301-2.

⁵⁶ DS, doc. 196, pp. 302-3.

⁵⁷ Branco, Maria-João, *D. Sancho I*, Lisbon, 2006, p. 171.

⁵⁸ On the royal visit, see Gonçalves, Iria, 'Alguns aspectos da visita régia ao entre Cávado e Minho, no século XIII,' *Estudos Medievais*, n. 10, Porto, 1993, pp. 33-57.

⁵⁹ TT, Chanc. Afonso II, Livro 1, fol. 42v (Monastery of Mancelos in 1219); TT, Gaveta IX, maço 10, doc. 27 (Monastery of Santa Cruz, undated).

⁶⁰ By 1258, this logistics was still operative and the minute obligations and services that a royal stay implied were well remembered by the elders, as royal enquiries amply testify for the regions with better hunting grounds. Gonçalves, 'Alguns aspectos,' pp. 33-57.

⁶¹ Branco, *D. Sancho I*, pp. 115-6, 175-80, 212-4; Vilar, Herminia Vasconcelos, *D. Afonso II*, Lisbon, 2005, p. 254.

regnum. Coercion, more or less declared, was integral to the finances of the state.⁶² Conversely, there are unsystematic but coherent indications that the autocratic rule of Sancho I largely attenuated under his less forceful son. This orientation, which was already felt in the dying days of his father, materialised in the founding moment of his reign, the assembly of 1211, where his famous General Laws were issued.⁶³ As Maria-João Branco has pointed out, much against the dominant current notion of Afonso II as a precursor of the Portuguese centralisation, the General Laws of 1211 stand for an attempt to circumscribe the powers of the monarch.⁶⁴ In fiscal terms, as Branco noted, the laws, namely those securing private ownership from the assaults of royal officers and forbidding the confiscation of salvaged goods by the monarchy, protected the economic life of the kingdom.⁶⁵

Instead of the voracity displayed by his father, Afonso II attempted to develop a system of collecting royal dues guided by regular procedures and dependant on regular recording, in ways unknown to autocratic Sancho I. References to the *De Recabedo Regni* books, which constituted the basis for auditing of the royal officers, and to the *Libri Repositi* which recorded what entered and left the royal treasuries, appear in 1216. In the same year, Afonso II issued a regulation of the household logistics alluding to the punishment of dishonest officers.⁶⁶ In 1220 he organised a wide enquiry on the state of the royal domain, the *Inquisitiones*. Finally, in 1222 Afonso II issued two more statutes concerning punishment of deceitful officers and the auditing based upon the *Recabedo* books.⁶⁷ The developments did not stop in his reign. Recently, research by Filipa Roldão has shown that that in the 1230s debt-

⁶² Interestingly, the charters of Sancho I employed the term *fiscus* to denote his judicial as well as tributary authority. Branco, *D. Sancho I*, p. 173.

⁶³ On these Laws in English, Branco, Maria-João, 'The General Laws of Afonso II and his policy of "centralisation": a reassessment', in Gosman, Vanderjagt, A. and Veenstra, J., eds., *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West*, Groningen, 1997, pp. 79-95.

⁶⁴ Branco, 'The General Laws,' pp. 86-7. On the historiography on Afonso II as the pioneer of 'centralisation', see Vilar, *D. Afonso II*, p. 254.

⁶⁵ Branco, 'The General Laws', p. 87. The relevance of constitutional protection of property rights is obviously a major theme in recent developments in Economic History. North, Douglass C. and Weingast, Barry R., 'Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutional Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England,' *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 49, n. 4, Dec. 1989, pp. 803-832.

⁶⁶ TT, Chanc. Afonso III, livro 3, fols. 7v-8.

⁶⁷ TT, Chanc. Afonso III, livro 3, fols. 8-8v; TT, Leis, Maço 1, doc. 12.

collecting was performed by two officers, the executing *almoxarife* and the controlling scribe, which had to observe set procedures.⁶⁸

These new institutes – the *Inquisitiones*, the *Libri De Recabedo*, the *Libri Repositi*, the control by a scribe – constituted innovations of Afonso II that set a pattern for the later fiscal recording of the Portuguese crown. However, they stand for an improvement of the management of his revenues, not for the creation of new sources of income to compensate the lost revenues. Apart from the declining tributary revenues, it is likely that moribund Sancho I's penance and promises of forbidding his ruthless exploitation affected the revenues of the kingdom. Similarly, the decision not to debase the coinage deprived Afonso II of short-term income. The values mentioned in King Afonso's last will (1221) indicate that his reforms were insufficient to claim back some of the opulence of his father. At any rate, by the end of his reign, the personal treasure of Afonso II had even fewer assets than in its early days and Sancho II did not invert this trend. Indeed, the situation seems to have deteriorated in his reign. A seemingly steady inflation⁶⁹ and the strong debasements of the *d.* by Sancho II cannot fail to have led to a decay of real income. A few charters granted to the municipalities in his reign state that their annual contributions expressed in golden *morabitanos* could be redeemed through payments in bullion (*morabitanadas*).⁷⁰ Even the farming of a wealthy centre like Santarém was estimated in silver coinage.⁷¹ Decaying revenues are also a plausible justification for Sancho II to alienate the king's right to the fifth of all plunder in the hands of the bishoprics.⁷²

For Gonçalves, Afonso III overcame the financial strains by the creation of new forms of revenue, in particular the general taxes of 1254, 1261 and the general loan of 1266. This claim, however, overestimates the importance of this taxation. Although the global proceeds of three general taxes are unknown, the

⁶⁸ Roldão, Filipa, *Escrita e Poderes Urbanos nos concelhos de Coimbra, Santarém e Lisboa*, Lisbon, 2007, pp. 104-173.

⁶⁹ Marques, 'A Circulação e a Troca,' pp. 521-522.

⁷⁰ e. g. SS, docs. 17 (1224).

⁷¹ This is inferred from the debt of '30,000 *maravedis* of 10 *s.*' owed by leading tax-farmer *Domnus Daniel* (TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 2, fol. 84v). As Maria-José Pimenta Ferro argued, *maravedis* of 10 *s.* were silver coins, possibly Muslim dirhams. Ferro, Maria José Pimenta, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Dinis', *Do Tempo e da História*, vol. V, 1972, pp. 206-9.

⁷² DR, 358, p. 483 (1185); TT, Chancelarias Régias, Chancelaria de D. Afonso II, Livro 1m fols. 76-76v (1218); SS, doc. 15, p.191 (1224).

existing indicators downplay the dimension of the income generated by such taxes. Two different sources document the contribution of three of the nine bishoprics of the realm to the tax of 1261 and the loan of Santarém in 1266. Together, Braga, Coimbra and Viseu paid about 990.5 marks of pure silver in bullion.⁷³ Dividing by the rate of 9:1 (to compare with the wills) this would mean around 108.5 marks of pure gold. In the 'loan' of 1266, the second centre of the reign (Santarém) paid only 10,000 *l.*,⁷⁴ equalling some 517 marks of pure silver.

Historians have long detected in the reigns of Afonso III and of his son determined and consequent attempts to increase the crown's revenues. Already in the 1290s, a contemporary Castilian author commented how Afonso III had 'amplified his revenues.'⁷⁵ Similarly, a text recovered in the *Crónica de Portugal de 1419* applauded Afonso III's 'strict regulation of his household and the realm and the keeping of his wealth in good array'.⁷⁶ Historians' appraisal was not essentially different, as they have unanimously hailed the reign of Afonso III (1248-79) as a decisive turning point in the construction of the Portuguese monarchy.⁷⁷ José Mattoso pointed to Afonso's systematic acquisition of urban property and to the tighter control of his officers as essential aspects of what he regarded as the 'triumph of the monarchy'.⁷⁸

From 1258 onwards, Afonso III developed a stop-and-go policy of systematic concentration of sets of coherent, contiguous patrimony, sometimes by sales, sometimes by more or less leonine 'agreements.' His focus was in the hottest property in the country: urban housing and shop stalls (mostly, though by no means exclusively, in Lisbon).⁷⁹ Abundant, if unsystematic, instruments of sale do not illustrate the strong degree of coercion these operations involved,

⁷³ *TAlII*, docs. 11-17, pp. 245-52. The calculations are as follow: 14,586 *l.* of Portuguese old *d.* * 240 * 0.05 g (Ag in Portuguese old *d.*) = 175032 g Ag. 2607 *l.* of Portuguese new *d.* * 180 * 0.066 g (Ag in Portuguese new *d.*) = 30971.16 g Ag. 3915 *l.* of Castilian coins + 278 *maravedis* of 16 *s.* = 82748 *sol.* *Burgaleses* * 0.2 g (pure Ag in *Burgaleses*) = 16549. 1217 *l.* of Legioneses *d.* + 134.5 *maravedis* of 8 *s.* = 25416 *sol.* *Burgaleses* * 0.2 g - 6 % (difference from legionenses to Castilian coinage) = 4778 g Ag

⁷⁴ *PEP*, p. 32.

⁷⁵ The words belong to Juan Gil de Zamora who wrote his *Liber Illustrarum personarum* to be read by prince Sancho (future Sancho IV) while he was active in the court of Alfonso X: 'he kept the realm in peace, amplified his revenues', fortified towns and castles, and the fear he inspired did refrain the Sarracen'. Ventura, *D. Afonso III*, p. 267.

⁷⁶ *Cr. 1419*, chapter 77, pp. 142-3.

⁷⁷ For an overview on the historiography of this king, see Ventura, Leontina, *D. Afonso III*, Lisbon, 2006, pp. 24-35.

⁷⁸ Mattoso, José, '1258-1264: O Triunfo da monarquia portuguesa. Ensaio de História Política,' *Análise Social*, vol. XXXV, n. 157, 2001, pp. 899-935.

⁷⁹ Mattoso, '1258-1264: O Triunfo,' p. 905. Ravara, António, 'Introdução ao Estudo da Propriedade Régia Urbana com D. Afonso III e D. Dinis,' *Ocidente. Revista Portuguesa de Cultura*, Nova Série, Vol. LXXXI, n. 400, 1971, pp. 99-104.

most of all in Lisbon.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the acquisition of urban houses proved to be a very profitable option in the long-run as contracts were not perpetual and thus could be improved for the landlord. Afonso III also tried to rationalise the management of his dispersed and encroachment-threatened lands in the North⁸¹ and ordered his representatives in Guimarães to recover lost lands.⁸² His goal was to convert the rents from kind to monetary and he tried to maximise his revenue by imposing a centralised municipal structure. By buying or building shop stalls and housing in the urban centres, by creating new settlements whose renders would be paid in cash, by alienating the custom duties in Porto from the hands of the local bishop,⁸³ and obviously by means of general taxes of 1254, 1261 and 1266, Afonso III deployed extensive efforts to tap the country's monetised economy.⁸⁴ Under Dinis I there were firm instructions to accrue the royal urban property on every possible occasion.⁸⁵ Later in his reign Dinis I continued to accrue the domain by turning his attention to the fertile, paddy wheat-fields of the Tagus which were subject to piecemeal acquisition from the end of the thirteenth-century onwards and were to be exploited directly by the king.⁸⁶

The success of these measures, in turn, would only be possible thanks to the stability of the coinage. Indeed, the establishment of a stable coinage was perhaps the most important achievement of Afonso III. Although, as it will be clarified, the king's plans were significantly changed by strong opposition, the monetary policy of Afonso III, which Dinis I did not alter, seems to have been guided by the reinforcement of the coinage (see *supra* chapter 2).

In spite of the vast transformations undertaken in the second half of the thirteenth-century, the assets hoarded by Afonso III and Dinis in 1271 and 1299 were modest and not essentially different from that of Sancho II in 1226. This

⁸⁰ In Lisbon, the king appropriated many public spaces to construct his houses, depriving the inhabitants of some facilities and markets. This is stated by the municipality of Lisbon in an open assembly with King Dinis, six years soon after Afonso III's death. TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 1, fol. 163v-65. In 1261, the king commanded the council of Lisbon to force men into dwelling in his shops. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 49v.

⁸¹ Some examples: Henriques, *O Rei e a Terra*, vol. I, pp. 133-8; Ventura, *A Nobreza de Corte*, vol. I, p. 506.

⁸² TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fols. 60v (1259), 79v, 79vbis and 79vbisbis (1265).

⁸³ TT, Gaveta I, maço 1, doc. 15.

⁸⁴ Mattoso, *História de Portugal*, pp. 119-121.

⁸⁵ Ravara, 'Introdução à Propriedade,' p. 103.

⁸⁶ Even if this did not exclude pressure as it is clear from some individual cases, as it is clear in some letters of acquisition included in Afonso III's chancery. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 49v and Livro 3, fols. 16-23v.

circumstance points to expenditure as the reason behind the incapacity to accumulate shown by Afonso II and his successors.

In 1210 Sancho I bequeathed to his elder son alone 200,000 *morabitanos* but in 1214 the royal treasury had no more than 78,000. For all his abundance, Sancho I had left arrears, such as 56 marks of gold owed to the Papacy.⁸⁷ The charters of Afonso II include a considerable number of aids in monies provided to the bishoprics, either by assignments or by one-off gifts. In one of them, Afonso II explicitly mentions that he was succouring the See of Braga in 'time of material hardship'.⁸⁸ Just like with Afonso II, the early phase of Sancho II's reign was marked by sudden expenses. A deathbed agreement of Afonso II with his sisters had meant that the sizeable frontier towns of Alenquer, Montemor and Torres Vedras were assigned to them.⁸⁹ As Sancho II's testament of 1226 makes clear, his father had left insufficient monies to clear his late bequests, of which some 16,000 *morabitanos* were still owed.⁹⁰ In 1223, his very first regnal year, still during his minority Sancho II was forced to pay to the Archbishop of Braga and other lords a heavy indemnity of 50,000 *morabitanos*,⁹¹ a sum which closely matches the whole of his father's bequests to him in 1221.

Under Afonso III expenses appear to have been kept at a high level. To put in perspective the sums bequeathed in testament and got from taxation, there is a rough indication of regular household expenditure in the summarised account for the royal maintenance between October 1257 and July 1270.⁹² Maintenance (*cozinha*) was the name for the logistics and supply of the permanent courtiers, hangers-on and visitors.⁹³ Considering the amounts handled by its receiver, this worked as an important form of redistribution. In those fourteen years, the audited officer 'obtained and delivered' 135,231 *l.* in

⁸⁷ *MH*, I, pp. 50-51 (doc. 27).

⁸⁸ To Évora, in 1214 (Arquivo Catedralício da Sé de Evora, CEC 3-III, doc. 90) and in 1221 (TT, Gaveta I, maço 7, doc. 15). To the Santa Cruz monastery in 1214 (TT, Sé de Coimbra, DR, maço 2, doc. 44.). To Braga, twice in 1218 (*Liber Fidei*, III, pp. 313-314 and ADB, *Coleção Cronológica*, Pasta 1, doc. 29; Caixa 2, doc. 26). In the latter of these, the 'economic hardships' of the episcopal see are expressly mentioned as the reason for the gift. I thank Maria João Branco for accessing me her unpublished calendar of Afonso II's charters.

⁸⁹ The latter was valued at 4,000 *morabitanos*. Fernandes, *D. Sancho II*, p. 101.

⁹⁰ *SS*, doc.15, p. 191.

⁹¹ Fernandes, *Sancho II*, p. 109.

⁹² Document in Ribeiro, João Pedro, *Dissertações Chronologicas e Criticas Sobre a Historia e Jurisprudência Ecclesiastica e Civil de Portugal*, vol. III, 2nd part, 2nd ed., Lisbon 1857, doc. XXX, p. 86-7.

⁹³ The explanation for the word *cozinha* is found in 1599 chronicle: *E havia um livro em que se assentavão que se chamava da cozinha o qual de pouco tempo para cá se chamou da matrícula nelle se escrevia toda a despesa que se fazia e as pessoas a que se dava a moradia*. Leão, Duarte Nunes do, *Descrição do Reino de Portugal*, Lisbon, 2002, chapter. LXXXVI, p. 277.

cash, apart from dairy and livestock. In metallic terms, this equals some 462 marks of silver. More impressive is the information about the revenues assigned to the household of Prince Dinis which amounted for 40,000 *l.* each year from 1278,⁹⁴ some 2,068 marks of pure silver.

Nevertheless, the most important evidence is the reckoning of the liquid income entering the treasury in the years 1278–80 in the letter of quittance of the high-treasurer Vicente Martins.⁹⁵ This source states clearly that these were ‘monies and valuables received and then spent.’⁹⁶ As the document combines nineteen European and North African currencies, besides gold dust, silver bars and silverware, coinages are reduced to their silver content, making accounts easier (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 – Receipt of the High-treasurer, 1278-80

| Coins and/or commodities | Marks of pure Ag | Marks of pure Au |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| 300,561 <i>l.</i> , 4 <i>s.</i> , 6.5 <i>d.</i> of coins and commodities expressed in Portuguese currency | 15,563 | - |
| 3870 <i>l.</i> , 12 <i>s.</i> of Leonese currency | 372 | - |
| 7083 Gros Tournois | 129 | - |
| 125 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> Tournois | 7 [^] | - |
| Other European silver currencies | 80 [*] | - |
| Silverware | 71 | - |
| Silver in bars | 4 | - |
| Gold dust | - | 0.23 |
| Muslim and Castilian golden currencies | - | 14 |
| Total | 16,226 | 14.23 |

Note: *-conversions indicated by the source; ^-conversion based in exchange rates, not intrinsic value.

Source: *Descr.*, doc. 8, p. 345; Pellicer I Brur, *Reportorio Metrologico*, p. 128; Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, pp. 156, 157, 184.

This letter of quittance allows for a new perspective on the declining curve of the sums bequeathed in the royal wills. Using the same conversion rate for the royal wills (*9.1), the total 16,226 marks of silver obtained are equivalent to 2,136 marks of gold, a metallic value comparable to the late twelfth-century

⁹⁴ 'Inventário e Contas da Casa de D. Denis (1278-1282)' ed. Anselmo Brancaamp Freire, *AHP*, vol. X, Lisbon, 1916, p. 41.

⁹⁵ *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 8, p. 345.

⁹⁶ *De omnibus illis que ipse [thesaurarius] de me et de omnibus allis loco et nomine meo recepit, et de omnibus illis que dedit et expendit per meas cartas et per meum mandatum.*

testaments. True, there is a crucial difference: gold, whether in bar or in coinage, is almost absent, accounting for a mere 14.23 marks, 1.5 % of the value entering the treasure in 1278-80. This difference confirms that the finances of the monarchy were founded on a silver-fuelled economy, in contrast with the gold hoardings of Afonso I and Sancho I. The receipt of the treasurer shows that 95% of the silver entering the royal treasury came minted in Portuguese coins. The crown drew its resources from the internal economy.

Anyway, at least apparently, the prosperity of the first kings had been restored, albeit if with alternative means and possibly with a smaller purchasing power. In the time between 1185 and 1188, the treasury had received more than the lifetime accumulation of Afonso I. Unless we assume that expenditure took away most of the resources, it would be extremely problematic to reconcile the bulky two-year proceeds of the treasury with the mere 69,400 *l.* bequeathed by Afonso III in 1271 (some 3,600 silver marks). Although the crown had a high cash-flow, it retained only a small fraction of it.

The incapacity to hoard was only inverted between 1299 and 1322. The latter date is that of the second will of King Dinis whose 350,000 *l.* are, when converted to marks of gold (Fig. 1), roughly equivalent to the wills of 1179 and 1188. Thus, the will of 1322, marks the recuperation of the accumulative capacity of the monarchy.⁹⁷ The wealth disposed by Pedro I at his death confirms the fact that monarchs managed to slowly but surely accumulate value at the rate of 9,000 *l.* (the equivalent to 51 marks of gold in the measure used). However, it reveals more than a return to the past. Previous royal wills show how the accession to the throne could be a occasion for some material weakness. The movables were freely disposed by the monarch, the heir to the throne receiving his share as a son and not as a king. This practice clearly hindered the capacity to accumulate at least until 1322. The will of 1322 marks indeed the end of the king's prerogative of disposing of his treasuries. In his last will, King Dinis clearly distinguished the sums to be parted among his wife, descendants and religious institutions from those that should remain in the Lisbon treasure to be used 'for the defence of the kingdom and war against the

⁹⁷ The terms will of 1324 confirms that the 350,000 *l.* constituted a treasury that could not be spent. *Provas*, vol. I, part 2, doc. 11, p. 130. Dinis' grandson Pedro I bequeathed the same value in 1367. Ferro, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Fernando,' pp. 9-10.

enemies to the faith'.⁹⁸ Henceforward, hoarding was part of the royal duty and future war the justification for the existence of a system of revenue collection and the kings would no longer make monetary bequests of their wealth in their wills.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ '*Pera defendimento dos regnos de Portugal e do Algarve ou no servisso de Deos contra os imigos da Fe.*' *Provas*, vol. 1, part 2, doc. 11, p. 130.

⁹⁹ Note however that the will of Pedro I includes some bequests. Ferro, '*Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Fernando*,' p. 10, note 22.

Chapter 2 - A Fiscal Constitution

This chapter will address the political limitations and opportunities that defined the monarchy's capacity to translate its political authority in taxation both in its hidden (debasement) and conventional (by legitimate general taxes) forms. This will be done by importing the concept of fiscal constitution from economic analysis. Section 2.1 will discuss this concept, while following sections will test whether fiscal-constitutional principles limited royal power to manipulate the currency (section 2.2) and to impose taxes (section 2.3).

Section 2.1 'Fiscal Constitution' as a Historical Concept

The concept of 'Fiscal Constitution' was advanced by economic theorists Geoffrey Brennan and James Buchanan, soon after the 1978 'tax revolts' in California.¹ Their goal was to identify which limitations on the state's taxing and spending powers a 'rational citizen/taxpayer' should chose. The two economists departed from the assumption that, for all its protests of moral, benevolent intentions, the state is by definition expansive and revenue-maximising. Thus, they dismissed all claims of self-regulation on behalf of the state as intrinsically impossible.² For these reasons, Brennan and Buchannan considered that non-governmental entities had to present a set of rules in order to 'limit and appropriately direct [...] the power to tax' and institutions to impose them.³ Such 'fiscal constitution' would be analogous to the 'game rules' which players agree on before actually playing. After accepting the regulation, the players would be free to chose whatever 'strategies', or 'in-period choices' in their terminology, suited them better, as long as it was in accordance with the rules. The distinction between constitutional design of and concrete decision-making would assure that the constitution would be formulated without anticipated knowledge of the individuals' position. The two authors also pledged that there

¹ Brennan, G. and Buchanan, J. M., *The Power to Tax. Analytical Foundations of a Fiscal Constitution*, Cambridge, 1980.

² Brennan and Buchanan, *The Power to Tax*, p. 163.

³ Brennan and Buchanan, *The Power to Tax*, p. 9.

should be effective rules whose observance would be assured by a non-governmental watchdog with the means to control the government's decisions.⁴

Brennan and Buchanan were obviously concerned with contemporary politics and constitutional systems rather than with modelling fiscal experiences of the past. Yet, although their goal was to intervene in the current fiscal policies and their financial analysis bore on contemporary democratic governments, the relevance of the concept of 'fiscal constitution' for the historians' descriptive analysis was recognised by R. Bonney and W. M. Ormrod.⁵ The term 'fiscal constitution' however had to be understood in a broader way. Indeed, a crucial aspect of applying the notion of 'fiscal constitution' in long-term historical analysis is that it assigns no room for changes of ideology or discourse. By definition, the rational *homo oeconomicus* of Brennan and Buchanan would be unsusceptible to ideological propaganda and persuasion. Thus, as seen by Bonney and Ormrod, rather than normative principles applied to fiscal decision-making, the concept of 'fiscal constitution' would be the balance between the principles, practices and attitudes of rulers and ruled concerning state finances.⁶ Thus, each state, be it 'domain', 'tribute', 'tax' or 'fiscal' state, would have its fiscal constitution. Yet, such a vast, structural understanding of fiscal constitution is methodologically unworkable within concrete historical settings and does not help in distinguishing their specificities. In the present context, it is more important to simply ask whether any sort of fiscal constitution functioned in the times of the 'old kings' that is to say under the 'domain state.'

Brennan and Buchanan's idealised fiscal constitution has to be thought of in different terms in order that their plea for political reform can be used as a historiographical model. This implies three precise adjustments:

- 1) contracts between rulers and ruled and customary norms limiting royal prerogatives should be included in the category of constitutional 'rules', although in legal technical terms they might not be. What ought to define a constitution is the

⁴ Brennan and Buchanan, *The Power to Tax*, p. 5-7.

⁵ Bonney, Richard, 'Revenues', *ESF*, pp. 431-4. Bonney, Richard, 'Introduction', *RSF*, pp. 6-7. Bonney and Ormrod, 'Crisis, Revolutions and Self-sustained Growth: Towards a conceptual model of change in Fiscal History', *Crisis*, pp. 1-3.

⁶ Bonney and Ormrod, 'Crisis, revolutions,' pp. 1-3.

existence of explicit principles effectively restraining the fiscal powers of the state;

- 2) In the context of thirteenth-century and fourteenth-century Europe, any hypothetical 'fiscal constitution' sets not only the rate and type of taxation but also its very implementation, as universal taxes were for the most extraordinary. As such, the notion of 'taxpayer' ought to include 'potential taxpayers';
- 3) The institution responsible for fiscal constitutional decisions needs not to have been a permanent one.

In spite of these adjustments, the model retains its fundamental assumption: as they are by definition incapable of self-restraint, fiscal powers can only be checked through external control. The effective regulation takes the form of principles distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate in-period decisions. By no means discourse, 'mentality' or the king's goodwill are to be taken for effective constitutional mechanisms.

In the case here concerned, it can be argued that the basis of a fiscal constitution emerged in the 1250s and 1260s and was observed until it was disrupted by the rule of war-weary King Fernando. In fact, this constitution did never manifest itself more clearly than during the Fernandine Wars. When the constitutional principles were challenged by Fernando's military ventures, they emerged with great clarity in the discourse of the *Povos*, the municipal towns' representatives in the Portuguese parliamentary institution, the *Cortes*.

Section 2.2 - The Monetary Constitution

In the immediate aftermath of the First Fernandine War – ended by the Peace of Alcoutim, signed on 31 March 1371 - Fernando I summoned the *Cortes* to be held in Lisbon four months later.⁷ Their purported aim was to 'set straight and improve the condition and order of these realms'.⁸ The declared benign intentions hint that the summoning of the *Cortes* was a response to the

⁷ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 14.

⁸ '*Corregger e melhorar o estado e regimento destes reinos*'. See *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 15. On the same *Cortes*, see also Marques, A. H. de O., 'Lisboa, Cortes de (1371)', *DHP*, vol. 4, pp. 8-9.

criticism of Fernando's minting of two new species of bullion with a thin silver value and poor leadership in war, the latter ripe and loud enough to echo in the later chronicles.⁹ In one reply to an article of grievance, the king explicitly declared that he sought to reach some form of agreement with the *Cortes* concerning the notorious debasements he had perpetrated during the war.¹⁰ The possibility that by holding *Cortes* the king was procuring a general tax to finance a fresh offensive against Castile can not be totally excluded either.¹¹

Whatever the precise reasons behind the summons and the particular agendas of the two parts, the representatives of the municipalities seized these *Cortes* to voice before the defeated king the grievances accumulated in two years of war. As in customary fourteenth-century practice, these 'general' (as opposed to 'special' or municipal) grievances were presented in a written list of articles drafted before the actual talks took place.¹² Most concern practical cases and bring forward concrete solutions but, for all their apparent casuistic stance, the grievances of 1371 and 1372 present a remarkably coherent argumentation. Often, the municipal representatives resort to principles which, they claimed, were those observed by the 'kings of old'.¹³

In the very first of the articles of 1371, the municipal representatives declared that no substitution of coinage could ever be performed without their consent. They alleged that the recent introduction of new, strongly debased silver coins, the *grave* and the *barbuda*, was in flagrant opposition to what 'had been sworn and conceded by the late kings in their names and in the names of their successors'.¹⁴ Indeed, the face values of the four coin types minted by Fernando I during the war (Fig. 5) were at odds with the relation between facial

⁹ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XXXVI, p. 119.

¹⁰ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 16.

¹¹ This very reason caused two meetings to take place shortly afterwards in Porto (July 1372) and Leiria (October-November 1372). The generic justification given by the king could have been a decoy for a thoroughly financial request. In the 1372 *Cortes* of Leiria, where a general tax was requested, the summoning letters did not mention anything but similarly amenable intentions. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 123. On these two *Cortes*, see Marques, A. H. de Oliveira, 'Leiria, Cortes de (1372)', *DHP*, vol. 3, pp. 451-2 and Rodrigues, Maria Teresa Campos, 'Porto, Cortes de (1372)' *DHP*, vol. 5, p. 127.

¹² The original document does not exist. As often happens with Portuguese parliamentary records, the questions subsist together with the king's answers and thus are phrased with the king as subject and the *Povos* as indirect object.

¹³ 'Os reis que dante foram/os reis dante vos'. This evocation of the older kings' practices is central to the argumentative strategy in many other grievances (1st, 23rd, 29th, 31st, 35th, 93rd, 97th, 101st). *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, pp. 16, 26, 28, 29, 32, 60-3.

¹⁴ 'Aquilo que pelos Reis dante nos foi outorgado e prometido por sij e por os seus soçesors de se guardar.' *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 16 (article 1st).

and intrinsic value of the dominant currency for generations (the 'new pence' or *dinheiros novos*).¹⁵ The evils associated with such a decision were detailed. The dearth caused by such an abrupt change in the intrinsic value was made even worse by the war situation. Indeed, price inflation had widened liability to non-noble military service which, as in England, was graduated according to annual income expressed in nominal, not metallic, terms. Thus, in some districts the holders of an income of 500 *l.* had to render mounted service, even if the sum was insufficient to buy a horse. The growth of real salaries, the difficulties in the execution of wills and price-settings ruinous for the vendors also constituted targets of the complaints. In face of such dire consequences, the representatives, as 'citizens and natives' (*cidadãos e naturais*), demanded not only that Fernando I abide by what the old kings had 'prescribed' (*ordinhado*), but also that the persons who brought their old *d.* to the mint should have them back, regardless of the costs this operation would entail for the monarch.¹⁶

As mentioned, the king declared that he was seeking an agreement with the *Povos* regarding coinage in the *Cortes*.¹⁷ While there is no further indication about that agreement, nominal values of the much-maligned *barbudas* and *graves* were indeed reduced after the *Cortes* of Lisbon. Although the reduction fell short of what the *Povos* demanded (Fig. 5), it is possible that it arose of that elusive agreement.¹⁸ Nonetheless, soon Fernando's wilful policy against Castile would result in yet other change in the Portuguese monetary system. In mid 1372, probably in May or June, Fernando I resumed his monetary experiments by minting yet another new type of bullion with excessive nominal value - the *coroados* - and by enforcing its use through a price regulation.¹⁹ Again, Fernando I, hard-pressed as he possibly was by open discontent and strife,²⁰ summoned the *Cortes*. This time the summons explicitly claimed that the goal of the

¹⁵ On these coinage experiments, *HMMP*, pp. 87-103.

¹⁶ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 16 (article 1st).

¹⁷ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p.16 (article 1st).

¹⁸ Maria José Pimenta Ferro claims that this resulted from the agreement (Ferro, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Fernando I,' p. 23). However, if this debasement resulted from an agreement, it probably would not have been censured by the *Povos* as it was in the Porto *Cortes* of 1372. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 83. On the timings of Fernando minting operations, see *HMMP*, pp. 172-175 and Figure 5, *infra* p. 34.

¹⁹ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 82.

²⁰ The possibility that the king was forced to do so by violent opposition can not be entirely eliminated either. Ferro, Maria José Pimenta, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Fernando,' p. 32. However, the chronology of the peasant revolts in 1371-4 is very imperfectly known. Oliveira Marques was inconclusive, while Rita Costa Gomes distinguished two different bursts in late 1371 and other in the mid 1373. Marques, A. H. de Oliveira, *Portugal na Crise do Século XIV*, Lisbon, 1987, pp. 516-8; Gomes, Rita Costa, *D. Fernando I*, Lisbon, 2005, pp. 272 and 274.

assembly was to deal with 'coins and price-setting'.²¹ Apparently, by summoning the *Povos* Fernando I aimed at yet other *post-factum* consent for his fresh monetary alteration.²² Just like the coins issued for the First Fernandine War, this represented a purely prerogative decision, made without prior consultation from the *Cortes*.²³

The minting of the metal-depleted *coroados* flew in the face of the *Povos'* views on the king's minting rights. In the *Cortes* of Porto/1372 the claims for illegitimacy of minting by the *Povos* was re-asserted in still louder terms.²⁴ These alterations, the municipal proctors roared, were opposed to what had been 'ordained between the kings of the ancient times and the *Povos'*.²⁵ This time the *Povos* even dared to specify concrete rules: only *dinheiros novos* could be issued and only in the quantity produced by one pair of furnaces during one year. The plea to return to the standard of the traditional tender was renewed even more vigorously in the *Cortes* of Porto/1372.²⁶ The monarch proved more amenable, although not entirely compliant. He consented in the abolition of the price-setting which was implemented together with the infamous *coroados*.²⁷

²¹ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 81. The date for the summons is unknown.

²² However, given that the surviving version for the summons is undated, the sequence of the decision process remains extremely blurred: was the new coinage minted before or after the summons? Hypothetically, the minting took place whilst the municipalities were preparing their parliamentary commissions. In any case, textual evidence hints at, but is no proof of, an issuing of the *coroados* before the *Cortes*. In the text of the *Cortes*, Fernando I answers to the complaint about the new coinage claiming that he had addressed the matter 'through a separate letter' (*per carta apartada*) to the towns. This can either mean a letter 'separate from the summons' or a document issued in the *Cortes* in the letter-emission sessions directed to the municipalities that preceded the written answers to the articles (for instance, *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 83). This agrees with the answer to the third grievance which refers to the 'letters taken by the municipalities' (*Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 85).

²³ Gomes Marques claims that the change was already under place by May or June 1372, thus a few weeks before the *Cortes* but presumably after the issuing summons. *HMMP*, p. 173. To make things more complicated, the idea that Fernando I summoned the *Cortes* in order to use his recent coinage to bargain for support in other projects, namely for a general tax for the new attack on Castile which he was already envisaging in the Spring of 1372, cannot be discarded. However, both the summons and the date of the negotiations prior to the treaty of Tagilde between Fernando I and John of Gaunt are unknown. Russell, P. E., *The English intervention in Spain and Portugal in the time of Edward III & Richard II*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 186-203. Gomes, *D. Fernando*, p. 101.

²⁴ 'Per razam da moeda que per nos foi ffecta e da almotaçaria.' *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 81.

²⁵ See article 27 of 1371 (*Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, pp. 27-28) and article 2 of 1372 (*Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 83). Also, *HMMP*, pp. 101-5.

²⁶ The minting of the *coroados* was unanimously received with hostility. This time, however, the critiques took two, markedly contradictory, arguments. According to most of the municipalities, the solution found by Fernando I had not addressed the fundamental problem - the disproportionately high facial value - for which the only solution was a return to the old *dinheiros novos*. Yet, the grievance voices two hitherto unheard interest groups: those who had acquired a stronger purchasing power by selling their silver to the mint and receiving new coinage and the mercantile cities, namely Lisbon and four border towns. For these, weak coinage was beneficial for the acquisition of imports, most of all from Castile, which had an even thinner currency. As such, they put forward an alternative: the fiddling of the *coroados'* alloy with the face values of Fernando's older bullions as adjusted between the two *Cortes*. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 82 (articles 1 and 2 of the *Cortes* of Porto/1372).

²⁷ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 85 (3rd article).

Moreover, King Fernando approximated the three new currencies' nominal values to the standard of the 'kings of old' and harmonised them (Fig. 5). The return to the old standard by means of nominal depreciation would be Fernando's fourth and last monetary intervention.

Fig. 5 – Bullion Currency of Fernando I, 1370-2

| | COINS: | Dinheiro novo | Barbuda | Grave | Coroado |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Silver content (grams): | 0.056 | 1.08 | 0.51 | 0.25 |
| Pre-war | Nominal value | 1.(3) <i>d.</i> | - | - | - |
| | g Ag per s. | 0.504 | - | - | - |
| First War Coinage Between Jul. 1369 and the <i>Cortes</i> of Lisbon (Aug. 1371) | Nominal value (in s.) | - | 20 | 15 | - |
| | g Ag per s. | - | 0.054 | 0.034 | |
| Post-war Adjustment and Introduction of the <i>coroado</i> Between Apr. 1371 and the <i>Cortes</i> of Porto (Jul., 1372) ²⁸ | Nominal value (in s.) | - | 14 | 7 | 5 |
| | g Ag per s. | - | 0.077 | 0.072 | 0.05 |
| Final adjustment 13 Jul. 1372 | Nominal value (in s.) | - | 2.33 | 1.16 | 0.58 |
| | g Ag per s. | | 0.462 | 0.437 | 0.428 |

Source: *HMMP*, pp. 91-106, 169-182; *Cort. Fernando*, I, pp. 16,31-2, 81-4; Ferro, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Fernando,' pp. 18-26.

What does the *Cortes* met during the monetary changes of 1370-2 reveal about the fiscal constitution? The strong debasements during the war and before the *Cortes* of Porto/1372 make clear that under King Fernando the crown was able to pursue a minting policy unhindered by constitutional limits. The criticism of the *Povos*, however strong and coherent, was only a reaction to

²⁸ Gomes Marques thinks that the creation of the *coroado* took place before the reduction of the nominal value of the *barbudas* and *graves*, as the *coroado* would represent a return to debased coinage in full contrast with Fernando's policy after the peace treaty of Alcoutim. However in the spring of 1372, Fernando was already scheming a fresh offensive against Castile and the *coroado* could have been another war coinage. Russell, *The English intervention*, pp. 186-203. Gomes, *D. Fernando*, p. 101.

done deals which no constitutional mechanism halted.²⁹ Although they invoked at least one rule of the hypothetical fiscal constitution – the prohibition of debasing coinage –, no legal or institutional mechanism preventing unconstitutional in-period decisions was present. Considering the concept above presented, it can be said that no fiscal constitution existed. Naturally, consent by the *Cortes* cannot be regarded as a constitutional mechanism, given that the *Cortes* had to be summoned by the monarch and, worse still, in 1371 and 1372 met *post-factum*.³⁰ Moreover, the *Povos* agreed to negotiate the principles they defended. Capable of alleging the principle but incapable of enforcing it, the municipal representatives ended up by negotiating with the king and eventually reaching a settlement.³¹ The situation of 1371-2 certainly seems at odds with the notion of a constitution: rulers could circumvent the principles without opposition and taxpayers regarded constitutional rules as negotiable.

Parliamentary opposition was made stronger by widespread social unrest but it voiced a coherent argumentation rested on limitations on the monarch's effective minting powers. Apparently, rules for a fiscal, or at least monetary, constitution existed. Central in the *Povos* argumentation about coinage is the idea that King Fernando's actions disrupted the constitutional order that had existed under the 'ancient kings'. This was asserted clearly in the *Cortes* of Porto/1372 when the *Povos* claimed that alteration in the alloy of the coinage by the monarchy was a matter of consent by the *Cortes*; it was a plain legal prohibition for the king resorting to the mint. According to the *Povos* this prohibition had been prescribed by the kings of old and, as claimed by the proctors of 1372, even included technical specifications: no more than two furnaces during one year and the standard was that of the *dinheiro novo*. How far did this argument emerge from the effective practices of the 'kings of old'?

Surprisingly, the allegation made by the municipal deputies to the *Cortes* that the 'old kings' bound themselves and their descendants to preserve the standard of the coinage was not a simple idealization of the past. The position

²⁹ Marcelo Caetano argued that the discourse of the *Cortes* of Leiria/1372 showed 'the consciousness that the king's power is limited by the obligation to listen to the *Cortes* in some cases and when debasing the coinage he has to require the consent of the *Cortes*' cit. in. Marques, A. H. de Oliveira, 'Leiria, Cortes de (1372)' *DHP*, vol. 3, p. 452. Yet, as we have seen, Fernando acted with little consideration for this alleged 'limit'.

³⁰ According to the leading legal historians, *Cortes* could not summon themselves nor be summoned by other than the king, despite two well-known exceptions. Sousa, Armindo de, *As Cortes Medievais Portuguesas (1385-1490)* vol. I, Porto, 1990, pp. 87-88.

³¹ In terms of silver weight, the diminution was very close to the subtle devaluation of Dinis. *HMMP*, pp. 167-8.

of the *Povos* in 1371 and 1372 was directly inspired by the constitutional settlements reached under Afonso III (1248–79). The allegation in the 1372 Porto *Cortes* that the minting output had been limited to the work of two furnaces in one year by the ancient kings is taken from a statute issued by Afonso III in the *Cortes* of Guimarães (April 1261). Similarly, the 'oath' to conserve the standards of the coinage mentioned in 1371 as having been taken by one of the ancient kings in his name and in name of his successors can easily be identified with the oath made by Afonso III before the prelates of the realm in March 1255.³² However twice circumvented by Fernando I, the prohibition against debasement was backed by constitutional doctrine and practice which dated back to the reign of Afonso III (1248-79).

Like nearly all his predecessors had done before him, with Afonso II being the exception, Afonso III replaced the current coinage in his first days in power.³³ Indeed, since the twelfth century Portuguese monarchs had regarded as their prerogative replacing, or 'breaking' to use the contemporary term, the currency by new, debased coins.³⁴ This practice obviously harmed many interests, including those of the landlords, and for this reason, in Portugal, like in Aragon, Castile and Leon,³⁵ the prerogative to re-coinage came to be limited to a period of seven years by the end of the twelfth century.³⁶ Eventually, in Leon (at least from 1202) and Castile (at least from 1215), the towns obtained from the monarchy the suspension of this right in exchange for a tax, the *moneda*

³² Not enough is known about the political culture of the parliamentary proctors to discuss whether they knew the existence and the very letter of those documents or whether the oath and its content had crystallized within customary law. Fernão Lopes who probably knew well the 1371–2 *Cortes* and who repeats many of the arguments then produced, ascribes the creation of the *dinheiro novo* to Afonso IV (1325–57) instead of Afonso III (1248–79). Also, one of his most likely sources, the 1435 memorandum on the currency changes in Portugal presented to his patron, king Duarte, makes the same mistake. So it is probable that the document was not very well known and thus not a central feature of the argument of the *Povos* in 1371 and 1372. See Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter LV, p. 188. The memorandum is published in *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 32, pp. 274–81.

³³ Afonso III minted coin, presumably in the name of his brother, in January 1248 according to Caetano, Marcello, *As Cortes de Leiria de 1254*, Lisbon, 1954, pp. 12-14. Gama Barros gives the date 1247. *História da Administração Pública em Portugal*, vol. III, Lisbon, 1947, p. 136. See on the coinage itself, *HMMP*, pp. 62-72.

³⁴ Moreover, unlike their Castilian or French counterparts, they enjoyed an effective, full monopoly on minting rights within the country. On the incomplete construction of the mint monopoly by the French crown, see Miskimin, Harry, *Money Prices and Foreign Exchange*, New Haven, 1963, pp. 51–2. On the Portuguese monopoly, see *HMMP*, p. 10.

³⁵ On the *moneda* and the *Cortes* of Castile–Leon up to 1252, O'Callaghan, 'The Beginnings of the *Cortes*,' pp. 517–23. Russell, J. C., 'The Medieval Monedatge of Aragon and Valencia,' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 106, n. 6, Dec., 1962, pp. 483-504.

³⁶ In Portugal, this situation is less clear, but in a charter dated 1255 Afonso III refers to the intention of changing the coinage, as 'his successors used to.' '*Prout predecessores mei usque ad tempus mei regiminis eam conusueuerum frangere*' (underlined mine). *Karta Iuramenti* published in *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 4, p. 340. *Frangere* relates to the physical destruction of the coins and not their debasement.

forera which compensated the monarch for not exercising his prerogative.³⁷ As no such agreement emerged in Portugal, Afonso III could freely 'break' the currency and impose the circulation of his coins as he did in 1247. Seven years later, however, Portugal acquired the foundations of a monetary constitution that would become very different from that of its neighbours.

In the winter of 1253 Afonso III was envisaging a second re-coinage for the next year, the seventh of his effective rule. Anticipating the inflation the new, debased coinage would cause, the king issued an extensive list of maximum prices. While setting the prices, Afonso enlarged the royal council in order to include representatives from the municipalities. Their role was to assent to the setting of prices, as they did. However, the representatives seemed to have seized the occasion to dispute the new coinage and the two parts looked for a settlement. Eventually, months later in the *Cortes* of 1254/Leiria, Afonso withhold his plans for a *fractio monete* in exchange for a kingdom-wide subsidy paid by all households in the realm, as was customary among peninsular kingdoms.³⁸ This was to prove more than a temporary settlement as one year later, in response to the municipalities' 'humble and insistent supplications', Afonso III swore in the hands of the bishop of Évora that he and the kings after him would never demand a general tax as a compensation for a kingdom-wide re-coinage. The king could still obtain the customary rights asked for by his predecessors *in fractione* and *pro fractione monete*, meaning presumably the seigniorage taken for each re-coinage. Formal letters testifying the oath (*kartaë iuramenti*) were issued and sent to the head of the major clerical institutions and to the pope.³⁹ With this oath, the municipalities and lords of Portugal avoided the payment of a tax in lieu of royal coinage, as was customary in Castile and Leon.

The *iuramentum* of 1255 was but one of the political compromises that the *Povos'* deputies referred to in 1371. When a new septennial period was about to expire, the king announced the minting of a new, silver-richer species of *d.* As the *iuramentum* forbade the crown to order a re-coinage, a better-quality bullion could only be imposed together with a facial devaluation of the

³⁷ O'Callaghan, 'The Beginnings of the Cortes,' p. 1523.

³⁸ For this occasion the municipal delegates, acted and deliberated as legal proctors for the first time, thus effectively binding the communities they represented to their actions. Caetano, *As Cortes de Leiria*, p. 44.

³⁹ Letters published in *Descr.*, vol. I, docs. 4 and 5, pp. 340-1.

depleted old *d.*⁴⁰ While well within the terms dictated by the oath of 1255, this cunning move totally opposed its spirit and, understandably, Afonso III met with the objection of *prelates, barones, religiosi et populus regni* who demanded the summoning of the *Cortes* once more. In the ensuing assembly held in Guimarães in 1261, the king agreed on withholding the change of facial value of the existing coin. As a form of compensation for the loss he incurred, Afonso III tried to extract a new *monetagium*. This was eventually conceded by the barons, prelates and municipal representatives but only in exchange for the king's firm compromise of never again changing the currency nor demanding another tax.⁴¹

The settlement reached in 1261 obtained the form of royal charter, later known as the *Instrumentum Super Facto Monete*. This letter stated the material limits that all further coinages had to observe and obliged the king and all his successors to abide by them.⁴² The monetary compromise came along the creation of a new coin, the *dinheiro novo*, valued at 1.(3) *d.* and with 0,066 g of pure silver, whose alloy and titre had to be observed by future monarchs. New coinages could only be made once in a year and were strongly limited to the yearly output of two furnaces. In sum, the amplitude of the monetary policy of any king was severely restricted.

The rigid terms of the *Instrumentum* were observed by later monarchs. Numismatic evidence confirms that the monetary constitution was not broken by any monarch up to King Fernando.⁴³ Chemical analyses on the bullion of Dinis I (1279-1325), Afonso IV (1325-57) and Pedro I (1357-67) have confirmed that these 'kings of old' stood to the compromise by keeping the amount of silver in the *dinheiro novo* as defined in the *Instrumentum*.⁴⁴ The *dinheiro novo* coins from Dinis I onwards display a slight reduction of the prescribed weight of the

⁴⁰ *HMMP*, pp. 164-9.

⁴¹ The Castilian crown also made a similar compromise in 1268. Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, p. 59.

⁴² Although in terms of diplomatic it has the features of a royal charter, it contains declarations and compromises in the name of the both parts of the agreement. Thus, the later designation of *instrumento* (written version of a contract) is legally and politically more adequate. Published in *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 5-A, pp. 341-343.

⁴³ The limited coinages of innovative highly-valuable types under King Dinis and King Pedro I (the *tornês de prata* and the *real*) did not constitute a real challenge to the substance of the 1261 settlement, as neither of these new coins was designed to replace the current *dinheiro novo* and their high face value was consistent with the standard set in 1261. *HMMP*, pp. 83 and 89.

⁴⁴ The average weights (in grams) for the surviving *dinheiros novos* of these monarchs are : Afonso III (0.745) Dinis (0.725) Afonso IV (0.725) Pedro I (0.735). This last figure is probably due to the smaller time of circulation of Pedro I's coins, replaced in 1369 by Fernando I's diverse currencies, and not to any intentional change. As a matter of fact, the proportion of silver remains the same. *HMMP*, pp. 75-7, 167-9.

coinage, but the quality of the alloy remained the same and, thus, the weight loss can be better explained by the wearing out of silver. This minor difference does not detract from the fact that Portugal underwent one century of currency stability, in contrast with the abrupt devaluations of the last decades of the Reconquest. Statistical analysis of hoards and findings has been used by Gomes Marques to estimate that the output of the royal mint under Afonso IV and Pedro I was considerably smaller than that under Afonso III, a piece of information which suggests the observance of the restrictions in terms of money supply defined by the latter king.⁴⁵

However, there is more than negative evidence for the strength of the monetary agreements between Afonso III and the estates of the realm. As Maria José Pimenta Ferro noticed there is a short entry in the chancery record of Dinis mentioning a '*carta de concillis super immutationem de moneta*.'⁴⁶ Although this document, datable from October 1291, did not survive, it seems clear that by that date the municipalities wrote to the king about coinage, presumably to re-state the prohibition. Similarly, the only surviving document relating to the Lisbon *Cortes* of 1325 is the royal answer to the grievances presented by the municipality of Santarém. In the preamble, Afonso IV mentions the municipal proctors who had been elected in response to the summons 'to pay me homage and for the matter of the coins.'⁴⁷ What was this 'matter of the coins'? What precisely it refers to cannot be ascertained as no general articles remain for this assembly. In the face of the present institutional and numismatic research and the silence of chronicler Rui de Pina, speculation becomes inevitable. A likely hypothesis is that Afonso IV wanted to notify his subjects of the start of the minting, in the terms of the *Instrumentum* of 1261. Another possibility is that Afonso IV was seeking to debase the currency, maybe in view of his imminent war with his half-brother.⁴⁸ However, the possibility that Afonso IV managed to manipulate the currency should be dismissed in light of numismatic evidence. Gomes Marques has already confirmed that the coinage

⁴⁵ Marques justifies these low outputs with the purpose of keeping the amount in circulation. See *HMMP*, pp. 151-2, 169.

⁴⁶ TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 2, fol. 66v, quoted by Ferro, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Dinis,' pp. 221-2.

⁴⁷ '*Pêra mj fazerem as menages e outrossi per feito das moedas segundo uos mande*', *Cort. Afonso IV*, p. 13.

⁴⁸ Pina, Rui de, *Chronica de elrey Dom Afonso o Quarto*, ed. Paulo Craesbeeck, 2nd, Lisbon, 1936, chapter III, p. |

of Afonso IV was not substantially different from that of his father.⁴⁹ In consequence, the 'deed of the coins' mentioned in 1325 did not have serious consequences for the coinage standards and supply set by the *Instrumentum Super Facto Monete*. The likeliest case is that Afonso IV had to endure a refusal to mint beyond the conditions defined in 1261. Such refusal is clearly consistent with the numismatic evidence. This hypothesis is also backed by a sentence that Fernão Lopes attributes to Afonso IV: 'if my people had consented [debasement] again, I would rank amongst the world's richest kings'.⁵⁰

Section 2.3 - Representation without Taxation; Taxation without Representation

The concession of subsidies by the *Cortes* was another focus for constitutional contention during the reign of Fernando I. As he had done with coinage, King Fernando actively sought the authorisation of the proctors of the *Povos* reunited in *Cortes* for collecting subsidies. Little more than a year had elapsed since the peace settlement of Alcoutim (March 1371) when Fernando signed an offensive alliance with England (the treaty of Tagilde in August 1372). Envisaging a new strike against Castile, the king of Portugal summoned again the *Cortes* to meet in Leiria, in the centre of the kingdom. The intentions were clear: to ask for a subsidy, given that monetary manipulations proved politically untenable.⁵¹ By then, the king and his councillors were aware of the hostility that monetary operations could arise.

In the *Cortes* of Leiria, which took place in October 1372, Fernando I met again with clear opposition.⁵² The argument of the *Povos* was that through prises, purveyances, unpaid repair works, military service and currency alterations, they had borne the brunt of the war and as such paying a tax would be, they claimed, a 'burden devoid of reason'.⁵³ Again, negotiation ensued, with

⁴⁹ *HMMP*, pp. 75-7. Moreover, its coinage seems to have been relatively scarce.

⁵⁰ 'Se lhe o seu poboo conssetira outra vez mudar a moeda, que elle fora huum dos ricos Reis do mundo'. Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter LV, p. 147. In the text of Lopes, this statement applies the introduction of the *dinheiro novo* by Afonso III which Lopes ascribed to Afonso IV given that other common designation of the coin was the *dinheiro afonsi*. The chronicler's error has been demonstrated by Gomes Marques (*HMMP*, p. 68). Given the mention to the 'deed of coinages' in 1325, Lopes might well have ascribed to the same Afonso two different processes: the minting of the *dinheiro novo* (by Afonso III) and the demand for a change in the coinage (by Afonso IV).

⁵¹ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, pp. 126-8 (4th and 7th articles of Leiria *Cortes*).

⁵² This is explicit in the 5th article of Leiria *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 126.

⁵³ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 126.

the municipalities making the payment of sales taxes conditional to a reform of the domain and a revision of the grants Fernando I had bestowed upon the nobility.⁵⁴

Once more, we find that the *Povos* and the king had to negotiate and to reach an agreement outside the *Cortes*. The well-known principle of no direct taxation without consent of the taxed common to states, like France, Castile and England,⁵⁵ was not yet established in Portugal. As such, unlike what happened with coinage, the *Povos* could not invoke any constitutional text. This time, it is well worth to notice, their case did not rest on constitutional arguments, neither in ancient customs or laws: the *Povos'* resistance against the *sisas* was merely grounded on abstract 'reason' (*razaom*). Nevertheless, the principle that taxation required the joint consent of the kingdom's municipalities in the *Cortes* also had a respectable constitutional history behind it dating back to the reign of Afonso III. In order to understand it, there is need to understand the relation between taxation and representation, back to the first *Cortes*, as summarised on Fig. 6.

⁵⁴ The broad plans for this project are presented in the *Povos'* 3rd article. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, pp. 124-5.

⁵⁵ Ormrod, 'The West European,' pp. 128-32.

Fig. 6 – Cortes and Taxation, 1254-1369

| CORTES | Year | General tax |
|------------|--------|----------------------|
| Leiria | 1254 | <i>Monetagium</i> |
| Guimarães* | 1256 | - |
| Coimbra | 1261 | <i>Monetagium</i> |
| - | 1266 | Loan |
| Santarém | 1273 | - |
| Évora | 1282 | - |
| Lisbon | 1285 | - |
| Guimarães | 1288 | - |
| Lisbon | 1289 | - |
| Coimbra* | 1291 | - |
| Lisbon | 1301 | - |
| Coimbra* | 1303 | - |
| - | 1304 | Aid* |
| Guimarães* | 1308 | Aid |
| - | 1320-2 | Church tenth (3 yrs) |
| Lisbon | 1323 | - |
| Évora | 1325 | - |
| Santarém | 1331 | - |
| Santarém | 1340 | - |
| - | 1341-2 | Church tenth (2 yrs) |
| - | 1345-6 | Church tenth (2 yrs) |
| Lisbon | 1352 | - |
| - | 1355 | Church tenth (2 yrs) |
| Santarém* | 1358 | - |
| Elvas | 1361 | - |
| Coimbra | 1369* | - |

Sources: PEP, DHP, 5 vols.; Mattoso, *História de Portugal*, vol. 2; Cort. Fernando I.

Notes: * doubt over its existence/date; the Cortes of 1291 and 1303 are only referred to in Mattoso, *História de Portugal*, vol. 2, p. 133; the Cortes of 1369 are dated in Gomes, Rita Costa, *D. Fernando I*, Lisboa, 2005, p. 271; Gonçalves mentioned a subsidy demanded by Pedro I in 1361, being this the year of the only undisputable Cortes reunited in his reign; however, the remaining records of these Cortes do not refer to it. PEP, p. 206.

It was during the negotiations around the minting of the *dinheiro novo* coinage that the Cortes had emerged as a body whose consent bound the whole kingdom.⁵⁶ The first known general taxes, the *monetagia*, were justified by the conflict of interests surrounding the royal minting prerogatives. First, the Cortes of 1254 had established that taxation was not a royal prerogative, but a concession of the estates of the country reunited in the Cortes. In 1261, according to the legal historian Marcello Caetano, the Cortes were an

⁵⁶ Beforehand, of the three meetings that can be labelled Cortes, those of Coimbra 1211 and 1226 and that of Guimarães in 1250 were held basically to pay homage to the ruler either in his first years (1211 and 1250) or in his legal majority (1226). None had any fiscal implications, nor did its participants include people outside the clergy and the nobility. Azevedo, Maria Antonieta Soares de, 'Coimbra, Cortes de (1211)' DHP, vol. 2, pp. 94-5.

independent, if temporary, institution with given features and where municipal representatives acted with full autonomy, and not merely an enlarged royal audience.⁵⁷ However, these cases do not stand for direct relationship between the *Cortes* and taxation, as the assemblies met to decide on matters of coinage, not on taxation, which appears merely as a by-product of that negotiation. Indeed, the link between taxation and representation proved ephemeral. After the coinage-related *Cortes*, the subsequent meetings, as far as they can be known, are dominated by the conflicts with the clergy (1273, 1282, 1285), with noble immunities (also 1285, 1288, 1289, 1291) or with the rebellious crown-prince Afonso (probably 1320 and certainly 1323). Only the *Cortes* of 1308 could prove to be an exception,⁵⁸ as their date coincides with the grant of a subsidy for the wedding of *Infante Afonso*.

After the debates surrounding taxation in the 1250s, no outstanding fiscal needs troubled the relationship between the crown and the local representatives in the *Cortes*. Yet, in spite of their absence of fiscal intervention, during this period the *Cortes* grew in importance. After a decade of adjustment between the monetary interests of the crown and of the communities, the assemblies were called to other functions. Late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century *Cortes* played an essentially political role as they provided Afonso III and Dinis I with political support and legitimacy against their internal rivals, the clergy and the nobility.⁵⁹

The *Cortes'* function as a political mediator was followed by participation in law-making.⁶⁰ Under Afonso IV (1325-57), however, the statutes by the king issued in *Cortes*, whether laws or concrete remedies to grievances presented therein by the municipal proctors, constituted material limits for future legislation

⁵⁷ Caetano, Marcello, *Subsídios Para a História das Cortes Medievais Portuguesas*, Lisboa, 1963, p. 5.

⁵⁸ The matter is still involved by doubts. These *Cortes* and the subsidy hitherto granted are known through a late fifteenth-century chronicle. Pina, Rui de, *Crónica do Muito Alto e Muito Esclarecido Príncipe Dom Diniz, Sexto Rey de Portugal*, 2nd, Lisbon, 1912, chapter XVIII; *PEP*, p. 151. The existence of the subsidy is confirmed by a letters patent sent to Lisbon by Dinis acknowledging the 'service' that the city had made him, making no mention of *Cortes*; AML, Livro dos Serviços a el-Rei, doc. 1.

⁵⁹ As in Castile, the *Cortes* were normally favourable to the monarch. Mattoso, *História de Portugal*, vol. 2, p.133. Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, pp. 304-5.

⁶⁰ Dinis issued legislation during sessions of *Cortes* but there is no certain indication that the assembly played any part in its design. Mattoso, *História de Portugal*, p. 133.

and for action of the royal officers.⁶¹ In these days, the *Cortes* were dominated by the redress of the grievances presented both individually by each municipality and collectively, after a preparatory meeting.⁶² Although the initiative of summoning remained an undisputed right of the king, the redress of the municipal and 'popular' grievances came to dominate the agenda of the rare *Cortes* that met in the time of the old kings. Coinage and taxes are absent from the remaining grievances presented to Afonso IV and Pedro I in *Cortes*.⁶³ In flagrant opposition to better-known cases, like Plantagenet England, the redress of grievances was unrelated to the crown's fiscal pressure. Under Edward III (1327-77) parliament constituted the link between taxation, regarded as an obligation of the subjects, and redress of grievances, taken seen as the main obligation of the ruler.⁶⁴ In the 1340s this became a relatively explicit trade-off.⁶⁵

Despite, or indeed because of, the claims against the king's judges, military and fiscal officers, the grievances of the mid-fourteenth-century *Cortes* hint at a strong convergence of interests between the crown and the municipalities.⁶⁶ The monarchy proved responsive to municipal aims for reforms in justice⁶⁷ and, more than that, promoted the defence of non-noble property. An article presented by the *Povos* in the 1331 *Cortes* of Santarém about a matter as sensitive as the export of precious metals shows the convergence between the king and the towns: the representatives of the *Povos* asked for its prohibition as 'the richer your land, the nobler and more prized it will be and you better served and the *Povos* with larger profit.'⁶⁸ As a response to this request the monarch issued a law, considering that 'the richer and more honoured his

⁶¹ As was said in 1371, '[the kings of old] ordered that no official could decide against it [what the king had granted in *Cortes*] and that any charter issued by him be invalidated.' *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 63. Caetano, 'Subsídios para a História,' pp. 20-23.

⁶² Thus happened in 1325, 1331, 1340, 1352, 1361. On the new procedures and the changing nature of representation in the *Cortes* after 1331, see Caetano, 'Subsídios para a História,' pp. 13-16.

⁶³ See *Cort. Afonso IV* and *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I.

⁶⁴ Harriss, G. L., *King, Parliament and public finance in Medieval England to 1369*, Oxford, 1975, p. 97. Ormrod, W. M., *The Reign of Edward III*, 2nd, Stroud, 2000, pp. 62-5.

⁶⁵ Harriss, *King, Parliament*, pp. 310-2. Ormrod, *The Reign*, pp. 64-5.

⁶⁶ On the reforms on justice in the fourteenth century, see Homem, Armando Luís de Carvalho, *O Desembargo Régio (1320-1433)* Porto, 1990, pp. 213-29.

⁶⁷ Marques, *Portugal na Crise*, p. 293. Pedro I fought the 'departmentalisation' of the justice and tried to abolish the intermediary judiciary instances, thus bringing more litigation in the central bodies of justice. On the judiciary reforms of Pedro I, see Homem, Armando Luís de Carvalho, 'Subsídios para o Estudo da Administração Central no Reinado de Pedro I', *Portugal nos Finais da Idade Média. Estado, Instituições e Política*, Lisbon, 1990, pp. 63-96.

⁶⁸ 'Quanto a vossa terra for mais rica tanto será mais nobre e mais preçada e vós melhor servido e os povos com maior proveito.' *Cort. Afonso IV*, p. 45.

land, the better he will be served and his men will gain more.⁶⁹ Years later, a broad paraphrase of this answer would later head a royal statue abdicating the royal rights over findings in non-royal lands.⁷⁰ For someone like Fernão Lopes, who not only knew the legal traditions and the *Cortes* records but also knew the financial straits of his days, such a political relationship appeared striking, even blissful. For this reason, his panegyric of the kings of old not be easily dismissed: 'the kings gauged that it was their service and profit that everybody was rich, thus they could have many and abundant revenues'.⁷¹

Contrary to what Fernão Lopes might have longed for, the cooperation between the *Cortes* and the monarchs did not derive from the latter's immense wealth. Indeed, even reliable notices of taxation granted by the *Cortes* between 1308 and 1369 (Fig. 6), a variety of sources show that Portuguese kings did not abdicate extraordinary revenues. Simply, they bypassed the *Cortes*. First of all, Dinis, Afonso IV and Pedro I sought to obtain alternative sources of extraordinary taxation: the Jewry and the clergy. Like other European sovereigns, Portuguese kings could divert to their coffers the ecclesiastical revenues under certain circumstances defined by Rome.⁷² The Portuguese Jewry also contributed with occasional *serviços*, besides their usual *genesim*.⁷³ Both these resources are exploited from the early fourteenth century onwards. The Jewry of the kingdom had been liable to pay an annual *serviço* by means of sales taxes since 1306.⁷⁴ The *serviço* was augmented in 1317 (from 20,000 *l.* to 40,000 *l.*), 1339 (from 25,000 *l.* to 35,000 *l.* and 1372 (from 35,000 *l.* to 40,000 *l.*). Church proved also compliant with royal demands throughout the fourteenth century.⁷⁵ In all likelihood, transfers from ecclesiastic taxation were even more

⁶⁹ 'Quanto a sa terra for maijs Rica e maijs honrrada que tanto el seera milhor seruido e as sas gentes ualeram maijs e seeram milhor manteudas.' *Cort. Afonso IV*, p. 45.

⁷⁰ *Cort. Afonso IV*, pp. 116-7.

⁷¹ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5.

⁷² Unlike fourteenth-century England and France, Portuguese kings had to appeal directly to Rome and only resorted to the clerical revenues in wars against the unfaithful. Ormrod, 'The West European,' pp. 132-3. A tenth of the clerical revenues was collected under the justification of coastal defence against the North African piracy in 1320-2, 1341-2 and 1345-6. The collection of the *décimas* depended on papal approval and was irrespective of any consultation of the national clergy, let alone the summoning of the *Povos*. See *infra* notes 16 and 17, p. 84.

⁷³ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. III, docs. 370 and 416, pp. 261 and 327.

⁷⁴ TT, *Chanc. Dinis I*, Livro 3, fol. 104v.

⁷⁵ Before the Fernandine Wars, Portuguese kings only resorted to this tax on four occasions: a triennial tithe in 1320; a biennial tithe in 1341 for defensive and offensive war against the Muslims of Grenade; another biennial tithe in 1345; a quadrennial tithe in 1355 to rebuild castles in the Algarve. *DP*, vol. I, doc. 46, p. 40, doc. 71, p. 83, doc. 81, pp. 98-103; *MH*, vol. I, doc. 92, pp. 217-221. Again, Castile proved more demanding and in the same period obtained a total of twenty years of the ecclesiastical *décimas*. Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, pp. 203-7. In the reign of

substantial, with the tenth of the tithe being assessed as 62,822 *l.* in 1320.⁷⁶ At any rate, while often resorted to, the tenth of the tithe remained an extraordinary revenue.

Similarly, municipalities were also called to make some extraordinary contributions. However, they were not summoned as a whole. The repeated, formal, kingdom-wide demands made to the Church and to the Commune of the Jews show *a contrario* why the municipalities managed to escape regular direct taxation. The Church and the Jewry were entities with autonomous institutions and, thus, they could self-assess, organise the collection of taxes and secure payment. Municipalities, by contrast, were a diverse lot which had no common kingdom-wide or regional institutions.

As several examples make clear, Portuguese kings obtained subsidies by dealing directly with each municipality. Each municipality regarded itself as a collective vassal and, for this reason, it accepted that it was bound to serve the king in some precise occasions, defined by custom (not by abstract 'necessity'). As such, the legal liability to pay taxes fell upon the municipality, not unto the individuals living in it. When Afonso III intended to send fifty knights in succour of his ally in 1266, he asked for a loan from each of the municipalities in order that he could gather the required funds. After securing the sums borrowed under that guise, the monarchy avoided the repayment and persuaded each municipality to forgive the debt.⁷⁷ In the following decades, the crown continued to demand specific, extraordinary services (*serviços*) from its municipalities. It was also through direct negotiation with different municipalities that Dinis obtained the aid granted to fund his diplomatic travels in 1304, as no parliament met then.⁷⁸ In 1339, the municipality of Salvaterra claimed that it was exempt from paying in a *serviço*.⁷⁹ Another example is the 60,000 *l.* subsidy demanded from the municipality of Lisbon destined to the kingdom's fortresses in 1357.⁸⁰

Fernando I there were also a biennial half-tithe agreed in 1376 and another biennial half-tithe the next year (*DP*, vol. I, 135, pp. 150-154, doc. 141, pp. 162-165). I thank Mário Farelo for some of these references.

⁷⁶ This figure is known via a eighteenth-century copy of the original that was published in Almeida, Fortunato de, *História da Igreja em Portugal*, 2nd ed., vol. IV, Porto, 1971, pp. 91-143.

⁷⁷ That the municipalities regarded it as a loan is clear in the long-lasting hope of retribution of Santarém that only wrote it off twenty-three years later. *PEP*, p. 32.

⁷⁸ According to fifteenth-century chronicler Rui de Pina, King Dinis 'received great subsidies in monies from his Povos'. Pina, *Crónica do (...) Príncipe Dom Diniz*, chapter XI, p. 71.

⁷⁹ Because it was exempt from serving in the royal host *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. II, doc. 171, pp. 275-6.

⁸⁰ This subsidy was labelled *pedido*. *AML*, Livro I de Serviços a el-Rei, doc. 2.

Municipalities resisted any attempt to transform these services into permanent payments by demanding formal oaths declaring that the loan could not be regarded by him or by his successors as a precedent.⁸¹

Individual negotiation was in the interest of the rivalling municipalities who could acquire individual privileges, sometimes at the expense of others, not unlike contemporary English examples.⁸² Moreover, subsidies let municipal oligarchies with a freehand in apportioning the burden vis-à-vis the political centre. On the other hand, as Fernando I found out, when approached individually, municipalities proved more amenable to the fiscal interests of the king than when reunited in parliament.⁸³ At any rate, the monarchy had to compromise with the municipalities. Indeed, the most efficient form of municipal taxation, the sales taxes or *sisas*, depended on the control of the local markets.⁸⁴ Although shared and disputed by the crown, the mechanisms of market-regulation were still held by the municipalities in the times of Fernando I.⁸⁵ Constitutionally, this was reflected in the need for municipal consent to fixing prices, as happened with the 1253 setting of prices and with the 'Pragmatic' statutes of 1340, issued in *Cortes*.⁸⁶ The *sisas* posed for the monarchy the problem of how to collect, store and distribute the proceeds of the sales tax without the collaboration of the municipal administration. In these conditions, the need for individual municipal consent to extraordinary taxation formed an effective constitutional check on the crown which had to negotiate individually.

The arguments of the municipal opposition against the military ventures of Fernando I reveal a fiscal constitution which had taken form in the times of Afonso III and that had stood since then. Until 1371, an unchallenged constitution helped the stability of the currency. The complicated negotiations

⁸¹ Barros, *História da Administração*, vol. III, p. 158. See exact words in *PMH, Leges*, I, p. 127 and Chanc. Dinis I, livro 6, fol. 227. See the similar principle in action in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Aragon. Sanchez Martinez, Manuel, Furió, Antoni and Sesma Munoz, Angel, 'Old and New Forms of Taxation in the Crown of Aragon (13th - 14th Centuries)' *La Fiscalità nell'Economia Europea. Secc. XIII-IV. Atti*, vol. I, Florence, 2008, pp. 105-6.

⁸² Such a device resounds of Edward III's attempts at exacting subsidies directly from the shire communities either by negotiated grants or by payments in lieu of eyre. Bryant, W. N., 'The financial dealings of Edward III with the country communities, 1330-60', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 88, 1968, p. 767.

⁸³ See *supra* pp. 204-8.

⁸⁴ Royal letters ordering that the clergy participated in the *sisas* collected in the Algarve abridged by Jorge Faro. Faro, Jorge, 'Introduction', *RED*, p. LXXIX.

⁸⁵ Marques, *Portugal na Crise*, p. 148. In the 6th article of the Cortes of 1361 the municipalities had already warned the king that 'deeds of prices and weights [*almotaçaria*] had always belonged to the municipalities'. *Cort. Pedro I*, p. 34.

⁸⁶ *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 3, pp. 334-40; *Cort. Afonso IV*, pp. 103-19. Even Fernando I agreed with this when the issue of the price setting of 1371 was discussed in the Porto Cortes of 1372. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 81.

that followed Fernando's disastrous manipulations show to what extent Portuguese kings were conditioned by the political action of the municipalities which reacted to what they perceived as an abuse of power. When Fernando disregarded the monetary standard set in 1261, the municipalities brought the monarch to the negotiations table in the *Cortes*. Ultimately, Fiscal Constitution had its watchdog not in the *Cortes* but in the municipalities which had autonomous executive powers. The fiscal constitution translated the strength of municipal organisation vis-à-vis the king.

Chapter 3 - Grand Strategy and Internal Pressures

The 'kings of old' accepted constitutional limitations in their attempts to tap their subjects' wealth. At any rate, the crown's military enterprises in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did not push for kingdom-wide direct taxation or for the break of the *Instrumentum Super Facto Monete*. However, despite the claims of the *Povos*, there was not any sort of constitutional limitation on warfare, offensive or otherwise, and the monarchy could claim taxes in lieu of military service existed. Considering the behaviour of contemporary dynastic states and the absence of formal, constitutional limitations,¹ did the relatively peaceful Portuguese kings act on considerations of dynastic interest? Sections 3.1 and 3.2 will overview military involvement of the Portuguese crown and the solutions found. Section 3.3 will look at internal equilibria that might have contributed to check dynastic ambitions.

Section 3.1 An Iberian Scotland?

A glance at the year-by-year comparison with the wars fought by the English crown (see Appendix 1) shows how scarce military activity of the Portuguese monarchy prior to the Fernandine Wars was.² Considering other European examples, where war worked as one key factor for fiscal pressure,³ the relatively peaceful pattern drawn in the timeline is certainly coherent with the scarcity of direct taxation documented in the last chapter. A brief reference to the situation in Castile, whose documentation has similar limitations to the Portuguese and with whom Portugal shared its geopolitical position, can be enlightening. Whilst in Portugal two aids and two *monetagia* were collected in the period studied, in the same time-span (1258–1369) Castilian and Leonese

¹ On this limitation, see Blockmans, Wim, 'Voracious States and Obstructing Cities: An Aspect of State Formation in Preindustrial Europe,' *Theory and Society*, Vol. 18, n. 5 [Special Issue on Cities and States in Europe, 1000- 1800] Sep., 1989, pp. 745-9.

² As it will be argued warfare was limited in space since most of the action took place in the borderlands and in the sea; limited also in purpose, as do-or-die dynastic quarrels that provided the *casus belli* for England and Scotland, for England and France or within the Empire were hardly of substance up to 1383; and, as a consequence of the latter, also limited in time.

³ Ormrod, 'The West European,' pp.124-27.

assemblies had granted at least thirty–four general aids of different kinds.⁴ Considering the information published by Ladero Quesada, wars (both civil and against the Moors) were used as a direct justification for ten of these taxes and the other seven were destined to redeem the nobility's military annuities and wages in arrears.⁵ The intention of this chapter is to make intelligible the relationship between warfare and state finances prior to the Fernandine Wars by looking at it under two complementary angles: first geopolitics and then internal politics.

The relative peace ensuing the *Reconquista* can be related to various exogenous factors, such as geographical position, lack of expansive projects, relative military weakness or even to doctrines of 'just cause' adverse to war with Christians.⁶ Most importantly, a series of settlements between Portugal and Castile during the second half of the thirteenth century, culminating in the treaty of Alcanices in 1297, removed the equivocal situation relating to the tenure of the Algarve and established a clear-cut border defined by common accord 'for all perpetuity'.⁷ Admittedly, the letter of a diplomatic agreement is hardly the most powerful of deterrents; yet, after 1297 none of the feudal ambiguities connected with overlordships, fiefs, homages – which constituted the constant *casii belli* between Scotland, France, England, the Flemish counties and the Empire – would affect the relations between Portugal and Castile. Another word should be said about a quintessentially random factor – dynastic stability. After Afonso III (1248-79) had dethroned his heirless brother, a clear father-to-son line of succession worked for a century and half: Dinis (1279-1325), Afonso IV (1325-57), Pedro I (1357-67), Fernando I (1367-83). Long reigns and smooth successions worked evidently as a cause for peace. However, this pattern of

⁴ This figure excludes those where the intervention of the Cortes or *ayuntamientos* is doubtful (1254, 1255, 1259, 1262, 1265, 1275, 1279, 1284, 1327, 1332, 1337, 1349, 1355–6, 1361–5). Most of *servicios* affected the two kingdoms, León and Castile, but even those that seemed to affect only Castile (1320) or León (1292, 1305) were counted in. See the detailed inventory in Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, pp. 57-72.

⁵ Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, pp. 57-72.

⁶ See a brief overview of the just war theory in Portugal in Monteiro, João Gouveia, *A Guerra em Portugal nos Finais da Idade Média*, Lisboa, 1998, pp. 501-3. In English, see Russell, Peter, *Prince Henry 'the Navigator.' A Life*, Yale, 2001, pp. 135-60.

⁷ Confirm the text of the treaty in González Jiménez, Manuel, 'Las relaciones entre Portugal y Castilla durante el siglo XII', *As Relações de Fronteira no Século de Alcanices. Actas*, vol. I, Porto, 1985, pp. 21-4. See also Garcia Fernandez, Manuel, 'La Política Internacional de Portugal en el Contexto Peninsular del Tratado de Alcanices: 1267-1297. Relaciones Diplomáticas y Dinásticas', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História*, Série II, Vol. 15, n. 2, Porto, 1998, pp. 900-943.

limited warfare can be understood through less circumstantial or even accidental factors.

At first sight, the unequal opposition between Portugal and Castile may bear some superficial resemblance to the nearly-permanent Anglo-Scottish antagonism which followed the vacancy of the throne of the kingdom of the Scots in 1290. In both cases, there is a sensible disparity in the contenders' military and financial potential. Although many objections can be raised against the comparability of these two scenarios, ranging from the legal status to the degree of 'national' hatred, not to mention the dynastic haphazard factors such as minorities, throne vacancies and lack of offspring, a contrast with Scotland highlights Portugal's strategic position and, consequently, the nature of its military commitments and conditions. Indeed, the main differences lay in the political geography. All the main centres of the Scottish kingdom were accessible from the border, including the most important single source of revenue, Berwick-upon-Tweed.⁸ The vulnerability of the Lowlands was such that Robert Bruce tore down the castles south of the Firth of Forth, 'so that the king of England and his men should have no places in the area where they would be safe from the Scots.'⁹ On the other hand, the interior of Scotland, courtesy of the steep terrain and the foul weather, was easily defensible but it commanded scarce resources and political weight.

Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Portugal was a mirror image to the kingdom of the Scots. Its long boundaries coincided with a rim of 'highlands', whereas its 'lowlands' and major centres dwelt far from the border and close to the coast. The king's resources and his most lucrative property (housing and wheat fields) were located in the coastal urban settlements. Thus, historians have had no trouble in trusting Lopes' indication that by 1367 the renders of Lisbon and Porto towered above the rest of the country.¹⁰ Moreover, Portugal was by no means vulnerable by land. Whereas the Scottish border was nearly devoid of castles for strategic reasons, the Portuguese frontier was defended by

⁸ Rodgers, Clifford J., *War Cruel and Sharp. English Strategy Under Edward III, 1327-60*, Woodbridge, 2000, p. 60, note 83 and sources cited.

⁹ The words are from the *Chronica Monasterii Melsa*, quoted in Rodgers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, p. 61.

¹⁰ The Lisbon port customs (excluding the *décima*) alone accounted for between 35,000 and 40,000 *dobras*, whereas all other renders of the kingdom without those of the two major ports were in the region of 200,000 *dobras*. Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p.5.

an intricate network of fortifications, held by the king's castellans and in times of need also manned by local populations, combined with mountainous terrain to limit the depth of the enemy penetration. Considering the short width of the operations, the cost of defence fell largely on the border municipalities but the proceeds of the domain played a relevant role in the war effort.¹¹ Coordinated initiatives of castle-building and strategic settlement in the later years of Afonso III and earlier phase of Dinis I's reign had made even more defensible the country's rugged borderlands.¹² Although their martial prowess in the *Reconquista* belonged to a different era, municipalities retained some of their military traits, especially when it came to defence operations.¹³ Led by a castellan appointed by the king, the men in the municipalities provided, in the opinion of an historian, a 'proper garrison army.'¹⁴

The evasive manoeuvres that defined the thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century confrontation with Castile depended on the logistical and defensive support of well-garrisoned and well-provided fortresses. To borrow the phrase from Miguel Gomes Martins, these were 'dodging wars'¹⁵ in which pitched battles were avoided and penetrations in enemy territory were cautious. Before the Fernandine Wars, no Castilian invasion had ever penetrated more than 90 km in a straight line. The frontier did not ensure that all the country would remain unscathed in the case of a land invasion. The outskirts of Porto were reached once (1337),¹⁶ Guimarães was unsuccessfully besieged twice (1139 and 1369) and non-walled Braga was entered in 1369. Also, the border burghs of Chaves, Bragança and Elvas were often attacked and the first even remained in Leonese captivity for one decade (1218-1231). But, apart from Braga and Porto, all other bishoprics (Évora, Coimbra, Lamego, Lisbon, Guarda, Viseu and Silves) and the wealthy towns of the lower Tagus valley remained far from the

¹¹ Came war or peace, the *almoxarifes* were responsible for channelling part of the crown's agrarian resources to the fortresses. The logistical role played by the *almoxarifes* emerges clearly from the narrative of the first Fernandine War. Cr. *Fernando*, chapter I. By contrast, the infamous purveyances imposed by Fernando I in his first war were especially resented because they were unprecedented. As we know by the complaints of the Povos, the old kings kept their all-important galley fleets and the border castles through the grain of the royal granaries. See chapter 4 presented by the Povos in the *Cortes* of 1372. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 85.

¹² The more recent synthesis, Barroca, Mário Jorge, 'Arquitectura Militar', in Barata, Manuel Themudo and Teixeira, Nuno Severiano, eds., *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, vol. I, Rio de Mouro, 2003, pp. 117-121.

¹³ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 77.

¹⁴ J. Borges de Macedo quoted in Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 137.

¹⁵ Martins, Miguel Gomes, 'A Guerra Esquiva. O Conflito Luso-Castelhano de 1336-38,' *Promontoria*, Ano 3, n. 3, Faro, 2005, pp. 19-80.

¹⁶ And even in this occasion, the invading force was defeated. Marques, *Portugal na Crise.*, p. 498.

Leonese-Castilian incursions of 1139, 1176, 1190, 1218, 1333, 1336 and 1369 as well as during the 1250s.¹⁷

The country's political geography was complemented by a defensive diplomatic orientation on behalf of the crown. As a whole, the military interventions of the Portuguese crown in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had been limited, both in ambition and in temporal scope. Unlike what would happen in times of Fernando I,¹⁸ the Hundred Years War did not precipitate any struggle between Castile and Portugal. Without any permanent, direct interest in Edward III's bid for the French crown, Portuguese and Castilian early fourteenth-century diplomacies became, in the eyes of the contenders, notorious for their duplicity.¹⁹ Castilian intervention on the side of their French neighbour had periods of great compromise and intensity, when the house of Trastamara shared its enemies with France - Pedro I of Castile or Fernando I of Portugal, both allied to England - but ceased altogether as soon as the new dynasty was firmly installed in the throne of Castile and Leon.²⁰ Until the 1370s, Portuguese diplomacy was guided by non-belligerent principles, along the lines of Alfonso XI of Castile.²¹ Although its diplomacy has not been so closely studied as Castile's, the westernmost kingdom of the Peninsula also strove to avoid extra-peninsular commitments. The two countries tried their best to remain on friendly terms with Capets, Plantagenets and Valois. The difficulty lay in the sizeable permanent galley fleets that Castilian and Portuguese possessed. These armadas, like those of Aragon and Genoa, were coveted by the French and, to a lesser extent, English crowns.

Despite the consistent orientation towards neutrality in extra-peninsular fights for most of the fourteenth century, whenever one side managed to lure Portuguese or Castilian fleets to operate on his behalf, the two countries aligned together. During the war of Saint-Sardos a Gascon counsellor to Edward II assumed that a Castilian intervention on either side would entail the intervention of Portugal for the same side: *meymamant si il [Edward II] a l'aliaunssa de*

¹⁷ The fourteenth-century dates and expeditions mentioned are taken from Marques, *Portugal na Crise*, pp. 491-523.

¹⁸ On Fernando I's external policy, Russell, P. E., 'João Fernandes Andeiro at the court of John of Gaunt', *Portugal, Spain and the African Atlantic, 1343-1490*, pp. 5-15.

¹⁹ The events of 1333 are particularly revealing of this. Rodgers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, pp. 140-1.

²⁰ Suarez Fernandez, Luis, *Intervencion de Castilla en la Guerra de los Cien Anos*, Valladolid, 1950, p.9.

²¹ Suarez Fernandez, *Intervencion de Castilla*, p. 35.

Espanya [Castile], *qar am sela il aura la Daragom e de Portegual*.²² This was a sound piece of counselling: in 1341, when French and Castilian warships set sail hunting for English transports in the Bay of Biscay they were followed by Portuguese galleys.²³ Very probably, Portuguese vessels were among those defeated in English victory of Winchelsea/*Les Espagnols-sur-Mer* (1353).²⁴ The evidence presented is illustrative of what were the goals of the two countries.

War against other Christian princes, however, was something a monarch that relied heavily on customs had good reasons to avoid. The seizure of goods and ships and the arrest of foreign merchants and piratical attacks were two acts that immediately followed the declaration of war. For a crown which regarded merchants, denizen and alien, with a great measure of protectionism, lest it lose one of its major sources of revenue, peace was a natural orientation. Unlike England, which taxed exports, Portuguese taxes tapped imports and anchorage of ships. Thus, assuring the continuity of external commerce was vital for the crown and even the bellicose Fernando I was forced to admit before the towns in the *Cortes* of Leiria how disruptive war was to the country's trade and, hence, royal revenues (see *infra* Fig. 18). This is well patent in the few tax-farming contracts surviving from this period, some of which contain special clauses which granted the tax-farmer the right to suspend the contract in case of war.²⁵ Again, what Lopes says about the kings of old, should not be dismissed as empty praise: 'they felt it was their service and profit that all [of the realm] were rich, so that kings could have great and vast renders'.²⁶

Unhampered by extra-peninsular diplomacy and united by antagonism against the Moor, the relations between the two peninsular neighbours were relatively peaceful. Since the thirteenth century, the strongest party, Castile, did not harbour projects of peninsular hegemony while Portugal had a decisively

²² Letter sent by the Gascon seneschal Raymond Durand to Hugh le Despenser in 11 January 1325. *The War of St. Sardos*, Chaplais, Pierre, ed., London, 1954, doc. 121, p.127.

²³ Rodger, N. A. M., *The Safeguard of the Sea*, 2nd, London, 2004, p. 100. Possibly in exchange for trade privileges in Normandy which Phillippe VI bestowed the very same year. The privilege is abridged in *DP*, vol. I, doc. 76, p. 90..

²⁴ This hypothesis is drawn from the parallel between the alliance negotiated by the English with Lisbon and Porto which was signed by him in 20 October 1353 (*DP*, vol. I, doc. 80, pp. 94-97) and the treaty of alliance between England and the Basque ports, confirmed nine days later (Suarez Fernandez, *Intervencion de Castilla*, p. 45, note 1). An equal service rendered to the English crown appears as the best explanation for the equality and simultaneity of treatment.

²⁵ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. II, doc. 37, p. 82.

²⁶ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p.5.

defensive stance. Given the similarity of interests, Portugal had good reason to align its external policy with Castile, even if it implied lending its galleys, as happened in 1341 and 1353. The two monarchies also shared the same perception of the Muslim powers as fundamentally alien to the Peninsula,²⁷ wherefrom emerged a reasonably coordinated policy against the Muslims in Iberia and North Africa. The Portuguese crown organised large expeditions by land and sea in 1266, 1309, 1340, 1341 and 1343 in succour of the Castilians against Moorish enemies.²⁸ However frequent collaboration seems to have been, it had always precise goals and was intended at keeping an advantageous peace rather than involving the dynasty in a war.

One of the better illustrations of the Portuguese stance towards Castile is provided by the argumentation the royal council presented to King Pedro I on whether or not to help the dethroned king of Castile in 1357. Pedro I had been a reliable ally of the Castilian monarch, having helped him with knights and ships in his Aragonese war. Later, Pedro of Portugal even refused to join the Franco–Aragonese invasion of Castile that eventually overthrew the Castilian monarch.²⁹ However, when his dethroned old ally came to ask for support, Pedro refused. Lopes voices the discourse of king's private counsellors who 'thought that the king could not do it without great effort and expenditure and great damage of his reign; and worse of all without good reasons to believe he would succeed, as throwing the usurper out of Castile either by battle or by guerrilla tactics required great might (my underlining).'³⁰

Paradoxical as it may seem, the defensive strategy of the crown of Portugal inspired ambitions of territorial increase at Castilian expenses. It was precisely because the border was the mainstay of the defence that the crown felt the temptation to attack and incorporate tracts of enemy land. For this reason, Portuguese strategy aimed at extending the thickness of the border at

²⁷ This question was widely developed by Maravall, J. A., 4th. *El concepto de España en La Edad Media*, Madrid, 1997, pp. 197-287 and by Krus, Luis, *A visão nobiliárquica do Espaço Ibérico*, Lisbon, 1994.

²⁸ There were also practical reasons for this: in the fourteenth century the two crowns had to endure repeated attacks from Maghreb pirates who preyed upon trading ships and the coastal settlements.

²⁹ On this circumstance, in English, Russell, *The English Intervention*, p. 45.

³⁰ Underline mine. '*O nom podia elrei fazer sem grandes, trabalhos e gasto e mui gram dano de seu reino; e o peor de todo, nom teer aazadas razões como tal feito podesse viir a acabamento* [given the extent of the victory and popularity of the usurper] *Pois quem ouvesse de lançar fora de Castela Henrique e todoloos da sua parte, assi per batalha, come per guerra guerreada, gram poderio lhe comviinha teer.*' Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XXXVIII, p. 177.

the expenses of the enemy. This would extend the distance between the wealthy coastal cities and the frontier. In all conflicts that broke after the perpetual border definition in the Badajoz Treaty of 1267,³¹ Portuguese kings only fought with clear advantage on their side, attempting to use momentary Castilian frailty to absorb a portion of its territory. Internal dissensions furnished enough encouragement and pretexts for Dinis I and Afonso IV to do so. The former invaded war-torn Castile in 1295–6 which led to the Portuguese occupation of the Riba-Coa district. This was confirmed in the 'perpetual' settlement of the boundaries between the two realms, the already mentioned treaty of Alcanices in 1297.³² The 1336–39 war between Portugal and Castile took place when King Alfonso XI had been challenged by his half-brother.³³ Even Fernando I's bid for the throne of Castile-Leon, supported by blatantly dubious legal argumentation, intended little more than being bought off with a few Castilian border towns by the momentarily weak neighbour.³⁴ Although things would evolve in a very different direction, Fernando I's attack on Castile is not contradictory with the strategic thinking of the kings of old. The invasion of Fernando I, like those of Dinis I and Afonso IV, would prove another instance of this grand strategy whose ultimate aim was defensive. However, in 1369 there would be a new factor: the advent of a staunchly pro-French dynasty in Castile entangled the country in wider, European conflicts.

Section 3.2 - An Open Border

Castilian raids and invasions could only hurt the kingdom's peripheral towns, whereas the coastal cities and the more productive fields trusted in the double protection provided by distance and by the densely fortified and mountainous border. For all the safeguards offered by the frontier castles, the main administrative, demographic and commercial centres could be attacked by

³¹ Gonzalez Jimenez, 'Las Relaciones entre Portugal y Castilla,' p. 11.

³² Gonzalez Jimenez, 'Las relaciones entre Portugal y Castilla,' p. 22.

³³ Tellingly, both these wars were followed by alliances and joint attacks on Muslim lands. After the invasion of Leon in 1295–7, Portugal joined Castile in the war against Grenada (1309 siege of Algeciras). Within one year of the 1336–9, the two kings defeated a Moorish invasion of Castile in the fields of Salado in 1340.

³⁴ Indeed, as F. Lopes notes, Fernando did not wear the title of king of Castile and León but simply that of king of Corunna, Zamora and Tuy, the cities he had occupied, as suggested by Sir Peter Russell. Russell, Peter, 'Archivists as Historians,' p. 10. Also, Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XXVIII, p. 81.

sea. At sea, the conditions that made the Portuguese border such a formidable obstacle with limited manpower and financial resources could not be replicated. While on land, terrain and fortification multiplied the strength of the defenders, no such devices operated in the open waters. Along the maritime border, movement was smoother and, hence, invasions and battles more likely. Naval tactics based on the galley allowed for a war of attrition comprising piracy against enemy ships and seaborne attacks on coastal towns.³⁵ As N. A. M. Rodger wrote of fourteenth-century naval strategy, 'ships were extremely valuable; they incorporated a large fraction of the medieval economy's scarce liquid capital in a very vulnerable form'.³⁶ Commercial vessels were hard to locate on the open sea, but their ports were not. Even if no single ship was captured, the ravaging of a port, with its warehouses, registers and dockyards, could hit the enemy's economic capacity hard. Moreover, the sea trade was more vital to the finances of the monarchy than the distant and meagre revenues of the hinterlands. By 1367, customs collected in Lisbon and Porto accounted for some 16% of the total revenue.³⁷ The political weight of the major coastal cities and towns made this kind of warfare more damaging to the ruler. Arguably, this is nowhere truer than in Portugal where the international commerce took place along the coast whilst the interior mountains were impervious, barren and thinly settled. Thus, while there was no possibility of a purely naval strategic invasion by Castile or by Portugal, the sea proved a far more decisive battlefield than the country's mountain ranges and plains. Not only naval warfare was more sensible to the crown's cashable revenues, as the oligarchies of Lisbon and Porto, where the mercantile interests were embedded, formed a financial and political force to be reckoned with.³⁸

³⁵ Rodger, *The Safeguard*, pp. 91-93.

³⁶ Rodger, *The Safeguard*, p. 91.

³⁷ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5.

³⁸ The municipalities of Lisbon and Porto were important enough to negotiate an alliance directly with the Edward III in 1353 (*DP*, vol. I, doc. 80, pp. 94-97). The Lisbon municipality could secure loans from the Italian bankers or even from the king himself (*AML*, *Livro dos Pregos*, doc. 35). Reddaway argued that by the same period, Portuguese currency was known as *Lusshornes* in London. Reddaway, T. F., 'The king's Mint and Exchange in London 1343-1543', *English Historical Review*, vol. 82, n. 32, Jan 1967, p. 4. Given the mention to '*Ulixbonensi libras*' by the Genoese in 1370 (*DP*, vol. I, doc. 116, p. 131), he appears to be right.

The knowledge of Portuguese naval history is thus essential to understand the diplomatic stance of the monarchy.³⁹ Unlike the English crown, which counted on the requisition of commercial ships, the kings of Portugal owned their own fleet of warships.⁴⁰ Information on the strength of the Portuguese navy becomes consistent around 1317, when Denis I signed a contract with a Genoese corsair and merchant Emmanuele Pezzagno.⁴¹ By 1325, the Genoese-style fleet of the king of Portugal was dangerous enough for Edward II to make efforts to prevent it from joining the French party, together with Antonio Pezzagno.⁴²

The constitution of a permanent fleet was an expensive option, since complex administration and maintenance, high operating costs and manpower requirements meant that galleys inflicted a drain on royal treasuries.⁴³ A fleet of 20 galleys would cost annually up to 80,000 *l.*, that is to say 8.(3)% of the kingdom's notional revenues.⁴⁴ The increased expenses incurred in building and maintaining a state-of-the-art galley fleet represented a heavy burden on the monarchy. How costly, in relative and absolute terms, it is obviously impossible to ascertain. Yet, there is a discrete set of information that can be associated with these new costs for the monarchy. In 1310, one year after the admiralty contract with Pezzagno, the Portuguese crown required from the church one tenth of the tithe, in what would be the first of a series of transfers from ecclesiastical taxation. As the papal concession recalled, the pretext for this transfer was to fight Barbary pirates, makes it very likely that extraordinary levies from the church had to be called for in the financing of the fleet. Deemed essential for any confrontation with the Moors, the galleys concentrated the profits of ecclesiastical taxation conceded with the aim of fighting Muslim pirates

³⁹ There remain significant gaps on the knowledge of Portuguese sea power prior to the great discoveries. Here we follow the most recent synthesis on the Portuguese navy, Duarte, Luís Miguel, 'A Marinha de Guerra Portuguesa,' in Barata, Manuel Themudo and Teixeira, Nuno Severiano, eds. *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, Rio de Mouro, 2003, p. 296.

⁴⁰ Russell, *The English Intervention*, pp.xxi-xxiv.

⁴¹ Brother of the well-known financier of Edward II, Antonio Pezzagno. Marques, *Portugal na Crise*, p. 358. The hiring of the Genoese expert and his retinue by the Portuguese king is part of the European build-up of galley warfare which started in Italy in the first half of the thirteenth century. Unger, David, 'Admiralties and Warships of Europe and the Mediterranean, 1000-1500, *Ships and shipbuilding in the North Sea and Atlantic, 1400-1800*, p. 39.

⁴² Chaplais, *The War of Saint-Sardos*, p. 135, nt. 3.

⁴³ Unger, *Ships and shipbuilding*, pp. 36-42. According to L. M. Duarte, rowers in Portuguese galleys were paid as freemen. 'A Marinha de Guerra em Portugal', pp. 314-318.

⁴⁴ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5. The yearly price of 1,000 *dobras* for a galley is taken from Fernão Lopes. Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XXII, p. 104 which describes events in 1358.

or even invaders of Peninsular soil.⁴⁵ Indeed, when it mattered, Portuguese kings could, and did, opt for hiring additional vessels from Monegasque or Genoese mercenaries.⁴⁶

Fig. 7 – Portuguese and Castilian Galleys, 1337-1384

| Occasion | Portuguese galleys (other ships in brackets) | Castilian galleys (other ships in brackets) |
|---|---|--|
| 1337 - Battle of Cabo de S. Vicente | c. 20 | c. 30 |
| 1341 – joint succour of Cadiz | 10 | 30 (12) |
| 1369 – blockade of Seville | 32 (30) | 12 |
| 1370 - breakthrough of the Seville blockade | 16 (24) | 20 |
| 1381 – battle of Saltes | 22 (4) | 23 |
| 1384 – breakthrough of the Lisbon blockade | 17 (17) | 13 (40) |

Sources: Monteiro, Saturnino, *Batalhas e Combates e da Marinha Portuguesa*, vol. I, Lisbon, 1989, pp. 19-33; Lopes, *Cron. João I*, vol. I, chapter, CXXXIII, pp 260-3.

The defence of Portuguese coastal routes, fields and towns could only be achieved with a sizeable armada. Sheer numbers were tactically decisive, since galleys fought individually and had to avoid at all costs being outnumbered.⁴⁷ Thus, Portuguese kings consciously developed their fleet in order to obtain, or to near, parity in number of galleys with Castile, a goal that which was attained in the Fernandine Wars. Disparate information of the armadas put to sea by Portuguese and Castilian kings can be taken as indicators of a broad equilibrium of naval power. The number of galleys present in the fights between the armadas of the two countries were relatively balanced (Fig. 7). This could not have been attained without a consistent, conscious policy on behalf of the monarchy. Indeed, by 1367 Portuguese notional income was on the region of

⁴⁵ Tenths of ecclesiastical revenues were conceded in 1320-2 and 1341-4 to fight pirates and in 1355 to defend the Algarve from Muslim attacks. *DP*, vol. I, doc. 46, p. 40, doc. 71, p. 83, doc. 81, pp. 98-103.

⁴⁶ On the attack of Seville there were at least 4 mercenary galleys; moreover, some of the ships' captains were Genoese. Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XLII, pp. 136-7.

⁴⁷ For individual descriptions, see in Monteiro, Saturnino, *Batalhas e Combates e da Marinha Portuguesa*, vol. I, Lisbon, 1989, pp. 19-33.

240,000 *dobras*, which stood for slightly less than a third of the annual income of 790,000 *dobras* available to Castile in 1369.⁴⁸ These figures, however unsystematic, make it clear that despite its demographic and fiscal shortcomings, fourteenth-century Portugal could match its potential foe's strength where it mattered most: at sea.

Thus, while the Portuguese border was a low-maintenance military weapon, naval warfare was capital-intensive, because a state-of-the-art galley fleet required ample economic means. This was possible because the Portuguese kings were able to collect and accumulate revenues. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the reform of the Portuguese fleet according to Geonese models takes place in the 1310s, during the period of accumulation of revenue by Dinis (1299-1322).⁴⁹

Section 3.3 - Nobles and Municipalities

So far, this pattern of military involvements has been understood simply in diplomatic and strategic terms. The fact that the crown was able to follow a coherent and intelligible grand strategy demonstrates its strength. However, no state, let alone a fourteenth-century one, can follow an external policy totally independent from internal pressures. To start with, resorting to a broad but clear simplification, it is possible to divide the endogenous pressures upon the crown in two opposed groups of interest: the nobility and the municipalities. For the first, war was not only its ideological *raison d'être* but also an occasion and a pretext for material gain. Presumably, for the other group war was a burden, even without extraordinary taxes.

⁴⁸ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5. The 30 million *maravedis* of 1369 (notional revenue in that year; Ormrod, 'The West Monarchies,' p. 145) were divided by 38 (the value of a *dobla* in *maravedis*; Spufford, Peter, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, London, 1986, p. 160).

⁴⁹ In his will of 1299, Dinis declares that he spent most of his money in the war (*Provas*, vol. II, part 2, doc. 11, p. 130), while in 1322, he declares that the money bequeathed was gathered by him. This shows that the wealth displayed in 1322 was accumulated between these dates (Brandão, *Quinta Parte da Monarchia Lusytana*, doc. XXXIV, fol. 331v. This period also saw the emergence of kingdomwide taxation for the Jewry and for the Church. See *supra* pp. 278-9.

The end of the *Reconquista* and the ascent of Afonso III brought the 'curialisation' of noble families.⁵⁰ From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, royal service became the ultimate source of honours, distinction and, obviously, material gain. The grants and privileges obtained in the court became the long-term goal of the strategies of the noble lineages.⁵¹ The weight that such post- *Reconquista* patronage exerted upon the royal finances has been suggested above (see chapter 1). However, royal patronage kept a military rationale. Discounting the one-off or odd gifts for foreign knights paying homage to the kings, a favourite theme amongst chroniclers, the permanent endowments made by the king included the *tença* and the *contia*.⁵² These payments retained a distinctively military nature.

The term *tença* stands for permanent revenues granted by the king in exchange for a service, already performed or to be performed.⁵³ Indeed, the fundamental rationale of the *tença* was to reward services.⁵⁴ This designation comprised contrasted situations and the dominant forms of *tença* varied widely over time. From the reign of Dinis I (1279-1322) onwards, the *tença* was a rent payable by the monarch. In the thirteenth century *tença* referred to the precarious holding of a source of revenue which nominally belonged to the king or, in other words, to a tenure. In the reign of Dinis, *tenças* were disconnected from the exercise of authority and, although occasionally allocated in specific municipalities, they were royal revenues collected by the royal administration that were temporarily diverted to a holder.⁵⁵ They were, in sum, a rent. Unlike previous redistributive payments, it did not entail any function or exercise of jurisdiction, but merely the usufruct of the monies produced. The type of rent

⁵⁰ Branco, Maria-João, 'The Nobility of Medieval Portugal (XIth-XIVth Centuries)' Duggan, Anne (ed.) *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe. Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, Woodridge, 2000, p. 237; Gomes, Rita Costa, 'A Curialização da Nobreza,' *O Tempo de Vasco da Gama*, Diogo Ramada Curto (ed.) Lisbon, 1998, pp. 245-64.

⁵¹ Branco, 'The Nobility of Medieval', pp. 229, 233, 238. Also, Gomes, Rita Costa, *The Making of a Court Society: Kings and Nobles in Late Medieval Portugal*, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 225-8.

⁵² Even though these terms not always resisted the variations and occasional lack of precision of contemporary vocabulary and though the institutions they designated were considerably fluid, Rita Costa Gomes and João Gouveia Monteiro have established meaningful and operative distinctions between them.

⁵³ Henceforward, unless stated otherwise, the source of information is Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society*, pp. 215-31.

⁵⁴ On the doctrinal foundations for the relationship *mercê-tença*, see Olival, Fernanda, *As Ordens Militares e o Estado Moderno. Honra, Mercê e Venalidade em Portugal (1641-1789)* Lisboa, 2001, pp. 23-5.

⁵⁵ The holding of judicial/military district (*terras*) with jurisdiction virtually disappeared from 1287 onwards. Ventura, Leontina, 'Terras e Julgados', *Port. Defini.*, p. 524.

assigned to the holder of a *tença* varied: it could be the municipal rent,⁵⁶ it could be an agrarian property (*préstamo or reguengo*) or it could be the wages and fines allocated to the function of castellan (*alcaidaria*). Possibly, it could also be a sum of money payable by the king's central institutions.

Unlike *tenças* whose values varied extensively according to the dignity of the receiver, the *contia* was a flat payment that allowed a king's vassal to maintain a warhorse as well as acquire good defensive and offensive equipment.⁵⁷ According to Gomes, they appear c. 1300, as a counterpart of paying feudal homage to the king.⁵⁸ More specifically military than *tenças*, *contias* bound the recipient to be ready for military service.⁵⁹ The number of vassals receiving *contias* was carefully controlled by the crown which kept a central register of the available knights and replaced them in order to keep a *numerus clausus*.⁶⁰ By contrast, with the *tença*, the set *contia* was paid through an assignment in a source of revenue or directly by the king's treasury.

Both these payments supposed a heavy burden on the royal treasury. While figures for the *tenças* remain unfathomable for this period, the rigidity of the *contias* allows for a plausible guesstimate on their financial impact as, since the reign Pedro I, the *contia* was of 100 *l.* and this was the standing value in the times of the Fernandine Wars were fought.⁶¹ Considering that the number of registered *contia*-receiving vassals under the 'kings of old' might have been around 2,000,⁶² a notional sum for the annual payroll of *contias* under Pedro I

⁵⁶ *Tenças* allocated to municipalities were for the most reserved for the highest-ranking nobles. The earliest examples date from King Dinis. The rent of the municipality of Chaves was diverted to the Count Gonçalo Garcia de Sousa (TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 3, fol. 18v); the rent of Barcelos were diverted to the counts João Afonso Telo in 1298 and Martim Gil de Riba de Vizela and 1304 (TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 3, fols. 3 and 33v).

⁵⁷ Unless stated otherwise, information on the *contias* comes from Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 33-5 and Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter I, pp. 6-9.

⁵⁸ Whereas Gomes considers that the status of vassal implied living the court, Monteiro alleges convincingly that the existence of territorial books of vassals (*livro de vassalo das comarcas*) implies that residence in the court was not a necessary condition. Gomes, *The Making*, pp. 220-7.

⁵⁹ *Contias* were only paid to the nobles who held the status of king's 'vassal' and not simply noble (*fidalgo*). Gomes, *The Making*, p. 223.

⁶⁰ Although they were not technically hereditary, the custom was their father-to-son transmission, as Lopes implies. Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter I, p. 8.

⁶¹ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XI, p. 50. The value of 100 *l.* has been confirmed for the reign of Fernando I in his chancery register. Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 35; Gomes, *The Making*, p. 223.

⁶² Considering King Fernando's disgruntled remark in 1372 that he could not field the three or four vassals 'his honour required' (Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter LXXII, p. 254), the figure for the older period must be inferior to 3,000.

would be in the region of 200,000 *l.*. This sum would be roughly a fifth of estimated royal revenues.⁶³

While *tenças* and *contias* were related to military service, they were paid regardless of any effective fighting or campaigning. Whenever war appeared, vassals and holders of *tenças* saw their gains complemented by wages. Although the absence of consistent figures for the period before the Fernandine Wars makes it difficult to gauge how war enhanced the knights' budgets, existing indicators suggest that gains would be relevant but not impressive. The importance of the plain *contia* was in the equipment provided, as 100 *l.* were notoriously insufficient to adequately arm and maintain a knight.⁶⁴ The monthly stipend of 45 *l.* for a fully-armoured mounted man-at-arms in the 1369 siege of Monterey meant that it would take a sixty-six day-long campaign for a king's vassal to earn the equivalent to the 100 *l.* of the flat *contia*, if well-equipped.⁶⁵

If the nobles and vassals had some reason to regard war as a source of gain, the municipal proctors to the fourteenth-century *Cortes* made clear their opposition to potential or effective war. Through the Fernandine *Cortes* it is clear that municipalities had all reasons for being averse to offensive warfare on account of the prises, defensive tasks and disruptions on trade. Together with the return to the older coinage, one of the most consistent claims of the towns in the meetings of 1371-2 was that the king could not wage war without consultation of the *Cortes*.⁶⁶ The fact that communities' representatives challenged the king's right to go to war is symptomatic of where their interests laid.

Municipalities had developed autonomous militias in the days of the Reconquest, when the contribution of predatory activity was an essential feature

⁶³ The general estimate of income provided by Fernão Lopes for the earlier years of King Fernando's reign is of 960,000 *l.* Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, Prologue, p. 5.

⁶⁴ The settlement of the Order of Christ (dated 1326) indicates that the annual rent assigned to an adequately equipped knight was 500 *l.* (and 800 *l.* for a commander). *MH*, vol. I, doc. 74, p. 156.

⁶⁵ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 35.

⁶⁶ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, pp. 16 (Lisbon) 82 (Porto) and 127 (Leiria). Unlike the arguments related with coinage, this was a call for innovation. No constitutional statutes or customs are known to have hindered the king's liberty to wage war, not even when the parliament played a leading political role under Dinis I. The contrast with England, where fiscal contributions allowed parliament to take part in, or at least be informed of, military decisions, is evident. Despite the lack of documentation, there is no reason to think that the *Cortes* had ever met to prepare or discuss any offensive project. For the *Povos*, however, it was King Fernando's armed bid for the throne of Castile which went against what they perceived as the correct stance of the monarch.

in the economy of the municipalities great and small.⁶⁷ When the volatile frontier with the Moors gave way to a stable, discrete inter-state border, the municipal cavalry assumed the form of a landowning and commercial oligarchy centred in the larger urban centres. In the middle decades of the thirteenth century, wealthy townsmen changed their warhorses for pack animals in both symbolical and effective terms.⁶⁸ The municipal *cavaleiros* (knights) became 'citizens' (*cidadãos*) or simply 'dwellers' (*vizinhos*). However, their military capacities did not vanish as crown did not cease to demand armed service from the towns as they could provide a strong contingent of cavalry and of well-equipped infantrymen (mainly crossbowmen).⁶⁹ Even in time of peace, municipal membership was a very onerous condition because of the obligation of owning unproductive military equipment.⁷⁰ As municipal hosts they were due to serve for free during six weeks and the monarch was responsible for their wages only if they fought for longer periods.⁷¹ The liability to possess horse, armour, crossbow or light equipment was defined by a minimal level of value of possessions that was called *quantia*.⁷² As weaponry and horses were no longer regarded as reproductive 'capital,' the crown had to force the municipal men to own arms and mount. This is in the origin of what was called the *quantia* system, by which the form of military service was defined according to the value of lands of each man.⁷³

⁶⁷ Concerns of 'economic rationality', not of strategic convenience, framed the design and execution of the expeditions into enemy territory. On the 'economic rationality' in municipal warfare organisation, Garcia Fitz, *Castilla y Leon*, pp. 78-89. Or in English, Powers, James, *Society Organised for War*, California, 1987, pp. 162-185.

⁶⁸ Fernandes, *Entres Mouros e Cristãos*, p. 220.

⁶⁹ On the *quantia* system, see Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 44-58, followed here.

⁷⁰ In each municipality, the *quantia* was set by the king considering the relative affluence of the town and the region's horse-breeding potential, in result of which the *quantias* varied dramatically. Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 47-9.

⁷¹ The fighters themselves did not fight for free, as the municipalities defrayed the costs of their own men. E. g. Guimarães in 1369, *Vimaranis Monumenta Historica*, ed. João Gomes de Oliveira Guimarães, vol. II, Guimarães, 1931, p. 413; Loulé in 1384 Moreno, Humberto, *Actas de Vereação de Loulé*, vol. I, Loulé, 1984, p. 75; Lisbon in 1386, Martins, *Lisboa e a Guerra*, p. 57-61.

⁷² The orthographical distinction between *quantia* and *contia* cannot be identified in contemporary documentation as the two forms were interchangeable. We follow here the convention, established by João Gouveia Monteiro, which marks the semantic opposition between *contia* (annuity given to the nobles) and *quantia* (nominal sum that demanded the ownership of determinate equipment, like English librate system). Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 100-9.

⁷³ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 33. The richest among them were induced to own a fitting mount and complete armour, a second layer of middling townfolk had to own a crossbow, whereas the third, poorer rank of *aquantia* only had obtain light equipment. For the first rank, however grievous it was to sustain a horse, was could also be a road to social ascent. Indeed, during the Fernadine Wars, many plebeian knights joined noble retinues. The distinction between *contia* and *quantia* is often obscured in contemporary documentation because of its

The broad opposition drawn in these pages has some shortcomings. For individual agents of both classes, actual warfare offered both chances to advancement and material risks. Knights could ruin themselves in the king's service⁷⁴ or could benefit from contingent gains, such as plunders, ransoms and prizes from the *povos* or even better their *contia* with a *tença* or increase their *tenças*. For the townsmen who could afford a mount and complete armour, there was the chance of being integrated into a noble retinue and thus became a rear-vassal to the king.⁷⁵ The 'citizens' who chose to serve beyond their customary six weeks were also entitled to wages in equal footing with other knights.

Still, at any rate, the class interest of the municipal oligarchies, which gave voice to the so-called *Povos*, appears as opposed to that of the nobility in what concerned war. The military capacity of the nobles was sustained by the crown, whereas the latter had to provide the means of serving the crown. Yet, this opposition was not entirely diametric: *Povos* indeed opposed actual war while nobility favoured the build-up of war. While the antecedents to the Fernandine Wars show that there was an aristocratic pro-war party,⁷⁶ nobility was not interested in war *per se* but in the likelihood of war. Indeed, in a context of military build-up the nobility would be allowed to tap an increased share of the kingdom's resources, either by increasing the values of *contias* or *tenças* or by increasing the number of noblemen earning them. This was not contrary to royal interest. The problem was aptly summarised by Dinis in 1291 and in 1309, 'poor knights would not joint the [royal] host nor would provide me the services that they ought to for the defence of my land.'⁷⁷

The absence of a diametric, direct opposition between the interests of the *Povos* and the nobility's allowed the 'old kings' to accommodate the peaceful aspirations of the former, which were convergent with their own hoarding objectives, with the redistributive pressures of the latter.

interchangeable usage of the two words, despite their technical contrast established clearly by João Gouveia Monteiro.

⁷⁴ In his will, Fernando I left some monies for knights that were ruined 'because of his service'. Tavares, Maria José Pimenta Ferro, 'A nobreza no reinado de Fernando I e a sua actuação em 1383-1385', *Revista de História Económica e Social*, n. 12, Julho-Dezembro 1983, p. 57.

⁷⁵ The captain vassals recruited his retainers both within his affinity and in the municipalities. For obvious reasons, the monarchy fought this practice. Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p.35.

⁷⁶ Monteiro, João Gouveia, *Aljubarrota. A Batalha Real*, Lisbon, 2003, pp. 10-18.

⁷⁷ Cited in Mattoso, José, *Identificação de um País*, part 2, 6th, Lisbon, 2000, p. 124.

In this respect, the second half of the fourteenth century was a testing time for the monarchy. For the nobility that was affected by the decline of the rents brought by the mid-century crisis, crown's disbursements cannot fail to have become even more tempting and needed than before.⁷⁸ While this was a pan-European factor, in Portugal it was particularly aggravated by political circumstances. Indeed, the ranks of fourteenth-century nobility were swollen by the influx of exiled Castilian knights who sought the court of Pedro I and Fernando I.⁷⁹ Together with the crisis of the rents, this factor increased internal redistributive pressures. While little is known about the post-Black Death phase of the reign of Afonso IV, thanks to Fernão Lopes we know that 'peaceful' Pedro I while avoiding taking arms against the Trastámara usurpers, increased the flat *contia* from 75 *l.* to 100 *l.*⁸⁰ Similarly, as the same chronicler testifies, King Pedro also enlarged the ranks of the crown-subsidised nobility.⁸¹ While Pedro managed to avoid war,⁸² he did not escape a presumably strong growth of the standing expenditure, as Fernão Lopes hints at in other chapters.⁸³ If we credit Fernão Lopes, it was also King Pedro who first opened the *contias* to those who were not born nobles, a movement his father had opposed.⁸⁴

The concrete process of decision-making that led to the Fernandine Wars is irreversibly opaque. Discussion of the 'motives' or the 'vested interests' will avail little in the present case. Still, it is reasonable to suppose that the existence of a functioning, or even prosperous if we believe the *Cortes*, fiscal system constitutes a sufficient cause of the wars unleashed by Fernando. Fourteenth-century nobility looked at the monarchy as a wealthy institution whose coffers war could open.

The essential tools of fourteenth-century Portuguese grand strategy, the frontier, the *contias'* knights and the fleet, had different, if equally demanding, monetary requirements. Payment of the castellan and his garrison, as well as the maintenance and provisioning of the fortifications, was assured by the

⁷⁸ Ormrod, 'The West European,' p. 151. On the crisis of the seigniorial economy in Portugal, see M. H. Cruz Coelho, *O Baixo Mondego nos Finais da Idade Média*, vol. I, Coimbra, 1983, pp. 286, 320, 332 and Amaral, Luís Carlos, *S. Salvador de Grijó na Segunda Metade do Século XIV. Estudo de Gestão Agrária*, Lisbon, 1994, pp. 156-161, 174-6.

⁷⁹ Monteiro, *Ajubarrota*, pp. 10-18.

⁸⁰ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro*, chapter XI, p. 50.

⁸¹ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, chapter LV, pp. 228-9.

⁸² See *supra* p. 88.

⁸³ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro*, chapter XI, pp. 50-1 and chapter XII, p. 55.

⁸⁴ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro*, chapter I, p. 8.

specific constitutions of the diverse border municipalities. While in times of peace the frontier paid for itself, military payments and the permanent fleet were financially much more demanding.⁸⁵ The lack of administrative accounts makes it very difficult to sketch the mechanics of these expenditures but the *Cortes'* depiction of the 'kings of old' offers precious information about the way the crown dealt with war effort. One of the critiques made by the *Povos* in 1371 was that the kings of old paid their grants to their vassals 'with their treasures not with their renders'.⁸⁶ This certainly refers to the direct, as opposed to assigned, payments of *contias*. The direct handing over of *contias*, treasury money, instead of land grants became the monarchical practice after Dinis I.

In other words, the threat of conflict required a permanent war chest, especially if the annual revenue was rigid and general, direct taxes troublesome to obtain. The hoardings of the Portuguese monarchy have already been addressed earlier in section 1.1. The long period of decline of the value hoarded after 1210s was halted only in the reign of Dinis, although the first unequivocal evidence for the recovery of the accumulative capacity is his testament from 1322. The will of Dinis was also important for creating a crown's treasury, rather than the king's treasures of his predecessors. After bestowing part of his riches to his family and other beneficiaries, Dinis urged that the remaining monies should 'stay in the Lisbon treasure to be used 'for defence of the kingdom and war against the enemies to the faith'.⁸⁷ As it will argued for in next chapter, the successors of King Dinis followed this policy with some success (see chapters 1 and 4).

The direct relationship between offensive warfare and increase of taxation, so often highlighted by fiscal historians, has to be thought of differently in the Portuguese case. Indeed, the Portuguese kings' response to the constraints of their military setting was not met only through extraordinary taxation but by a combination of hoarding, permanent redistribution and demands upon the municipalities. The strategy of limited warfare appears as an adaptation of

⁸⁵ Although capital-intensive, a fleet of galleys was arguably more cost-effective than the more conventional land armies. According to values given by F. Lopes for 1353, a mercenary galley (usage and maintenance of a 'national' one would logically be less expensive and paid in weaker coinage) could be hired for an annual 1,000 *dobras*, that is to say 4,000 *libras* of usual currency. Thus, the remuneration for a month of mercenary service, some 333.(3) *libras* a month, equalled the earnings of only ten full-armoured knights. Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XXII, p. 104.

⁸⁶ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 35.

⁸⁷ *Provas*, vol. I, part 2, doc. 11, p. 130.

external policy to the resources that the country's economy and the strained monetary constitution allowed. As it was formulated in the 1322 will of Dinis I, the accumulation of metallic resources had a rationale, the defence of the kingdom. Ultimately, these savings were earmarked for future wars which, in spite of prudent diplomacy, were all too likely given Portugal's geopolitics. This is perhaps a polar opposite to the best studied cases.⁸⁸ This military-financial situation terminated when Fernando I finally succumbed to pressures, both internal and external, for full-blown commitment to the wars between France and England. Although Fernando's aim was the acquisition of more land, along the lines of his ancestors' diplomacy, the country eventually entered a lasting period of continuous warfare, similar to that which other European countries had been enduring.

In the period covered by part I, Portugal shifted from a coercion-intensive to a capital-intensive state, to use Charles Tilly's dichotomy. Twelfth- early thirteenth-century and Portuguese kings had a nominal, virtual claim over the kingdom's resources and the more significant part of their revenues was obtained with a strong degree of, inward or outward, coercion. By contrast, as it has been argued, fourteenth-century monarchs used the profits and savings of their domain closer to the capital-intensive mode of warfare adopted by contemporary republics and city-states. The First Fernandine War with the deployment of mercenaries and with the sending of gold to pay for Aragon would be the last capital-intensive conflict.

⁸⁸ Ormrod, 'The West European', p. 123-7.

Chapter 4 - The Invention of a Domain State

The purpose of this chapter is to present the institutional changes undergone by the Portuguese monarchy as a construction of a domain state. This conceptual option along with its historiographical implications will be dealt in section 4.1. Section 4.2 will approach the loose integration between the political centre and local collection of revenues during the early thirteenth century. By contrast, section 4.3 will show how the monarchy improved its grip on the country's resources while section 4.4 will describe the emergence of the institutions that will define an efficient 'domain state.'

Section 4.1 - The Concepts

According to Fernão Lopes, when Pedro I died, newly-crowned Fernando was informed that the royal treasury held an impressive sum of 800,000 *peças* and 400,000 marks of silver. This equated to nearly three times the annual income of Castile and nine times that of Portugal.¹ That the considerable treasures accumulated by the 'old kings' from Dinis up to Fernando resulted from the inter-generational accumulation with virtually no resort to coinage manipulations neither to extraordinary taxes constitutes a powerful suggestion of the effectiveness of the crown's fourteenth-century fiscal institutions whose lineaments Lopes described.

Notwithstanding the evidence, the system sketched in the chronicles of Fernão Lopes has hardly been considered by the historians who overviewed Portuguese state finances. José Mattoso alluded briefly to the thirteenth-century fiscal organisation only to dismiss it as a 'not very coherent system'. This exact judgment and these very words were reasserted by A. L. de Carvalho Homem.² For Mattoso, the large-scale acquisition of rural and mostly urban properties by Afonso III and his 'more aggressive' collection of new dues and old arrears

¹ See *supra* note 48, p. 98.

² '*Sistema pouco coerente*'. Mattoso, *Identificação de um País*, part 2, p. 194 (first published in 1984); Homem, A. L. de Carvalho, 'A Corte e o Governo Central', Homem and Coelho, *Port. Def.*, p. 546.

derived from the crown's centralising drive after the death of Sancho II. These were pragmatic and efficient acts that did not imply any profound institutional changes.³ As a result of Afonso III's personal intervention, the finances of the crown might have become more solvent but not necessarily more organised. For Carvalho Homem, the first sign of an improved organisation of finances was the emergence of the overseers of finances (*Vedores da Fazenda*) in the last third of the fourteenth century (1369).⁴ This new office was associated by this author with the new fiscal setting brought by the Fernandine Wars.

This interpretation followed closely that of A. H. Oliveira Marques and V. Magalhães Godinho who had signalled the later decades of the fourteenth-century as the moment when the finances of the state cease to be 'patrimonial' and became 'public'. For the former, this was manifest in the emergence of fiscal districts, the *almoxarifados*, and, most of all, of a sales tax common to the whole population of the kingdom: the *sisas*.⁵ The creation of the *Vedores da Fazenda*, the kingdom-wide implementation of the *sisas* and the definite formulation of inalienability of the royal patrimony with João I (1385-1433) converged with the doctrinal perception of a crown as a *respublica*, as a state. These transformations represented a rupture with a past based upon a patrimonial management of the king's finances and the absence of an autonomous institutional apparatus.⁶

More or less explicitly, all these authors opposed a state organisation with a fiscal administration to an incoherent network of officers and institutions subjected to the person of the ruler. According to this paradigm, historians only detected coherent organisation in the end of fourteenth century when state-like institutions – the *almoxarifado*, the *sisas*, the notion of demesne and the emergence of direct, public taxes – were established. To a large extent, the submission of fiscal problems to the grand narratives of 'centralisation' and state-building led Mattoso and Carvalho Homem to assume incoherence for the

³ Leontina Ventura highlighted the 'great reform of the financial administration that started in the reign of Afonso III' (*grande reforma da administração financeira que se inicia também no reinado de Afonso III*) but she did not address the long-term impact of these 'reforms', as her work upon the reign of Afonso III. Ventura, Leontina, *A Nobreza da Corte de Afonso III*, vol. I, Coimbra, 1992, p. 503.

⁴ Homem, *O Desembargo*, pp. 119-133.

⁵ Marques, *Portugal na Crise*, p. 300. This perspective was first suggested in a compact analysis of Portuguese 'public finances' by Magalhães Godinho: Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães, 'Finanças Públicas e Estrutura do Estado', *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, vol. 3, 2nd, Porto, 1992, pp. 21-31.

⁶ Godinho, 'Finanças Públicas,' pp. 21-31.

period prior to the 1370s. By contrast, the present chapter will show that Portuguese finances prior to the Fernandine Wars are intelligible within the conceptual framework built by Bonney and Ormrod, namely as a 'domain state.'⁷

The concept of 'domain state', as it was advanced by Bonney and Ormrod, has to be understood in close continuity to that of 'tribute state'. In fact, for these authors, the two systems share many of their most decisive features.⁸ Unlike the transition from tax state to fiscal state, which cannot be dissociated from dramatic changes within the economy, mainly the development of credit,⁹ domain state and 'tribute state' share the same type of revenues: infrequent and purpose-specific taxes and aids, debasement of coinage in wartime with 'exactions and extortions' playing a similar role in tributary and domainal systems. In both cases, as well, the payments to the state consisted of 'contributions in both money and kind,'¹⁰ although in the case of the tribute state, coercion plays a larger part. Furthermore, it is not the existence of domain alone that defines a 'domain state'. Bonney and Ormrod concede that tribute states could also resort to revenues from the 'domain', the difference being their importance: whereas domainal revenues form the indispensable basis of the state's finance, in tribute-based states the yield of the domain is only one amongst other equally relevant sources: plunder, surplus of colonised lands and tribute.¹¹ Similarly, the resources obtained by these two states are also spent in essentially the same activity: military effort. Indeed, whilst later-day tax states had to pay for technological and organisational improvements with the contribution of their tax-bases and were prone to severe debt-servicing costs during and after their conflicts, the armies of tributary and domainal organisations counted on booty, conquered land and tribute from occupied people to live on. These practices, as well as the resort to labour services for logistics, were common to both systems. There is an important difference: some domain states could scale the costs in proportion to their less elastic income.

⁷ Bonney and Ormrod 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions,' pp. 4-8.

⁸ Bonney and Ormrod 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions,' pp. 4-8.

⁹ Bonney and Ormrod 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions,' pp. 7 and 18-19.

¹⁰ Bonney and Ormrod 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions,' pp. 5 and 14.

¹¹ Bonney and Ormrod 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions,' pp. 5 and 12.

However this change pales in comparison with dramatic shift brought by tax state in this respect.¹²

To Bonney and Ormrod, the differences between the systems are mostly to be found at the level of the central rule: for tributary rulers, itinerancy was a major unifying factor within their states of uncertain borders and unstable peripheries, whereas their domainal counterparts could establish a strong personal rule without the need for constant military expansion and for constant travels in order to re-assert their prominence. This in turn contributes towards 'relatively advanced' forms of administration, as opposed to the rule by a volatile retinue with impermanent officers. As in what concerned expenditure, the difference lies on the relatively higher degree of stability provided by a revenue based on the domain rather than on such variable revenues as those provided by tribute.¹³

The notion of the 'domain' is evidently the cornerstone of this system. Nonetheless, as the authors avail, this concept is contentious and the usages of this word and of its equivalents widely vary within different administrations, historiographies and disciplines. The ambiguity starts with the word itself: twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal and administrative parlance distinguished the *dominium* from the *domanium*: while the former referred to the eminent seigniorial power that the king enjoyed over the territory of the realm, the latter denoted the lands owned by the king, what English administration came to call the 'old demesne.'¹⁴ However, in Schumpeter's original theory, the domain monarchy depended on the exploitation of natural resources owned by the monarch. The 'domain' would thus correspond to the estates, mines, human labour and minting profits that could form the patrimony of the princes. Accordingly, the taxation of commercial activity could not be considered part of the domain. Facing this contrast between the economic and legal-administrative notions of 'domain', Bonney and Ormrod opt for the latter and define domain as the set of regalian rights in the realm, irrespective of their economic nature. Thus, rights over trade and transport of merchandise should not be excluded

¹² For more concrete examples see Barta, János and Ormrod, W. Mark, 'The Feudal Structure and the Beginnings of State Finance', *ESSF*, pp. 53-79.

¹³ Bonney and Ormrod, 'Crises, Revolutions,' pp. 5 and 15.

¹⁴ Leyte, Guillaume, *Domaine et Domainalité Publique dans la France Médiévale (XIIe-XVe siècles)* Strasbourg, 1996, p. 127.

from the 'domain', in spite of not arising from the exploitation of natural resources.¹⁵

In the context of the thirteenth- to fifteenth-century European administrative workings and, consequently, with the available sources, the option of equating the domain to the regalian rights is certainly more practicable. The distinction between revenues from direct or indirect exploitation of royal landed property and the remaining seigniorial sources (judicial fines, tolls, customs and customary payments) was not an operational one for thirteenth- and fourteenth-century accounting bodies. When auditing their officers, neither the *Casa dos Contos*, nor the Exchequer nor the *Chambre des Comptes* were interested in distinguishing the revenues of direct exploration of regal lands from justice profits, monopolies, military contributions and tolls.¹⁶ Officer and accountant dealt with territorial units which comprised incomes of different nature. English sheriffs, French bailiffs and Portuguese *almoxarifes* were accounted as the responsible officers for a district not for a set of revenues. Indeed, the collection and spending of the royal revenues were only part of the obligations that those officers had within the territory assigned to them.

Thus, domain should be thought of as a set of regular revenues organised in territorial units and considered as integral to the dignity of the crown or state.¹⁷ As such, the history of any domain state, and indeed of the state, is intrinsically connected with the changes in the territorial administration. The link between a political centre and the territorial control of the realm is the

¹⁵ Ormrod, 'England in the Middle Ages', *RFS*, pp. 22-5.

¹⁶ In England, the yield of the king's manors and boroughs (the *demesne*) was included in the general 'farm of the county' which comprised also variegated profits of justice from local courts. See Morris, William A. 'The Sheriff,' in Willard, J. F., Morris, William A., Strayer, Joseph, and Dunham, W. N., *The English Government at Work*, vol. II, *Fiscal Administration*, Cambridge MA, 1947, pp. 74-75. As such, the sheriff was accounted for together with a series of other revenues. Similarly, the legal distinction between property and seigniorial rights was not relevant in the operations of the *Chambre des Comptes*. (Leyte, *Domaine et Domainalité*, p. 195.) In Portugal, the distinction was also meaningless until the very end of the fourteenth century, when the century-old *Casa dos Contos* was divided into the *Contos* proper (also called *de Lisboa* or *do Reino*) dealing with the kingdom-wide revenues and the *Contos da Casa Real* auditing only the officers of the agricultural estates which reverted directly to the royal household. Rau, Virginia, *A Casa dos Contos*, Coimbra, 1951, pp.25-7.

¹⁷ This definition remains close to that by Jean Favier: '*un complexe de revenus et de droits disséminés dans l'espace, ainsi peut-on définir le domaine*'. Favier, Jean, *Finance et Fiscalité dans le Bas Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1971, p. 23.

primary condition for a successful domain state.¹⁸ This connection which Michael Mann called 'territorial centralisation' can be regarded as the state's only irreducible power, as the capacity that no other network can produce.¹⁹ Without a contiguous network of spatial institutions linked to the political centre, the state would be unable to effectively tap the commercial or agrarian resources of the country and, crucially, manage them according to its own criteria. Indeed, without territorial institutions the political centre would require physical presence to rule, as in coercive, itinerant and volatile 'tribute states.' Indeed, domain state is not conceivable without a territorial system susceptible of gathering 'expendable income' and transfer, physically or by coordinated information and assignment, to the recipients decided by the political centre.²⁰

Section 4.2 - One King, Many Systems

One king, many systems: thus could we broadly describe the taxation of late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Portugal. Unlike post-Conquest English monarchs who enjoyed a 'system of 'undifferentiated government'' throughout the kingdom,²¹ the powers of the kings of Portugal were unevenly distributed within the realm. Leaving aside tribute and other military-related income, late twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century kings claimed as theirs a wide array of land-tied contributions throughout the kingdom. Large-scale conquests led by the monarchs had brought under the same throne the urban networks and cities of the South, warring autonomous towns in the Centre and East together with the primitive core of the realm, the rural North. While the vocabulary of the royal charters is remarkably homogeneous, each of these universes had endogenous institutions and taxes with the authority of the monarch bound together.

¹⁸ For this reason, it is surprising to find that Bonney and Ormrod do not consider the role played by local administration in the consolidation of the domain state. For these historians, both tribute and domain states display 'high levels of local autonomy with royal sanction and/or punishment'. *Crises*, p. 4.

¹⁹ Mann, Michael, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,' *War, States and Capitalism. Studies in Political Sociology*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 27-29. Or, to use borrow idea and an expression from Michael Mann, 'the state is indeed a place.' Mann, 'The Autonomous Power', p. 16.

²⁰ The notion of 'expendable income', originally from Robert Stacey, is taken from Vincent Moss. Moss, Vincent, 'The Norman Fiscal Revolution,' *Crises*, pp. 40, note 21, and 44-45.

²¹ Wolffe, B. P., *The Royal Demesne in English History*, London, 1971, p. 35.

The revenues collected in these different areas belonged to contrasting traditions. In the heartlands of the kingdom - in very broad terms the lands north of Coimbra - encroachments, overlapping jurisdictions, ecclesiastical and noble immunities and liberties, customs and individual, hereditary privileges formed impossibly complex jurisdictions so that, ultimately, each holding and each hearth had to pay specific rights and fees. In the northern half of the kingdom, the territory was divided in contiguous *terrae* which formed a coherent spatial grid.²² These were predominantly, if not entirely, rural areas with a few, but time-honoured, common institutions – weight and capacity standards, a judge and also customary laws and fines. The judicial scope of these *terrae* made them also convenient scopes for other non-judicial regalian payments. However, each *terra* was an intricate mosaic of three basic types of holdings: noble and ecclesiastical immunities, free holdings liable to the exercise of royal powers (Lat. *hereditates forarii*) and king's lands (*regalengii*, Port. *reguengos*). The 1220 and 1258 enquiries on this area distinguish clearly these three situations. The former were those wherefrom no contribution was due to the monarch, as all rights of the monarch had been transferred to (or alienated by) noble vassals or monasteries. Contributively, these areas were irrelevant, as their inhabitants had to recur to seigniorial courts and they were not summoned to the royal host. In contrast to these stood the *forarii* holdings which were liable to a varying host of dues and rights,²³ comprising both occasional payments reminiscent of the judicial and military powers of the monarch and smaller levies marking a sort of personal dependency to the monarch. Many of these dues derived from the royal itinerancy: some holdings were liable to the storage of the king's agrarian produce, while others had to lodge the monarch. Particular lineages were bound to serve the king as collectors of levies and of yields, whilst others had to fetch or lend particular items to king or serve as huntsmen.²⁴ The concrete burden imposed upon each holding varied

²² There are some monographs on individual *terrae*: Andrade, Amélia, Krus, Luís and Mattoso, José, *O Castelo e a Feira. A terra de Santa Maria nos séculos XI a XIII*, Lisbon, 1989; Henriques, António Castro, *O Rei e a Terra do Barroso. Montanha, Periferia e Poder Régio*, 2 vols, Lisbon, 2003; In French, albeit focused on the military aspects, see Barroca, Mário, 'Les Châteaux,' *Les Confins du Moyen-Âge. Art Portugais. XII-XVe Siècle*, Gent, 1991, pp. 59-66.

²³ Lat. *fora*; Port. *foros* or *direitos*. See on this word, Merea, Paulo, 'Em torno da palavra *forum*', *Revista Portuguesa de Filologia*, vol. I, tomo II, Coimbra, 1948, p. 485-94.

²⁴ Gonçalves, 'Alguns aspectos,' pp. 33-57.

immensely. Naturally, the tenants of king's lands were far more heavily burdened: not only had they to pay a hefty portion of the production (ranging from ½ to 1/10), but also they were liable to a series of periodical levies in kind as tokens of recognition (*directura*). Furthermore, they were subject to the same levies and payments of the *forarii*.

The mediocre value and diversity of individual payments, many of which were in kind, did not mean that they had to wait for the itinerancy of the monarch to be consumed or transferred. From the second quarter of the thirteenth century onwards, some examples of tax-farming of the *terrae* are visible and the Enquiries of 1258 show that officers named 'general mayors of the *terra*' farmed the revenues within the district.²⁵ They did so by connecting the many petty mayors (*mordomos*) responsible for small-scale units, such as villages or valleys or by some types of revenue.²⁶

However, more often the *terrae* would end in the hands of a tenant who held the functional powers of the monarch within that land: leadership of the army and the judging of his subjects in his court. These powers, and the income they brought, were not handled directly by the monarch. On the contrary: twelfth- and thirteenth-century Portuguese monarchs regarded these *terrae* as feudal *beneficia* to be distributed to his vassals. Thus, a vassal who held a *terra* as his tenure acted as delegate of the king and, as such, enjoyed all the prerogatives due to the monarch within its boundaries.²⁷ Naturally, the transfer of the royal rights comprised the usufruct of the revenues.

The greater development of the municipalities in the Eastern and Central small-towns and the relatively recent date of their incorporation in the kingdom

²⁵ Port. '*mordomos maiores da terra*.' Henriques, *O Rei e a Terra*, vol. I, p. 80. Particularly revealing are two excerpts of the 1259 Enquiries quoted by Rosa Marreiros: '*Johanes Alfonsi fuit maiordomus Terre et perdidit ipsa terra in guisa quod non potuit pagare ipsam terram*'; '*Menendus Pelagii fuit maiordomus istius terre qui non potens persolvere rendam Domino Regi*.' Marreiros, *Propriedade Fundiária*, vol. II, pp. 588-9, not. 281.

²⁶ Their service as collectors of these rights was in itself a right of the king. By collecting the temporally sparse revenues due to the king, the *mordomo* was paying his tax in service. Indeed, being a *mordomo* was a burden that could be redeemed by a considerable sum of money. TT, Maço 12 de Forais Antigos, fol. 43, for a charter confirming the resumption of the 'service' of being *mordomo* in exchange for 300 *morabitanos*.

²⁷ This situation of tenure is better formulated in later charters, as that of Cerveira in the far North (1266): *pro maiordomatu et vocibus et calumpniis et omnibus aliis redditibus et directis que debebat habere meus riqus homo qui ipsam terram tenebat nomine et loco mei*. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 81v-82. This is implied in many of the General Laws of 1211: 'neither we nor those who held the *terras* from us nor [their] *mordomos*' can lodge for free in the churches, 'neither we nor he who holds *terra* from us' can force the peasants to make quivers for hunting, 'no knight nor any other who holds *terras* from us' could resort to prises. *Leges*, pp. 164, 172 and 177-8 (3rd, 14th and 25th laws).

allowed for the monarchy to impose from the mid-twelfth-century onwards a more uniform fiscal grip. Here the king's revenues were not determined by the concrete condition of each particular holding; rather they resulted out of a collective negotiation with the king that bound the whole community and its territory.²⁸ The results of the negotiation were stated in municipal charters which stated the king's power over a specific community and the payments therefore due to him. To some extent, the revenues were the same as in the Northern lands - the fines (*coimas*) and payments to the court (*voz*); the obligation of military service and the obligatory bequeath of chattels to the king (*lutuosa*). However, the collective, and perhaps a livelier trade, provided the monarchy with sources of income unknown further North: municipal tolls, duties of some sold goods and the already-mentioned 'fifth' of the booty obtained.

Moreover, the collective, rather than individual, scale of the taxation worked to the benefit of the king. A good example of this is provided by the supposedly universal obligation of feeding the itinerant king and his court, the *collecta*: while in the North it induced individual holdings to provide specific foods, in the municipalities of the centre, it bound an entire town with its hinterland, thus resulting in a hefty sum. Similarly, the payment in lieu of military service – which in the North was reduced to paltry, irregular *fossadaria* – bound the able men of the community, horsemen and foot alike. Indeed, while the levies of the Northern territories were imposed according to the particular condition of a holding before its lord, in the towns of the Centre levies were paid by a community which recognised the king as its lord. This implied a decisive practical difference: the municipal justices and the collector of revenues were appointed by the municipality which, accordingly, kept a portion of the tolls and fines.

Although most charters expose in detail the levies and fines applicable to each particular fine or toll, in practical terms the community was a collective taxpayer and, at least from the days of Sancho II, tended to pay lump sums. The municipal charters were far from attaining any sort of uniformity. In spite of a noticeable unifying purpose, the different tributary traditions, the varying depth of the negotiations, the contrasting dates of incorporation in the realm posed

²⁸ On the economic aspects of this negotiation, see Esteves, Rui, *The Portuguese Concelhos and Forais. A Case in Institutional History from the eleventh to the mid thirteenth centuries*, 2003 (online working paper, Univ. Stanford).

limits –or irresistible opportunities – to the monarchs' aim. The Leonese *moneda* was collected in the northern and north-eastern areas formerly belonging to that kingdom. Additionally, as the latter area had been subjected to Leonese Law, towns were liable to a form of capitation paid on the feast of St. Martin known as '*Martinica*' which was ignored in the other regions of the country. At any rate, from the land occupied by municipalities the monarch could count with greater liquidity of income.

In the southern cities of the Tagus Basin and the Algarve the monarchy resorted to more sophisticated forms of taxation, given the stronger liquidity and monetisation of the economy. In these mercantile urban centres the king entered the market by selling grain and wine his lands produced or he had obtained from tolls.²⁹ A host of tolls paid by goods entering the city and a sales tax further controlled the market. Here the right of conquest endowed the king with the dues to the former sovereign and as such there universal obligations, like the uniform tax over land-use (the *jugada*) which bound all owners and users of the tolls and customs which reflected the control of the space. These tolls and customs included the old Muslim tenth which, unknown in the Northern *terrae*, burdened with 10% all products entering the city.³⁰ Sales taxes, in the form of *alcavalas*, already existed. Moreover, these towns had revenues unknown elsewhere. The Moorish communities who had surrendered without combat were taxed independently and subject to unique forms of taxation (the *alfitra* and the *azoque*) besides having to pay a share upon their agrarian production. Similarly, Jewish communities continued to pay the same capitation tax as in the Muslim occupation: the *djyzia* (Port. *algiza*, *genesim*). In the territories ruled by the Lisbon-Santarém-Coimbra law, owners of arable lands were bound to the land-use tax (*jugata*). Here, the fiscal grip of the monarchy was noticeably more uniform than in the Centre: in 1179 the same law was imposed upon the three leading centres of the kingdom - Lisbon, Santarém and Coimbra - and it would be later it was extended to the coastal towns of the Algarve, while most of the towns of the hinterland received the custom of Évora.

²⁹ In the case of wine, the king reserved himself the prerogative *relego*, that is to say the prohibition of wine selling before the king's wine (both resulting from tolls and produced in the king's lands) had been sold out.

³⁰ Gonzalez Arce, José Damián, *De la Fiscalidad Islámica a la Cristiana. El Dízimo Real y la Renta Agraria en Toledo (siglos XI-XV)*, (online working paper, Univ. Murcia). It should be noted that the tenth was collected in 1253 in Porto. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 11.

In the charters defining these customs, it is possible to find demands common with the rest of the kingdom: the taxes paid for attending the court and the fines (*voz* and *coimas*), payment in lieu of military service, tolls.

Although quantitative indications for the period are dim, the high degree of commercialisation of the economy could not fail to endow the monarchy with far greater revenues than in the Northern areas. This circumstance was reflected in the way royal income was collected. There are clear indications that the considerable revenues of the great southern municipalities were tax-farmed by financiers (Christian or Jewish) who could advance large sums to the monarchy. In the Lisbon-Coimbra-Santarém customary law, the collection of revenues was centralised in a single officer, the mayor or, as he became increasingly known, the *almoxarife*. However, neither the Carolingian nor Arabic designations allow us to comprehend the profile of this officer (see Appendix 2). Unlike their northern counterparts, the mayors of Lisbon, Coimbra and Santarém were no petty officers: two mayors of Lisbon were important enough to confirm two royal charters in 1158 and 1160.³¹ Unlike the Andalusian overseer or *al-mushrif*, thirteenth-century Portuguese *almoxarifes* were territorial officers which operated on a municipal scale.³²

While different, the profile of the Castilian *almojarife* allows a better understanding of the *almoxarife* that appears in the charter from 1199 onwards. From the late twelfth century onwards, the Kings of Castile had their Jewish *almojarife mayor* who acted as the king's main financier and advanced the profits of taxation.³³ He presided over a network of tax-farming *almojarifes* which acted locally in name of the crown in a few southern cities, most of them former capitals of Muslim kingdoms.³⁴ While from the first two mentions to *almoxarifes* in the Portuguese documentation (1199 and 1200), it is clear that Portuguese *almoxarifes* operated at the municipal scale together with municipal authorities (castellan and judges) and not at the scale of the *almojarifazgos* of

³¹ Cateano, Marcello, *A Administração Municipal de Lisboa na Primeira Dinastia*, 3rd, Lisbon, 1990, p. 15.

³² DS, doc. 79, p. 124 (31 January 1195), doc. 116, p. 180 (28 May 1199), doc. 215, pp. 320-21 (s. d.) and doc. 237, p. 349 (17 October ? [1206?]).

³³ The Legal Compilation of Alfonso X, the *Partidas*, finished c. 1261 describes the attributions of the *almojarife* (Part II, title 9, § 5.

³⁴ Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, p. 235. The *almojarife* and his associates were responsible for a set of revenues known as the *almojarifazgos* which included the all the royal revenues, both fiscal (tolls and tenths) and patrimonial (the *Bodega Real*). Gonzalez Arce, *De La Fiscalidad Islámica*, p. 24.

the kingdom of Castile, the first *almoxarife* of Lisbon can be regarded as very close to his Castilian counterparts.

In a letter dated from December 1210, the king urges a certain *Cidy*, whom he calls 'my Jew' (*meo iudeo*), not to arrest his Christian debtors.³⁵ Nine years later, two Jews, Yusef and Salomon 'sons of the *almoxarife*' sold a vast property in the vicinity of Lisbon and in the next year, in Coimbra, another man with a Hebraic name (Moussel) is styled as 'son of the *almoxarife*'.³⁶ Since the sales instruments of 1219 and 1220 refer to three Jewish 'sons of the *almoxairfe*,' *Cidy* was very possibly the father of these men. The reference to an '*almoxarife* of Santarém' called *Domnus* Daniel who, together 'with his associates,' owed a sum of c. 11,000 *morabitanos* to Afonso II confirms that the early-thirteenth-century *almoxarife* worked, or could work, as a tax-farmer.³⁷ On the other hand, the evidence present in the Laws of 1211 seems to indicate that the holding of sources of revenue resulted in the personal gain of the officers, either by simple appropriation or by usury with the king's monies.³⁸ When complemented by the aforementioned Sancho's letter granting the tax-farmers of Lisbon the privilege of not being forced to farm the rents of the lands, the sales of the king's wine or the king's tolls against their will,³⁹ these indications show that the collection of revenues in the municipalities of the South depended on tax-farms by financiers.

Given the institutional diversity of the realm, Portuguese kings were at the receiving end of a tangle of revenues that they did not create and whose organisation, set in the municipal charters or in customs, they would not alter. Through his physical presence, military initiatives and also coercion late twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century kings bound together these contrasting systems without changing them. At best, there was a clear perception that the monarchy conferred some sort of coherence to the different institutional

³⁵ DS, doc. 196, p. 303 (7 December 1210).

³⁶ PTI, 'Lisboa,' doc. 4, pp. 201-2 (December 1219) and 'Coimbra,' doc. 5, p. 209 (September 1220).

³⁷ 'Como fosse achado en hum rool das diuidas que he ena mha chanceleria que Don Daniel e seus companheyros ficarom por dar a el rey Don Affonso o segundo meu auoo trijnta mil maravedis de dez soldos.' TT, Chanc. Dinis I, livro 2, fol. 84v. The document is from 1295 but it concerns events in the reign of Afonso II (1211-23). The *maravedi* of 10 s. mentioned are Almohad *dirhams*, a silver coined used here as money of account, not the Portuguese *morabitano*. Ferro, 'Para o Estudo da Numária de D. Dinis,' pp. 206-9.

³⁸ *Leges*, p. 174-6 (laws 20th and 23th).

³⁹ DS, doc. 195, pp. 301-2 (December 1210).

universes of the realm. All fiscal vocabulary applied in the charter granted in 1179 to the kingdom's most important municipalities – Lisbon, Santarém and Coimbra – could also be used in the northern lands. All the king's sources of income are called *regalia iura* (including taxes, monopolies, military leadership and judicial profits) and their collection is ascribed to a mayor or *maiordomus*, not an *almoxarife*. These two words – *maiordomus* and *regalia jura* - could be used to denote the entirely different things in the context of the *terrae* of primitive Portugal: although *regalia jura* in Lisbon or Santarém referred to the tenth on land trade, the tax on *jugada* or the old sales-tax (*alcavala*), in the North they would refer to the old tax in lieu of military service (the *fossadaria*) and to the obligation of bequeathing the king (*lutuosa*). Even when alienating them, royal charters refer to the king's lands and jurisdictions with a variety of striking expressions such as *fiscalia*, *omnia quod ad regem pertinent*, *regalia*, *regalia jura*, *fiscale servitium* or *meis directis*. However, the very variety and level of abstraction of these terms betray their irrelevance to concrete administrative practice. Deprived of an autonomous spatial organisation, the monarchy depended on its authority over municipal oligarchies, financiers and tenants to whom it granted the *regalia jura* in turn of their loyalty and service.

The idea of the crown lands or specific rights played little or no part in the ideology of the early Portuguese kingship. Indeed, unlike in better-known contemporary cases, the symbol of the 'crown' as an institution independent of its bearer had not been articulated.⁴⁰ The self-representation of Portuguese kingship, directly influenced by papal doctrine, was rather different: kingship was correlative to an expanding *regnum*, instead of a set of institutions with intrinsic lands and functions.⁴¹ This doctrine had been formulated clearly in the papal bull which recognised self-proclaimed Afonso I (1143-1179) the title of king: the *Manifestis Probatum Est* of 1179. Accordingly, the charters and wills of King Sancho I (1185-1211) articulate and transmit the lofty conception of the indivisible *regnum*. As Maria-João Branco argues, this indivisibility of the

⁴⁰ In England, the first indications of the inalienability of the crown lands go back to the time of Henry II. Harriss, *King, Parliament*, pp. 131-2. In France, the crown became a concept autonomous from the person of the king (and not merely a 'symbol' of him) in the middle of the twelfth century. The idea of lands belonging to the crown first appears in royal charters in 1171-2. Leyte also stresses that along with France, Aragon, Hungary, Bohemia and Poland adopted similar ideas before the middle of the 13th century. Leyte, *Domaine et Domainalité*, pp. 200-5.

⁴¹ In this matter I have followed Branco, Maria-João, *Poder Real e Eclesiásticos*, 2 vols., Lisbon, 1999. On this doctrine and its application to the royal wills see Branco, *D. Sancho I*, pp. 86, 127 and 163-5.

regnum was affirmed against the practice, so common in the Peninsula, of dividing the realm between male heirs or to alienate parts of it to compensate younger sons or daughters.⁴² As such, there is no trace of a link between the *regnum* and the conception of a legal person entitled to specific revenues and lands, let alone any practical limits imposed to the monarch's disposal of his lands.⁴³ In practice, the idea of the inalienability of the *regnum* did not prevent the habit of alienating patrimonial land (*reguengos*) and/or royal jurisdiction. At any rate, the considerable treasure amassed by Sancho I was his personal property (*mea pecunia*) and two-thirds of it were distributed between his descendants other than the heir-apparent. As Maria-João Branco has argued, King Sancho I disposed of his considerable treasury irrespective of other considerations.

The central set of institutions was very loosely connected to the local administration. Royal logistics for the wandering Sancho I was secured by a set of ministers called *oboedientales*: the chamberlain,⁴⁴ butler, wine-butler, tailor, etc.. These were men of some status⁴⁵ who had to 'make our [the king's] expenses, keep our cloths, the tenths, and let the king's lands or lend the king's grain or sell the king's wine.'⁴⁶ On the other hand, there was the court mayor (*maiordomus curie*) who distributed the tenures amongst the king's nobles. The crisis of the royal finances, first detected in the will of 1214, saw Afonso II, the sedentary monarch *par excellence*, attempting some noteworthy reforms. Afonso II, who spent most of his reign between Lisbon and Santarém, attempted to discipline the personnel of the royal household with humiliating physical punishments for fraudsters in 1211.⁴⁷ Two regulations of the royal household would be issued later in 1216 and 1222.⁴⁸

⁴² Branco, *D. Sancho I*, pp. 163-5.

⁴³ Branco, *D. Sancho I*, p. 165.

⁴⁴ Under Sancho I, royal charters barely disclose the existence of a chamberlain (*repositarius*) and of a mobile chamber (*repositus* or *camera*) as distinct from the sedentary treasure keeps. A law of 1218 still threatened to punish the great-chamberlains with compensating the king of anything that is lost in the houses and churches where the king chooses to lodge and the houses near the churches where the king listens to the church offices. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, *livro* 3, fol. 7v.

⁴⁵ Indeed the law considers the hypothesis of some *ovençais* having the status of knight and employing auxiliaries.

⁴⁶ *Leges*, p. 176 (23th law). Surprisingly, in the General Laws the verb used to describe the holding of an *ovença* (*ter*) from the king is the same as in the tenancies: '*aquele que de nos teuer alguma cousa ovençal*'. The *ovençais* in a later law were later called those who have *servicia in domo mea*. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, *livro* 3, fols. 8-8v.

⁴⁷ *Leges*, p. 176 (law 23^m).

⁴⁸ Branco, *Poder Real e Eclesiásticos*, vol. II, pp. 39 and 88.

The ambitions of the crisis-triggered reforms of Afonso II went beyond the discipline of household officers. He organised elusive records known as the *Recabedo* books, first mentioned in 1216. These books apparently recorded (some? all?) royal revenues and to whom they ought to be paid. More famous are the monumental enquiries on the royal rights, conducted in the non-municipal lands of the northern dioceses (Braga, Porto, Lamego and Viseu) in 1220. These enquiries hint at the need to not only control royal logistics but also the lands and rights held from the monarch.⁴⁹

Even if Afonso II had an impressive knowledge of royal resources and possibly of the way they were spent, the impossibly diverse conditions of the country meant that only a share of the king's nominal resources would actually find their way from the villages and borders to the royal coffers. The intention of Afonso II and of his sons and successors, Sancho II and Afonso III, was to concentrate in his hands at least the most cashable resources. This seems to have been the role of the first central officer with fiscal attributions: the *portarius maior* (Port. *porteiro mor*). Institutional historians have assigned the role of 'coordinating the countrywide collection of revenues' to this officer.⁵⁰ He first appears late in the reign of Afonso II in the shape of two *portarii maiores* who witness a royal charter dated 1222.⁵¹ In 1225, a single *portarius maior* appears.⁵² His functions are not easy to discern.⁵³ From his very designation, it is likely that he centralised the profits of the lesser local *portarii*. These appear occasionally in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century charters as ad hoc collectors

⁴⁹ The enquiries were presented, and conducted, according to a fourfold structure, comprehending: royal lands (*reguengos*), *fora* (non-patrimonial levies), rights of patronage in churches and possessions of the orders. While the first two clearly can be included in the king's revenues, the fourth cannot. The number of categories inquired (four) and the number of *Recabedo* books (four) is probably a coincidence. One could imagine that each of the book covered one of this categories. However, the chancery of Afonso II has a consistent policy of multiplying the copies. Vilar, *D. Afonso II*, p. 165. Presumably, it was included in order to monitor the encroachments made by these institutions. Nonetheless, the enquiries of 1220 testify the drive towards the territorial perception and management of the *regalia jura*. Although the practical functions of the 1220 inquisitions are still being discussed, one should consider the hypothesis that they could be used as a form of audit. Since they bore upon the Northern section of the realm, most of the king's revenues were expressed in kind, a factor that would made the audit procedures cumbersome.

⁵⁰ Barros, *História da Administração*, vol. III, p. 240. On this and related officers, as well on the historiography about them, see Homem, *O Desembargo*, pp. 119-33, *maxime* 121-2.

⁵¹ Branco, *Poder Real e Eclesiásticos*, vol. II, p. 88 (TT, *Núcleo Antigo*, doc. 480, fol. 70).

⁵² SS, doc. 24, p. 210.

⁵³ Deposits the minting material in the treasury of Santa Cruz in 1261, *TAlII*, doc. X, pp. 242-5; and he witnesses the deposit of monies in the same place, together with the chancellor in 1265, *TAlII*, doc. XXVIII, pp. 252-3. Curiously, in the year that Afonso III redacted his testament, 1271, the *porteiro-mor* and *reposteiro-mor* coincide in the same person, *LL*, doc. 68, p. 207.

of individual sources of revenue: land and sea tolls and the royal tenths.⁵⁴ In addition, the *portarius* is often mentioned as the person responsible for the demarcation of noble and ecclesiastical immunities and, as such, he was probably responsible for the hefty fines resulting of their trespass.⁵⁵ Thus, seen from an economic angle, the *portarii* dealt primarily with cash or resources working as proxies for cash, such as cloth and grain (in the land and sea tolls).⁵⁶ As João Cordeiro Pereira has highlighted, between the 1250s and the 1270s the Portuguese customs system was already able to monitor both the terrestrial borders and the ports collecting a uniform tenth (*dízima*) on imports.⁵⁷ This could justify the existence of a *portarius-maior* who would audit or concentrate the profits of the local *portarii* and would himself be held responsible for them.⁵⁸ With the development of both central and local officers in the early decades of the fourteenth century, the *portarius-maior* became extinct.⁵⁹

Section 4.3 - From Tenure to Custody

As it has been argued above, the existence of a local administration is extremely decisive in the fiscal system. In purely institutional terms, the typical relations between the political centre and its nominal resources can only be understood if two forms of territorial control are differentiated: 'tenure' and 'custody'. In the first situation, a set of resources nominally belonging to the king in a given territory is assigned to someone, together with judicial, military powers and privileges to be exercised within a given same territory. He would exert his power in lieu of monarch but oriented towards his own, rather than the king's, dynastic interests. For the tenant this would be as much a *beneficium* as an *officium*. In custody, in contrast, a set of revenues are entrusted to an officer whose function is to collect, store and spend them in accordance with orders emanating from the centre. In this situation, coercive powers are, in theory at

⁵⁴ Unlike *almoxarifes* they were not placed on municipalities to manage set of disparate revenues. Branco, *Poder Real*, vol. II, p. 248.

⁵⁵ This is the oldest documented function of a *portarius regis*, DR, doc. 356, p. 480 (1185).

⁵⁶ Presumably, they also controlled the officers dealing with ports, the *riparii*, whose importance to royal revenues is apparent in the will of Sancho II. SS, doc. 44, p. 240.

⁵⁷ Pereira, João Cordeiro, *Para a História das Alfândegas em Portugal no Início do Século XVI (Vila do Conde - Organização e Movimento)* Lisbon, 1983, pp. 22-4.

⁵⁸ TT, Gaveta XII, maço 13, doc. 10.

⁵⁹ The *porteiro-mor* survived up to 1321. Homem, *O Desembargo*, pp. 121-8, 292, 488-95.

least, tied to the officer's fiscal functions. It is, thus, simply an *officium*, as it separates administration from patronage and the territory is no longer regarded as a benefice. In this situation, both redistribution and military service would be assured by the monies extracted by the king's officers from the territorial units.

This distinction can be recognised in some concrete, well-known institutional contexts: the contrast between curial and custodian sheriffs in twelfth- and thirteenth-century England.⁶⁰ The Castilian thirteenth- and fourteenth-century administrative units (the *merinados*) were clearly disposed of as tenures,⁶¹ while the French bailiffs had custodian functions within their *bailliages*. For the present case, the distinction between custody and tenure is already clear in the General Laws of 1211.⁶² In spite of the erratic, fluid vocabulary, a contrast between the officers and the tenants who held lands from the king is clearly apparent in this legislation.⁶³ The clearest example of this difference is perhaps twenty-seventh law which commands that 'those who held land from us' should not fail to collect fines on account of poverty and the same applied to the castellans and judges of the land 'we [the king] have withhold for us'.⁶⁴ This distinction between lands given away and those retained by the king did not apply only to justice and its profits. The third General Law stated that neither the king's officers (styled *almoxarifes*) nor 'those who hold those lands from us [the king]' could appropriate the cargo of shipwrecks.⁶⁵ Another law forbids both the tenants of the king's lands and the king's officers (here called *ovençais*) to pay their purveyances under their just price, as it was customary.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Carpenter, D. A., 'The Decline of the Curial Sheriff in England, 1194-1258', *English Historical Review*, vol. 91, n. 358, Jan., 1976, pp. 1-32.

⁶¹ For the Castilian *merinados*, see Alvarez Borge, Ignacio, *Monarquía Feudal y Organización Territorial: Alfoques y merindades en Castilla (siglos X-XV)* Madrid, 1993, p. 206.

⁶² The laws are articulated as a response to concrete grievances and as such the laws indirectly provide a description of current administrative practices. Branco, 'The General Laws of Afonso II,' pp. 86-91.

⁶³ Although, *almoxarife* and *tenente* can be sharply distinguished, the vocabulary relative to them fluctuates considerably in, predominantly Latin, twelfth- and early thirteenth-century royal charters and other better, partly because the vocabulary of the former was less permeable to colloquial speech. The *almoxarife* could be translated by the Latinate name of *maiordomo* in twelfth-century charters (as other Arabic offices were translated with some loose Latin equivalent, whenever available) while *tenente* is an erudite word adopted by the historians that seldom appears in contemporary sources. The tenorial position was designated by a rich vernacular and Latin vocabulary, including *dominus terrae* (Port. *senhor da terra*) *divus homo* (Port. *rico-homem da terra*) or *ille qui tenebat/tenet terra, vassalus*. In the present work, *almoxarife* and *tenente* will be used as technical terms with the meaning explained.

⁶⁴ 'Alguns que de nos as terras teuerem' *Leges*, p. 179.

⁶⁵ 'Que os nossos almoxarifes nom leuem deles cousa nem aqueles que de nos as terras teuerem nem nenhuum outro'. *Leges*, p. 164.

⁶⁶ *Leges*, p. 176 (23rd law).

Similarly, in the seventeenth law, the prohibition of lodging in the churches was extended both to the 'mayors' and to those who held the lands from the king.⁶⁷

In all these four laws, which were to be applied for the whole space of the kingdom, two different situations are envisaged: either authority - with correlative material gains - of a given territory was held as tenure or it was administered by an officer. In the first case, the idiom 'those who hold lands from us' unambiguously signals a vassal/lord relationship whose *beneficium* is constituted by the revenues associated with the rule of the *terras*.⁶⁸ If the territory was held by tenure, the judiciary fines, the rent of the king's lands and an array of personal fees reverted to the tenant (*tenente*), together with his judicial and military power, exerted in the name of the king. Furthermore, the tenant was not accountable for the powers he exerted in a territory held by him neither for the revenues he collected. At best, tenure comprised the obligation of providing free military service with a retinue.

By contrast with 'those who hold the lands', the officers acted as custodians of the king's interests within a given territory. The designations employed for the custodian officers are diverse (*almoxarife*, *ovençal* and *mordomo*) but all exclude a lord/vassal-type relationship with the monarch.⁶⁹ Although offices could be lucrative,⁷⁰ they were not *beneficia*, as they were subordinated to or controlled by other instances of equal standing and *ovençais* and *mordomos* were so bound to their mission that they could be forced by the king to collect or to tax-farm his revenues.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Leges*, p. 173 (17th law).

⁶⁸ The sentence is presumably translating *illi qui de nobis terras tenerint*, a common phrasing in the General Enquiries of 1258. The vassalic connotations of the verb *tenere* are well known within the Portuguese context. On the vocabulary of Portuguese 'feudalism', Mattoso, José, 'A Difusão da Mentalidade Vassálica na Linguagem Quotidiana,' *Fragmentos de uma Composição Medieval*, 2nd ed., Lisbon, 2001, pp. 119-131.

⁶⁹ In the Laws of 1211, three different names () are employed to denote this situation. These three words do not convey exactly the same: *ovençal* (Lat. *obediencialis*) is a name given to ministers of the monarch who held specific sources of revenues. *Leges*, p. 176 (23th Law). On the term 'ovença', see Caetano, *A Administração Municipal*, pp. 37-8; Amaral, *S. Salvador de Grijó*, p. 148-51. *Almoxarifes*, as it will be explained, combined subordinate judiciary and fiscal functions. The fourth of the General Laws, which forbade the *almoxarifes* to take the chattels of executed traitors, suggests that their actions were at least in theory under the authority of royal magistrates. *Leges*, p. 165. On the control of the *almoxarife* by the judges and the castellan, see for instance DS, doc. 116, p. 180 (28 May 1199). *Mordomo* is the loosest of the three, as it could designate anything from a petty, near-servile collector of customary revenues subject to the tenant to a revenue collector of a major city who could even reach the heights of confirming royal charters. Caetano, *A Administração Municipal*, p. 15; Henriques, *O Rei e a Terra*, vol. I, p. 112-7.

⁷⁰ Officers practiced usury with the king's monies. *Leges*, pp. 174-5 (20th law).

⁷¹ See the charter confirming the resumption of the office of *mordomo* bought from Sancho I by the *mordomo* Nuno Peres for him and for all his descendency (TT, Maço 12 de Forais Antigos, fol. 43). On forcing the *obedienciales* to tax-farm the revenues from Lisbon, see the privilege of Sancho I, in -DS, doc. 195, pp. 301-3 (December 1210).

Custody and tenure appear as alternative forms of ruling a given territory within the kingdom. In theory, the king could choose which form was more convenient to his interests in a precise conjuncture.⁷² Nonetheless, in practice, the contrast between these two forms of administration can be more clearly exposed together with two opposing forms of territorial organisation. The rural districts (*terrae*) of the primitive *Portucale* were held by tenant vassals, while the municipalities tended to be administered by their landholding and/or mercantile oligarchies, even if occasionally they held as tenures. Indeed, considering the opinions of José Mattoso, the very emergence of an independent monarchy in the person of Afonso I cannot be dissociated from the aspirations of the local tenant nobility.⁷³ Thus, Afonso I and Sancho I could not help regard tenure by a vassal as the default form of exerting their power on any territory.

Tenure was eventually exported southwards together with the conquests of Afonso I and Sancho I. Up to the middle of the century, several known instances of municipalities being held by royal magnates as tenures are identifiable. Even fiercely proud municipalities like Lisbon, Santarém or Coimbra did not enjoy such exemption and were at least occasionally held by tenants and vassals. Lisbon (conquered in 1146) had tenants in 1153 and 1179 and circa 1210.⁷⁴

Thirteenth-century tenancies retained all their strength before the monarchy. The lists of tenants for the reigns of Sancho II and Afonso III made, respectively, by Hermenegildo Fernandes and Leontina Ventura allow a good perspective on the tenancies in this period.⁷⁵ While in theory the vassal tenant was removable at the king's will,⁷⁶ in the North there was a clear tendency for families to build on their predominance over the same *terra*. Although tenants occasionally incurred the king's disgrace, there was a strong tendency for

⁷² While considering in his will the regency for his young son, King Sancho I envisaged the possibility of ruling *cum redditibus terrarum*, implying that the vassals would not hold them. See comments on this expression by Maria João Branco. Branco, *Sancho I*, p. 166.

⁷³ See his crucial essay 'A Primeira Tarde Portuguesa', *Portugal Medieval: Novas Interpretações*, Lisbon, 1987, pp. 11-35.

⁷⁴ For the first two dates, see Caetano, *A Administração Municipal*, p. 11. The last reference is simply a mention of a particular noble *quando ipse tenebat Ulixbonam*, *DS*, doc. 193, p. 295 (5 July 1210). Cases of tenure in these three cities disappeared in the middle of the thirteenth century with the affirmation of municipal government. See *infra* p. 130-1

⁷⁵ Ventura, *A Nobreza de Corte*, vol. II, pp. 997-1038; Fernandes, *D. Sancho II*, p. 277.

⁷⁶ The already-mentioned twenty-seventh law of 1211, threatened the tenants who failed to fine or arrest criminals with the loss of the land from the king. *Leges*, p. 179.

hereditary transmission.⁷⁷ Blood constrained so strongly the width of royal choices that Leontina Ventura considered that some were indeed 'family tenures'.⁷⁸ The reigns of Sancho II and Afonso III even saw the expansion of the tenancies to regions dominated by municipalities. Besides traditional Northern *terrae*, typically municipal areas such as Beira, Viseu and Panóias, and even cities like Silves (and with it the whole Algarve) and Évora were held as tenures.⁷⁹ Indeed, tenants were still appointed in *terrae* which were converted into municipalities, as in the case of Barroso which continued to have a tenant after receiving a municipal charter.⁸⁰ In both reigns only the wealthiest towns - Coimbra, Lisbon and Santarém - escaped being involved as passive revenues in vassal/lord relationships.

On the ninth of October of 1284, King Dinis solemnly revoked all the donations, grants and gifts he had made since the beginning of his reign five years before because, as he claimed in the preamble, he was then too young and unaware and because experience had shown that these had been in detriment of the crown.⁸¹ Notwithstanding the emphatic tenor, the crown, the entity which the donations so seriously offended, was unheard of in Portuguese administrative parlance.⁸² The very 'crown' as a physical object played no part in the monarchy's ideology because, as Peter Linehan claims, the kings of Portugal were neither crowned nor anointed.⁸³ Conversely, in European legal

⁷⁷ All the eight known tenants who held the *terra* of Barroso from the 1150s to the 1280s, descended from the father of the first known tenant; and still at least two of them had been deprived of the tenure by the king. Henriques, *O Rei e a Terra*, vol. I, pp. 102-3 (fig. 2). Blood was so influential that even the abrupt fall from grace of the grandson of the first tenant merely resulted in the transfer of the tenure to a nephew from the female line.

⁷⁸ Ventura, *A Nobreza de Corte*, vol. I, p. 267.

⁷⁹ However, the concession of tenancies to municipalities or sets of municipalities did not imply that the same combination of *officium* and *beneficium* that ruled the *terrae* could be applied here. In the cases where municipal lands were granted by the king as tenures, the power of the tenant could not have been as discretionary as in the *terrae*: in the context of municipalities, military defence was concentrated in a castellan that held the castle from the hands of the king and could even be chosen by the municipality, whilst courts were headed by locally-elected municipal justices. Furthermore, municipal charters fixed in written form the exact sums to be paid for fines, tolls and other contributions, thus diminishing the elasticity of the tenure's receipt. Moreover, many of these municipalities had agreed a perpetual farm with the king. Thus, while conceding the tenure of a land, the king was endowing his nobles with a rigid income that his actions could not change.

⁸⁰ Henriques, *O Rei e a Terra* vol. I, p. 144.

⁸¹ TT, Chanc. Dinis, Livro 1, fols. 181-2. The allusion to the crown is in the preamble: '*in perjudicium iuris et honoris sue corone*'.

⁸² This claim is based in word searches (s. v. '*coroa*', '*corona*', '*coroaa*') in a digital version of the published chancery registers of Afonso III (1248-79) and the skimming of his second and third unpublished chancery registers.

⁸³ Portuguese king were elevated upon a ceremonial shield (Port. *alçado*) and acclaimed by his court (Port. *aclamado*). On the absence of coronation ceremonies see, in English, Linehan, Peter, 'Utrum Reges Portugaliæ

doctrine, 'the crown' was a concept that had been discussed for three generations of legal scholars and had by then acquired a precise meaning of an 'entity entitled to rights and incarnating the common good.'⁸⁴

While heuristic contingency makes it impossible to identify the concrete donations and grants that had harmed the crown of the realm,⁸⁵ the expression the 'crown of the realm' proved to be a powerful legal weapon in the partly military, partly judicial fight to deprive his brother Afonso of his, otherwise legitimate, inheritance, comprising three castles in the border. In the text of the sentence which revoked the donation done by his father and confirmed by Dinis, the king *qua* judge stated that the fact that those castles were among the best in the kingdom and that they laid in its frontier made them dangerous to the crown of the realm.⁸⁶ Significantly, prince Afonso was offered in exchange for his strategic castles of Portalegre, Arronches and Marvão, a regular annuity equivalent to the total rents of those fortresses payable in harmless Sintra and Ourém.⁸⁷ Because this plea involved a legitimate son of Afonso III, it remains very well-documented. Nonetheless, one can argue that, in spite of high-profile, this was a paradigmatic case. Indeed, as J. A. Pizarro testifies, from 1284, the very year of the revocation, the tenancies started to fade. Moreover, the office of court mayor, who controlled the assignment of the tenants disappeared, never to emerge again.⁸⁸ Obviously, this did not imply the total alienation of the nobility. Indeed, the exchange of border castles for annuities proposed to Prince Afonso might well have been the compensation offered by the monarchy. Of this, however, the present information is very scarce as the surviving chancery records provide no other example of concession of annuities in this period.

In spite of the very patchy knowledge of the redistributive activity of the monarchy, the introduction of the political symbol of the crown had some impact

Coronabantur Annon,' *The Processes of Politics and the Rule of Law : Studies on the Iberian Kingdoms and Papal Rome in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 2002.

⁸⁴ 'Entité titulaire de droits incarnant le bien commun'; thus describes Leyte the concept of the crown as developed by twelfth- and thirteenth-century juridical thought. Leyte, *Domaine et Domanialité*, p. 320.

⁸⁵ This has led J. A. Pizarro to deny that this decree had made any practical difference. For him, it worked only as one more weapon in the legal, judicial and ideological arsenal that Dinis used to assert the supremacy of the king over the nobility without even recovering the encroachments his lands suffered as it he threatened to do in other occasions. Pizarro, J. A. de Sotto Mayor, *D. Dinis*, Lisbon, 2005, pp. 92-3.

⁸⁶ LL, doc. 69, p. 222 (1 October 1315). '*Fora feyta em gram perda e dano da corõa do reyno de Portugal que eram dos mays fortes e dos melhores castelos e dos mays perigosos porque stavam na fronteyra del.*'

⁸⁷ LL, doc. 68, pp. 206-209 (1 July 1300).

⁸⁸ Pizarro, José Augusto de Sotto Mayor, *D. Dinis*, Lisbon, 2005, pp. 92-5.

on the administration of the royal revenues. At first sight, the impact seems hardly overwhelming: in the terminology of the royal letters kings continued to use the first person possessive when referring to the regalian rights, precisely as twelfth-century charters used to. However, all land donations made to a lay person included the proviso that should there be lack of direct descendant they had to revert to the 'crown of the realm'.⁸⁹ What gave a major importance to the revocation of 1284 was that it came alongside a decided administrative orientation against the tenure of royal functions and revenues. The 'crown of the realm' came to be a synonym of 'custody': in the same period a few municipalities got from the monarch the promise of being held by no-one but by the 'crown of the realm'.⁹⁰ The most important evidence on the changes imposed by Dinis comes from an isolated folio which opens one of the records of the royal sentences issued in 1290 on the trespasses found by the enquiries of two years before.⁹¹ Here an unknown agent informed the monarch that the municipalities and *terrae* north of the River Lima, an area dominated by tenure, had been tax-farmed. The tax-farming of the *terrae* in the extreme north stands for a victory of custody over tenure.

Naturally, the systematic implantation of custody did not imply that the nobility was cut off from the giving hand of the monarch. Very likely, noble purses were the ultimate destination of the revenues of the domain. However, in the reign of Dinis the nobility was screened out of the landed revenues by the intermediation of royal institutions with an autonomous ends. Henceforward the monarchy would redistribute monies but it would not distribute districts. In absence of any relevant quantitative evidence, the evolution of the word *tença* points to a decisive rupture that can be dated to the time of Dinis I (1279-1322). In the thirteenth century *tença* referred to the precarious holding of a source of revenue which nominally belonged to the king or, in other words, to a tenure. The type of rent assigned to the holder of a *tença* varied: it could be the

⁸⁹ TT, Chanc. Dinis, livro 1, fol. 250v, livro 3, fols. 30, 41, 42, 44. The only 'pure and simple donations' found in the six surviving chancery books of King Dinis correspond to his rights as patron of churches whose peculiar legal frame was hard to fit into the idea of the 'crown of the realm'. This has already been noted in Farelo, Mário, 'O Direito de Padroado na Lisboa Medieval', *Promontoria*, Ano 4, n. 4, 2006, pp. 285-87.

⁹⁰ Montenegro in 1302 (TT, Chanc. Dinis, livro 3, fol. 22v); Castelo de Vide and Alegrete in 1299 (TT, Chanc. Dinis, livro 3, fol. 7); Bemposta in 1316 (TT, Chanc. Dinis, livro 3, fol. 101).

⁹¹ TT, Feitos da Coroa, Livro 6 de Inquirições de D. Dinis, fol. 1.

municipal rent,⁹² it could be an agrarian property (*préstamo or reguengo*) or it could be the wages and fines allocated to the function of castellan (*alcaidaria*). Possibly, it could also be a sum of money payable by the king's central institutions. Throughout the reign of Dinis, *tenças* were disconnected from the exercise of authority and, although occasionally allocated in specific municipalities, they were royal revenues collected by the royal administration that were temporarily diverted to a holder.⁹³ They were, in sum, a rent. Unlike previous redistributive payments, it did not entail any function or exercise of jurisdiction, but merely the usufruct of the monies produced. In return, it implied fidelity and military service.

Unlike his strict father, whose testamentary bequeaths were not even based in the sums hoarded, Dinis I provides many examples of the good shape of his finances after his first will of 1299 (see section 1.1). The relative wealth displayed by Dinis I in the last half of his reign and in his testament of 1322 shows how the crown recovered its accumulative capacity. However, the letter of quittance of 1278-80 suggests a high cash-flow in the crown's treasury was already a reality in the end of his father's reign. By then, it can be argued, the crumbling of the early king's finance had already been compensated by the constitution of a 'domain state'. However, and this seems the more coherent explanation, the expenditure side of the budget had not yet been tamed. Afonso III had not yet managed to master the redistributive pressures of his nobles. Presumably, redistribution had not yet found an alternative to tenure. The abrupt revocation of 1284 and the virtual end of the tenures was the sign of a monarchy that could directly exert its powers and collect its dues and, in parallel, could fulfil the redistributive hopes of the nobility without giving away administration as a form of patronage. In other words, it was the sign of a state that had managed to virtually encompass all his revenues in a system of custody.

⁹² *Tenças* allocated to municipalities were for the most reserved for the highest-ranking nobles. The earliest examples date from King Dinis. The rent of the municipality of Chaves was diverted to the Count Gonçalo Garcia de Sousa (TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 3, fol. 18v); the rent of Barcelos were diverted to the counts João Afonso Telo in 1298 and Martim Gil de Riba de Vizela and 1304 (TT, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 3, fols. 3 and 33v).

⁹³ The holding of judicial/military district (*terras*) with jurisdiction virtually disappeared from 1287 onwards. Ventura, Leontina, 'Terras e Julgados', *Port. Defini.*, p. 524.

Section 4.4 - The Invention of the Domain

The invention of the crown by Dinis in 1284 cannot be separated from profound changes in territorial administration. Indeed, as argued, the decisive transformation for the formation of a 'domain state' is the construction of an autonomous institutional network. In the reign of Pedro I (1357-67), this network existed in the shape of the *almojarifados* which formed a grid that virtually covered the kingdom.⁹⁴ The existence of the *almojarifado* as a defined area whereof an *almojarife* was responsible contiguous to other *almojarifados* occurs clearly in ordinances to be applied throughout the kingdom.⁹⁵ The *almojarifados* were fiscal districts headed by an officer, the *almojarife*, who had to collect, store and spend royal revenues within their territory. They had the same internal structure and staff, including a resident scribe who controlled the actions of the *almojarife* by means of two records: an up-to-date rental book and a receipt and expenditure log.⁹⁶ The rest of the staff had to keep a warehouse to keep the king's monies, assets and weapons.⁹⁷ The principle that all *almojarifados* were to be audited appears already in 1340.⁹⁸

The network of *almojarifados* did not emerge out of a *tabula rasa*. Its origins are to be found in southern tax-farmers, the earlier *almojarifes* who were first and foremost financiers which advanced to the monarch the important revenues of the southern municipalities (see section 4.2). As a tax-farmer, the *almojarife* pursued the king's fiscal interests in competition with the other urban authorities. He was clearly not a municipal officer, as the term *meus almojarifus* employed by Sancho I in 1200 makes clear. The *almojarife* was subject to higher judicial instances - the fourth of the General Laws, which forbade the

⁹⁴ Under Pedro I the *almojarifados* were used as spatial reference for judicial enquiries. *Chanc. Pedro I*, nos. 826, 997, pp. 376, 467. Nonetheless, a 1361 enquiry ordering a clarification throughout the Northern judicial districts still had to anticipate the possibility of the investigated locality having no *almojarife*. *Chanc. Pedro I*, doc.1175, p. 564.

⁹⁵ The law forbidding the export of gold, silver and horses to Castile is sent to the *almojarife* and scribes of each place. *Chanc. Afonso IVm*, vol. III, doc. 344, p. 199 (31 December 1341). See also *DP*, vol. I, docs. 63 and 68, pp. 65 and 75. The coverage seems to be complete by the early 1340s if not earlier. A document dated 1325 already mentions the obligation of the monasteries recording properties (TT, C.R., Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, Segunda Incorporação, maço 77, n. 3177, I thank Mário Farelo for pointing me to this document. Unfortunately, some of the *almojarifes* of the remotest parts of the country –Chaves, Vila Real and Torre de Moncorvo – are mentioned in undated documents.

⁹⁶ On these, see examples in Roldão, *Escrita e Poderes*, p. 50. See also, Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapters LI and LIV.

⁹⁷ *TAlII*, docs. XII-XVII, pp. 249-252 (1261).

⁹⁸ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, doc. 374, p. 266.

almoxarifes to take the chattels of executed traitors, suggests that their actions were at least in theory under the authority of royal, not municipal, magistrates.⁹⁹ While he worked for his profit, he acted as the king's delegate within the municipality.

Indeed, the kings retained the capacity to control the *almoxarifes*, because in his role of custodian of the king's interests within a municipality, the *almoxarife* acted along with a scribe (occasionally referred as the king's scribe). The control of the *almoxarife* by a scribe is a very early feature of this office. Indeed, it is mentioned for the first time in a letter addressed to the castelan, judges, *almoxarifes* and scribes of Lisbon in 1206. As Filipa Roldão observed for the municipalities of Coimbra, Lisbon and Santarém in the thirteenth-century, these scribes are never designated as the *almoxarife's* but as the king's or as the town's (e.g. *scribanus Sanctarensis*).¹⁰⁰

The post-1212 crisis of the Peninsular economy and, possibly, the political frailty of the monarchy in the transition from Sancho I to Afonso II seem to have affected financial operations to which *almoxarifes* resorted, with more or less forceful demand from the kings.¹⁰¹ Pressed by his internal opposition, Afonso II forbade Jews or Moors to serve as tax-farmers (*ovençais*) in the General Laws of 1211.¹⁰² Indeed, the two *almoxarifes* known for the reign of Afonso II, *Domnus Daniel* and *Domnus Petrus Valasqui*, were both Christian.¹⁰³ This seems to have worked in favour of the municipal oligarchy which provided the monarchy with the obvious recruiting ground for such an important function. Finally, the General Laws of 1211 stated that the municipality itself could organise the collection of rents with or without the *almoxarife*, whenever it decided to tax-farm the sources of revenue within its territory.¹⁰⁴ A few signs indicate that post-1212, non-Jew *almoxarifes* lost ground to the municipal authorities. A dispute from the reign of Sancho II hints at the difficulty the crown

⁹⁹ On the control of the *almoxarife* by the judges and the castellan, see for instance *DS*, doc. 116, p. 180. *Leges*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁰ Roldão *Escrita e Poderes*, p. 215, note 66.

¹⁰¹ The frailty is visible in the aforementioned letter by which King Sancho I promised not to force the *oboedientiales* to tax-farm the king's revenues. *DS*, doc. 195, p. 301.

¹⁰² The law is presented as a response to the grievances of the Christians. *Leges*, p. 178.

¹⁰³ Both are *almoxarifes* in Santarém. The former appears styled as *almoxarife Domini Regis* as a witness to a sales contract dated June 1221. *PTI*, 'Santarém,' doc. 7, pp. 22-3.

¹⁰⁴ The tax-farming is very clear in the fourteenth of the Law of 1211: '*quando as os concelhos assy querem teenr as nossas terras arrendadas*', cf. *Leges*, p. 172.

had in controlling the Lisbon *almoxarife* who repeatedly acted on the side of the municipal authorities against the privileges of the king's sailors.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, as documented by Roldão, confiscation procedures required the presence and assent of the municipal judges and, in the reign of Sancho II, could be done without the *almoxarife*.¹⁰⁶

According to Leontina Ventura, the assignment of tax-collection to *almoxarifes* within well-defined districts named *almoxarifados* was one of the administrative innovations brought by Afonso III (1248-79).¹⁰⁷ This claim appears to be backed by the emergence of the term *almoxarifado* applied to Coimbra in 1261 and to Santarém in 1267.¹⁰⁸ However, careful consideration of these and other documents cited here shows that from the emergence of the word *almoxarifado* it does not follow that the kingdom was divided into a homogeneous grid of discrete, identical *almoxarifados* each with specific personnel and boundaries. This is visible in the only two known instances of kingdom-wide contributions: the annual payments by the notaries and the *monetagia*. In the surviving receipts for the *monetagium* of 1261 it becomes clear that this tax was collected along the bishoprics (incidentally, including that of Coimbra); none of its tax-collectors is even styled as *almoxarife*.¹⁰⁹

At any rate, Leontina Ventura is right in pointing to the frantic activity of the *almoxarifes* under Afonso III. If the poorly-documented reign of Sancho II seemingly indicates a rapprochement of the *almoxarifes* with the local interests, in the 1250s the references to conflicts between *almoxarifes*, acting as procurators of the king's interests, and municipalities become frequent.¹¹⁰ Moreover, confiscation of lands of debtors to the king became more

¹⁰⁵ Fernandes, *Sancho II*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁶ Roldão, *Escrita e Poderes*, p. 25, note 73.

¹⁰⁷ Ventura, *A Nobreza de Corte*, vol. I, pp. 504-6.

¹⁰⁸ As far as it could be detected, the oldest known occurrence of the term *almoxarifado* dates from 1261 referring to the scribe of the *almoxarifado* of Coimbra (*TAIII*, doc. X, pp. 242-5). Years later, in 1267, one can find a forced sale to the king of a paddy field by a widow of a former *almoxarife* in Santarém' because of the *almoxarifado* ('*ratione dicti Almozarifattu*') (original: TT, Gaveta XI, maço 6, doc. 7, copied in TT, Leitura Nova. Livro 12 da Estremadura, fol. 121 and in TT, Chanc. Afonso III, livro 3, fol. 20v) and in 1273 there is a the *scribanum meum de predicto Almozarifatu* in a letter of quittance from the *almoxarife* of Guimarães (Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronológicas*, vol. III, 2nd part, doc. XXIX, p. 82).

¹⁰⁹ *TAIII*, doc. XI-XVII, pp. 245-252.

¹¹⁰ TT, Chancelaria de D. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 13 (municipality of Leiria, in 1255) and fol. 49v (municipality of Lisbon, 1261).

independent from the municipal authorities in the early 1250s.¹¹¹ Although scattered, there are many references in thirteenth-century royal and local documents to property confiscated from *almoxarifes*.¹¹² In a 1255 document testifying the sales of apprehended land, the *almoxarife* is shown acting autonomously by order of a royal writ, while the municipal seal merely confirmed the sale, not the act.¹¹³ The emancipation of this office appears very clear in the well-documented career of João Que Veio. He was *portarius maior* in 1236, under Sancho II, he emerged again in a document of 1251 as collector of the king's debts and became *almoxarife* of Lisbon between 1256 and 1267.¹¹⁴

There is yet a stronger argument for regarding the reign of Afonso III as a key period for the country's fiscal organisation: the export of the office of the *almoxarife* northwards. Indeed, in 1254 there is the first mention of the *almoxarife* of Guimarães.¹¹⁵ As noticed, in the first half of the thirteenth century, the *almoxarifes* are only found in Lisbon, Coimbra and Santarém. The town of Guimarães had been the patrimonial centre of the former counts of *Portucale* and headed the *terra* where the king's *reguengos* were more abundant.¹¹⁶ The customs disclosed in the enquiries of 1258, show that the granary of Guimarães already concentrated the yields of other *terrae*.¹¹⁷

The first interventions of the first *almoxarife* of Guimarães, Martim Real, were directed against the abuses of the local municipality on *reguengos*.¹¹⁸ A few years after these conflicts, the same Martim Real issued in the name of the

¹¹¹ Roldão, *Escrita e Poderes*, p. 27.

¹¹² In 1254, several members of the central *curia* confiscate a vineyard which had belonged to Martim Domingues, *almoxarife* of Lisbon because of his debts. TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, livro 1, fol. 7v.. In 1267, the widow of an *almoxarife* of Santarém is forced to sell his property to the king *ratione almoxarifattu*. TT, *Gaveta XI*, maço 6, no. 7. In 1280, the heirs of João Qui Venit reach agreement with Dinis I in relation to his debts. TT, *Leitura Nova, Livro Segundo dos Direitos Reais*, fols. 157v-158. In 1286, the properties belonging to Pedro Fernandes, former *almoxarife* of Santarém, were confiscated. TT, *Chanc. Dinis I*, livro 1, p. 318. TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 1, fol. 81 (29 December 1265).

¹¹³ The text is clear enough about the secondary role of the municipal seal: *Et ego Dominicus Johannis almoxarifus recepi supradictus 200 morabitanos [pro dare in debito] et ut hec factum in dubium non vertatur. Stephanus Johannis pretor Colimbrie et Johannis Petri et Martinus Muniz alvaziles; et Dominicus Johannis almoxarifus et Petrus Egee scribanus Colimbrie sigillum concilii Colimbrie apponi feverunt ut D. Matheus [the buyer of the land] per istam cartam melius se defendat et emparet.*

¹¹⁴ SS, doc. 91, p. 371; Farelo, Mário, *A Oligarquia Camarária de Lisboa, 1325-1433*, Lisbon, 2008, Appendix. 2.

¹¹⁵ TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 1, fol. 4v.

¹¹⁶ See Marreiros, *Propriedade Fundiária*, vol. I, p. 223-53.

¹¹⁷ TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 1, fols. 26v, 27, 27v, 29v, 37v, 89, 95v-96.

¹¹⁸ TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 1, fol. 5 (31 July 1254); TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 1, fol. 60v (June 1259).

king a series of eight contracts letting of royal properties in Guimarães.¹¹⁹ However, the most important features of this *almoxarife's* work are revealed in the letter of quittance that King Afonso III granted to his two sons in 1273.¹²⁰ While he held continuously the renders of the *almoxarifado* from 30 June 1258 to 1 April 1263, he held neighbouring *terrae* for very brief periods.¹²¹ Like the French *prevôts*, Martim Real seems to have operated within no fixed territory. Judging from the mention to a *terra* administered by after the death of a given tenant,¹²² from the holding of the *terra* of Sousa in for three or four months in 1261 and from the holding of Panóias in 1261, the year after the death of the former tenant,¹²³ the *almoxarife* of Guimarães held *terrae* while these were not ruled by royal vassals. Thus, at least in this area, custody of the king's revenues was only practiced in the vacancies of tenure.

In the letter of 1273, the term *almoxarifado* denotes to a set of rents. Indeed, the document distinguishes three types of revenues: on one hand, the *almoxarifatum*, the *terrae* and the *collectae*.¹²⁴ The older documental references from 1261 and 1267 also become clearer if *almoxarifado* is interpreted as a rent or as a set of revenues, rather than a territory. Indeed, this is clearly the meaning of two documents from the reign of King Dinis: instrument of confiscated land by an *almoxarife* and his wife in Santarém dated 1299 alludes to the non-payment of the rent of the *almoxarifado* which they had farmed,¹²⁵ whilst a letter of quittance from 1280 acquits the heirs of a former *almoxarife* of Lisbon of the '*almoxarifado* of Lisbon' as well as of *collectae* as of tax-farms.¹²⁶ While in the first case, the *almoxarifado* was the name of a tax-farm, in the second it is the name given to the income from a set of rents and a *collecta*. These first mentions to the *almoxarifado* indicate that it, like the Castilian *almojarifazgo*, was a set of rents, not a territory. As such, in the reign of Afonso III more than a territorial district, resulting of the 'territorialisation' of the

¹¹⁹ Ventura, *A Nobreza de Corte*, p. 506.

¹²⁰ Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas*, vol. III, doc. XXIX, pp. 82-5.

¹²¹ That of Neiva from 31 April to 20 June 1253, that of *Benviver* from 3 September to 5 December 1252, etc.

¹²² '*Terra* of Penafiel de Bastuço and *palatia* therefrom from the day Egas Lourenço da Cunha [king's vassal] died in 1261 until 20 June 1261'. Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas*, vol. III, doc. XXIX, p. 84.

¹²³ On these two cases, see the tenants' list for the reign of Afonso III in Ventura, *D. Afonso III*, p. 278.

¹²⁴ Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas*, vol. III, doc. XXIX, pp. 82-5.

¹²⁵ '*Renta do almoxarifado que elles [ele e sua mulher] teverom rrendida*'. The document is abridged in Roldão, *Escrita e Poderes*, p. 134.

¹²⁶ TT, Gaveta XII, maço 13, doc.10.

almoxarife's authority. Indeed the same suffix intervenes in other contexts to designate a regular 'set of rents', as in *mordomado* (eponym of mayor, *mordomo*).¹²⁷ In the surviving 1290 memorandum which defined the yearly contribution of the kingdom's notaries, the *almoxarifes* operate within the dioceses.¹²⁸ This reveals both that the *almoxarife* was already becoming a territorial officer and that the no operational grid of *almoxarifados* yet existed under Afonso III.

In practical terms, the pragmatic, ruthless systematic acquisition of urban housing and other properties by Afonso III and the export of a strong custody to the Northern lands in the form of an *almoxarife* created a coherent domain which would prove rentable in the long-run. This was what Afonso II, in spite of ambitious and sophisticated alterations of the household and curia, did not attain. However, the existence of a domain does not imply the existence of a domain state. From the fact that a prince, more or less efficiently, has managed to widen up his sources of revenue, both in scale and in type, and has taken pragmatic measures to improve their collection, it does not follow automatically that a 'domain state' has been built. The permanence of the tenure system with its characteristic non-distinction between administration and redistribution showed that the 'domain' was not perfectly integrated with the 'state'.

The constitution of a territorial grid of *almoxarifados* cannot be seen independently from the reinforcement of the central management. Even though the *almoxarifado* was not exactly a district, the counter-roll of particulars kept by a resident scribe and the permanence of an *almoxarife*, either as a tax-farmer or as a custodian meant that the *almoxarifatum* was a permanent institution, rather than a temporary arrangement. The earlier letters of quittance make clear that the writings of all collectors or tax-farmers of permanent royal revenues were compiled by a scribe appointed by the king. The wording of the first letter of quittance makes it clear: '*Noveritis quod Dominicus Petri dictus Pintus and Dominicus Suarii tunc judex de Gaya, mei decimarii in Portu Portugalie, et Johannes Petri canonicus Portugalensis meus scribanus super decimis*

¹²⁷ Or as in the Castilian *almojarifazgo*. Gonzalez Arce, J. D., 'Almojarifazgo', *Glossaire de Fiscalité*.

¹²⁸ Published in Marques, A. H. de Oliveira, *Ensaio da História Medieval Portuguesa*, 2nd ed., Lisbon, 1980, pp. 76-81.

ejusdem loci computaverunt.¹²⁹ The letter of quittance of 1273, shows clearly that the audit of the *almoxarife* of Guimarães was based upon the writings of the 'scribanus de predictu almoxarifattu.'¹³⁰ The scribe made possible the 'audit' of the *almoxarifes*.

In the present state of our knowledge, it is impossible to ascertain whether the practice of audit started in the reign of Afonso III. The *De Recabedo* books and the enquiries of Afonso II could also be related to some form of accountancy. At any rate, the 1273 letter of quittance passed to the *almoxarife* of Guimarães is clear about the entities that presided over the audit session: the *maiordomus* and the chancellor, the higher officers of the *curia regia*. Similarly, the first unequivocal mention of an audit procedure, that of 1253, states that the audit of the tenth-collector of Porto was made before (*coram*) the *maiordomus*, the chancellor and a third noble, in short, he was audited by the king's *curia*.¹³¹

For the next decades, there are a few sparse examples of letters of quittance after an audit by the *curia*: the collectors of the *monetagium* in 1264, the royal butlers in 1267, the treasurer João Moniz in 1276,¹³² the *almoxarife* of Guimarães in 1273, and the high-treasurer Vicente Martins in 1280.¹³³ Although these examples do not follow a clear format, it is clear that they are not routine documents but with a sort of appeal to the *curia* in its quality as a court. Indeed, as no particulars of account are displayed and only total sums are handled, this audit before a *curia* must have taken place after a previous session of closer inspection.¹³⁴ The 1273 letter refers to the detailed particulars that could be found in a separate roll (*partes in rotulo sue recapitulationis*). This suggests that a more hands-on accounting procedure took place before the *curia* was

¹²⁹ TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 3.

¹³⁰ Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas*, vol. III, 2nd part, doc. XXIX, pp. 82-5.

¹³¹ TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 3.

¹³² TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fols. 77-78v, 121, 161.

¹³³ *Descr.*, vol. I, doc 8, p. 345.

¹³⁴ As far as these documents show, the accounting of a royal minister implied two distinct processes, the *computum* and the *recabedum* (Port. *conta e recado*). These names remain very opaque. Possibly, the comparison between the recorded items of expenditure and revenue was the *recabedum* phase, after which came the computation of the balance receipts and expenses, the *computum*. In alternative, *recabedum* referred to what the officer collected and *computum* implied the deduction of orders of payment from the total. This would explain the order of the king to take *contas* (*filate contas*) from the abbot of Alcobaça: the latter would provide a receipt of the monies he received. The sums referred to in this receipt would be counted as expenditure and thus deducted from the total owned by the collector of revenue. Despite the present ignorance about these workings, it is clear that this form of accounting does not stem directly from the innovations of Afonso II. Indeed, no mention is made of the *Recabedo Regni* books or any other central records. Whatever procedures *computum* and *recabedum* were, they were based on the books supplied by the scribe of the officer.

involved. This is confirmed by a pair of letters to *almoxarifes* and scribes to settle some debts with the monastery of Alcobaça. In these, the king as a favour the abbot, dispensed him the payment of the chancery fees but not of presenting *contas*.¹³⁵

The previous, closer audit is perhaps present in the 1273 quittance of the *almoxarife* of Guimarães. Indeed, after presenting the high officers of the king's counsel the scribe mentions a board of five (one the *vice-mairdomus*, other the *notarium cancellariae*, and three king's clerks). In the document, these are called *computatoribus*, such as the men who worked in the undated quittance of João Que Veio in the reign of Afonso III (1248-1279) are also called *contadores*.¹³⁶ As institutional historians agree, the group of clerks who controlled the books of the *almoxarife's* scribes were eventually reunited in a permanent body, the *Casa dos Contos*. This process was already completed by 1296, date of a 'second book of the *Contos*,' as we learn from a later quarrel about a sum that the Lisbon municipality owed to the king.¹³⁷ Apparently, the book of the *Contos* was a set of entries signed by the payees and thus it allowed the *contadores* to track whether the municipality of Lisbon was in debit or not.

What is most important in the emergence of the crown's body of professional accountants is the emancipation of the audit procedures from the noble-dominated *curia*. In theory at least, the *Contos* were an instrument of the monarch, rather than an independent court. Once institutionalised, the *contadores* inherited the older functions of the *Curia Regis* as auditors. The emergence of the *Contos*, datable c. 1290, dated from the time of the 'invention of the crown.' While the scarcity of documents prevents the identification of any positive link between these two aspects, there can be no doubt that these are converging processes: nobles are moved away from both the centre and the territory, opening the way for the monarchy's autonomous, instrumental institutions (see section 4.3).

¹³⁵ *Primis denarijs quos receperitis tam de meis debitis quam de omnibus meis redditibus... et non filietis inde sibi Cancellariam sed filate contas*. TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fols. 7v-8.

¹³⁶ *Como meu padre rey Don Affonso mandasse receber conto e recado a Joham Que Veo de todas cousas que esse Joham Que Veo recebeu e teve do Almoxarifado de Lixbõa per dante Don Joham d'Avoyñ seu moordomo e per dante Don Stevam Eanes seu Chanceler e per dante seus contadores que son conteúdos en'o rool da recadaçom desse Joham Que Veo*. TT, Gaveta XII, maço 13, doc. 10.

¹³⁷ LM-1, doc. 28, pp. 195-7.

The priority of the *Casa dos Contos* was the audit of the collectors, but they also integrated the king's multi-purpose court (the *Desembargo*) in the reign of Dinis I. The first clear manifestation of the *Contos'* administrative activity can be found on a register of letting contracts from 1323 included in the fourth chancery book of King Dinis. Here, all the lettings of property in Lisbon are signed by the *contadores*.¹³⁸ Moreover, one of the few contracts of tax-farming known for the period – that of the kingdom's whaling - is signed down by the *contadores*¹³⁹

For a brief period the *Contos* dominated the king's finances. However, the decade of 1330 saw some significant changes within the central departments, partly entailing greater specialisation.¹⁴⁰ The functions of the *porteiro-mor*, namely the fiscal litigation and immunities were absorbed by a body of legal experts (the auditors of the *Portaria*). Nonetheless, for the purposes of this chapter, the changes in the litigation are of minor importance, when compared with the emergence of the overseer of the finances. Indeed, this officer was the intermediary between the monarch and the local administration.

The separation between the auditing body and the financial management in the person of the 'Overseer of Finances' or *Vedor da Fazenda* was a meaningful transformation that has passed unnoticed. In 1985, Carvalho Homem dated the emergence of this office from the early 1370s and saw it as an adaptation of the monarchy to the kingdom-wide taxation in the form of the *sisas*.¹⁴¹ Yet, a closer inspection of the documents of Afonso IV shows that the office already existed in 1341, as a certain Pedro Esteves witnessed a contract styled as the king's '*Vedor da Fazenda*'.¹⁴² One year earlier this Pedro Esteves had struck in the name of the king the tax-farming contract of whaling in the kingdom.¹⁴³ In the beginning of January 1339, Pedro Esteves signed together with three of the king's *contadores* the contract of location of a pair of shops in Lisbon. The terms of the document are unusually explicit: the collector of Lisbon

¹³⁸ TT, Chanc. Dinis, Livro 4, fols. 82 and following.

¹³⁹ Chanc. Afonso IV, vol. II, doc. 4, fol. 12

¹⁴⁰ Homem, *O Desembargo*, p. 124. According to this author, this new arrangement of the fiscal litigation answered directly to parliamentary claims expressed in 1331.

¹⁴¹ OA, Book I, title III § 11.

¹⁴² Homem states that the 'creation' of that office is from 1369 (*O Desembargo*, p. 129) but there is no grounds to doubt about the 1341 chancery record that mention in 1341 of '*Pero Stevez ueedor da fazenda de nosso senhor el rei dom Affonso*', as the highest bidder for king's houses in Lisbon. Chanc. Afonso IV, vol. III, doc. 258.

¹⁴³ Chanc. Afonso IV, vol. II, doc. 248, p. 378.

houses and his scribe 'certified Pedro Esteves and the king's accountants' of the outcome of the auction in order to obtain the letter.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, as an earlier document shows, the important responsibility of controlling the tax-farming contracts fell within the *Contos*.¹⁴⁵ In other words, this Pedro Esteves acted here as the representative of the king's interests and oversaw the decisions of the *Contos*.

The origins of the *Vedor da Fazenda* are to be found in the management of the king's revenues in Lisbon, notably with his housing. Indeed, *Vedor* emerges in documents from the late reign of Dinis, seemingly with the role of controlling the letting of houses and stalls.¹⁴⁶ This situation, the transfer of an urban office to the rest of the territory, mirrors that of the *almoxarife* and shows the importance of urban models for the Portuguese fiscal system. According to later regulations, he had, among other tasks, responsibility over the tax-farming of the royal rights.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, the introduction of the overseer of finances seems to respond to the widespread use of tax-farming contracts by the monarchy throughout the reign.¹⁴⁸ The *Vedor da Fazenda* emerged in the documentation after the peace that followed the brief warlike spell in the reign of Afonso IV with the Castilian War of 1336-9 and the Salado campaign of 1340. The post-war years were a period of definition of the king's rights by means of tight enquiries in the Northern lands.¹⁴⁹ The actual state of knowledge makes it very hard to confirm Fernão Lopes' allegation about the budgetary activity of the *Vedores da Fazenda*,¹⁵⁰ but there is no doubt that his version is compatible with the scanty data assembled: Pero Esteves, did not work alone, but together with the

¹⁴⁴ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. II, doc. 148, p. 240.

¹⁴⁵ *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. I, doc. 91, p. 106 (10 January 1327). This is the instrument of the letting of one of the king's houses in Coimbra by the accountants. In the document, it is stated that the '*almoxarife* and the scribe of the *almoxarifado* of Coimbra said to my *Contos* that no one else made a higher bid than the said Afonso Domingues.' After 1340, this function was usurped by the *Vedor*.

¹⁴⁶ Farelo, *A Oligarquia Municipal*, Appendix 2.

¹⁴⁷ Homem, *O Desembargo*, pp. 120-1.

¹⁴⁸ In many sentences from the king's courts, a pair of *vedores*—a word simply meaning overseer—were chosen by the two parts to evaluate the application of sentence or agreement. Examples in CP, Afonso IV, p. 125, (1352). The king himself had a permanent *vedor* in Lisbon and in his major wheat-fields whose role was evaluating whether the occupiers met the conditions agreed in the contract of location. *Chanc. Afonso IV*, vol. I, doc. 40, pp. 61-2.

¹⁴⁹ Marques, José, 'D. Afonso IV e as jurisdições senhoriais,' *Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de História Medieval*. Actas, Porto, 1990, vol. 4, p. 1527-1566.

¹⁵⁰ This hypothetical document would have been what Alain Guéry labelled as an *état au vrai*, a factual deduction of the ordered expenses over the effective revenues. Guéry, Alain, 'Le roi dépensier: le don, la contrainte, et l'origine du système financier de la monarchie française d'ancien régime', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, Année 39 (1984) vol. 6, pp. 1241-1269.

treasurer, other clerks and the accountants.¹⁵¹ Moreover, he had access to the information produced by the *Contos*, the accounting body.¹⁵² To compose a summary of the receipts and expenses at the local level is not unthinkable, given that the *almoxarifes* had registers kept by their scribes and the political circumstances were peaceful. There were some other important factors for stability, and hence predictability of income. In the North and Centre many municipalities had their contribution fixed for good in their charters and this made their total of income entirely predictable, at least in times of peace. Other important receipts like the notaries' pension (16,218 *l.* in 1290) and the Jews' service (which was fixed in theory, but was often negotiated) were stable. In addition, a few tax-farming contracts known of irregular revenues (fisheries of the realm, tenths and tolls of Lisbon and Setubal) celebrated in 1336 had a seven-year duration making the crown's revenue even more predictable (25,740 *l.*). Accordingly, the crown avoided debasements of the currency, as this would affect collection based on fixed lump sums, rather than fluctuating rents. In the period of peace that followed 1340, revenues could be anticipated and, most of all, expenditure could be more easily accounted than the extraordinary and fluctuating expenses brought on by wars, the exception being precisely the embassies which Lopes highlighted in his description.¹⁵³

Temporal coincidence apart, it is again impossible to correlate the activity of the *Vedor* with the consolidation of the *almoxarifado* system throughout the kingdom. Nonetheless, it is clear that the *almoxarifados* complemented the tax-farming of kingdom-wide revenues, the general supervision functions and possibly the budgetary activity of the *Vedor*. By expanding the *almoxarifes* throughout the realm, in spite of the different tributary traditions and customs, the Portuguese monarchy assured three goals: 1) The encapsulation of disparate revenues and rights within a single territorial unit under an officer

¹⁵¹ It can be sensed that Lopes' text somehow reflects the rivalries within the central administration as Álvaro Pais (who is Lopes' focal figure for the first chapters of his chronicle of João I) and the successor of the oft-mentioned Pedro Esteves as *Vedor* of the chancery were sacked following the ascent of Fernando I's new *Vedor da Fazenda*, Pedro Afonso. This man did not intervene in the normal attributions of the *Vedor da Fazenda* but rather in judicial sentences. On these bureaucrats, check the micro-biographies composed by Homem. *O Desembargo*, pp. 281-2, 337-8, 371-2.

¹⁵² Of the 24 letters he subscribes, only once he twice he subscribes alone. Twice he dispatches with the treasurers. See 1347 letter signed by the treasurer and the Pedro Esteves about an alleged debt to the king which the *Contos* books proved to be otherwise. *LM-2*, doc. 28, pp. 195-7.

¹⁵³ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XII, p. 53.

which would concentrate, allocate and transfer these resources, according to order from the centre; 2) The production of expendable income (once the permanent or assigned charges were deducted) that the tenant system did not endow him; 3) Finally, the permanent presence of a scribe in all transactions made by the *almoxarife* allowed the king to systematically audit his men.

Yet, for all the expansion of the *almoxarifado*, there would be a noticeable hole in the coverage of the fourteenth-century network: Lisbon. The understanding of Lisbon as a sort of treasury for the monarchy is already patent in the reign of Afonso III. Even before his massive real estate operations, he regarded the proceeds from Lisbon as the best cash-generators. Indeed, wanting to quickly settle the 2,000 *morabitanos* of arrears still due from his father's will to his favourite monastery, Afonso III addressed a letter to the *almoxarife* of Lisbon in order to pay these from the *primis denarijs quos receperitis*.¹⁵⁴ Most of all, it was the 1271 will of Afonso III that indicates what was the basis for this decisive feature of the country's fiscal organisation: the primordial role of the Lisbon revenues. The text of the will is very explicit: *tunc filius meus qui post me regnaverit faciat utilitatem suam de civitate Ulixb. [Lisbon] et de redditibus eius, sicut de aliis suis villis regni sui, sed inde non accipiat inde aliquid*.¹⁵⁵ In other words, unlike the profits managed by the territorial *almoxarifes*, those of Lisbon could never be granted as tenures and constituted the mainstay of the king's finances.

From 1251 to 1318 the *almoxarife* of Lisbon can be amply documented but in the chancery registers of Afonso IV and Pedro I, Lisbon, instead of being a district headed by one *almoxarife*, was actually home for many *almoxarifes*, each managing specific sorts of revenues: house-lettings (*almoxarife das casas*), letting of shopping houses (*almoxarife das tendas*) the farmed revenues (*almoxarife das ovenças*), the regal tenths on goods transported into the city (*almoxarife das décimas*).¹⁵⁶ This complexity responded certainly to the sheer dimension of the sums handled that required separate tax-farming.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the reason for the fiscal distinction enjoyed, or rather suffered, by Lisbon should

¹⁵⁴ TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 2v (3 June 1351).

¹⁵⁵ *Provas*, vol. I, part 1, doc. 28, p. 72.

¹⁵⁶ See Farelo, *A Oligarquia Camarária*, Appendix 2.

¹⁵⁷ The king's shops (*tendas*) were tax-farmed in 1293 by at least 350 *l.* TT, Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça, maço 20, doc. 35. Document abridged in Foidão, *Escrita e Poderes*, p. 143.

be sought for in one crucial factor: as the country's greatest port, it could provide more income in cash than any other town.

This long overview of Portuguese finances instead of portraying a 'not very coherent system' supplied, albeit intermittently, the necessary elements for recapturing the rough lineaments of the changes of the kingdom's fiscal structure. In absence of important quantitative data, a brief comparison of the, reasonably similar, Portuguese and Castilian fiscal evolutions,¹⁵⁸ provides a good example of the fiscal efficiency of the system produced by the Portuguese kings. The relevance of the kingdom-wide coverage by the *almojarifados* can be understood by contrast with neighbouring Castile which shared the same problem, if in a far larger area. Like Portugal, Castile kept an extremely heterogeneous fiscal geography. Regions north of Toledo maintained the intense fragmentation and diversity of fiscal units, whereas to the south the *almojarifazgos* formed a coherent grid,¹⁵⁹ based upon the former Muslim political divisions. North of that city, the main divisions were the *meirinos* whose functions were indistinctively judicial and fiscal. Only the development of the sales tax (*alcabala*) during the Trastámara dynasty effectively changed this organisation in the North, although the first general taxes, the *servicios* and the *monedas* were collected by the *meirinos*. These districts were in the hands of nobles who exploited its revenues and exerted the royal seigniorial prerogatives.¹⁶⁰ Whereas the *meirinos* were distributed as feuds, the revenues of the *almojarifazgos* were assigned as collaterals for cash advances by merchants and financiers.¹⁶¹

In fourteenth-century Castile-Leon, the king's revenues were concentrated and managed by a *almojarife mayor*, later called high-treasurer, who acted both as the king's paymaster and as the head of a group of Jewish financiers who controlled tax-farming dealings in the realm.¹⁶² He dealt directly with the local

¹⁵⁸ Information comes from García de Valdeavellano, Luis, *Curso de Historia de las Instituciones Españolas*, Madrid, 1970, pp.592-593 and 610; Ladero Quesada, 'Castile in the Middle Ages.'; Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*.

¹⁵⁹ Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*, pp. 140, 249-50.

¹⁶⁰ Álvarez Borge, *Monarquía Feudal*, p. 206.

¹⁶¹ González Arce, José Damián, 'De la Fiscalidad Islámica.'

¹⁶² Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad*, pp. 235-7.

receivers.¹⁶³ Their religious difference made the holder of the office even more ambiguous and politically fragile, the *almojarife mayor* often becoming either a victim of the king's ire (as in 1273, 1329 and 1360) or a preferential target for assassins and rioters (1304, 1328, 1355). Capital punishment or mob violence inflicted on the Castilian Jewish high-treasurers are more than anecdotal episodes: they illustrate the precariousness of the system, unable to cope with Castilian troubled internal politics after the death of Alfonso X.¹⁶⁴ In neighbouring Aragon, the Catalanian *Corts* of 1283 also pressured king Pere to get rid of his powerful Jewish manager and creditor Juçef Ravaya, using his religion as a pretext to stop the king's increasing financial centralisation.¹⁶⁵

A brief incursion into the realm of Aragon might reinforce the plausibility of Lopes' claims of a sound management of their scarce resources by the Portuguese 'old kings'. In the thirteenth-century Aragonese crown, credit and constant warfare went side-by-side. The Aragonese kings, as Martha van Landingham sharply summarises, 'instead of a system based on a budget, relied on a system based on credit.'¹⁶⁶ Within the Aragonese system of credit-bonds, that made its finances workable without much direct control,¹⁶⁷ proto-budgetary techniques made little sense. Even allowing for the lacunae of Portuguese archive, the lack of evidence for credit in the reigns of Afonso IV and Pedro I indirectly mirrors the hoarding capacity of the monarchy. Indeed, in the early thirteenth century, King Dinis loaned to his subjects and even to the Castilian kings.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Ayala, Pedro Lopez de, *Coronica del Serenissimo Rey Don Pedro, Hijo del Rey Don Alonso de Castilla*, Pamplona, 1591, Ano Septimo, cap. XV, pp. 49, 50.

¹⁶⁴ If we can trust the information of chronicler Pero Lopez de Ayala, the Jewish-Castilian treasurers chronically lacked the strength to act against corrupt local receivers. Ayala, *Coronica del Serenissimo Rey Don Pedro Ano Septimo*, cap. XV, p. 50.

¹⁶⁵ Van Landingham, Martha, *Transforming the state: king, court and political culture in the Realms of Aragon (1213-1387)* Leiden, 2002, pp. 136 and 143.

¹⁶⁶ Van Landingham, *Transforming the State*, p. 120.

¹⁶⁷ Van Landingham, *Transforming the State*, p. 128.

¹⁶⁸ In 1297, King Dinis gave to Fernando IV of Castile a jewel and gold ingots worth 120,000 Castilian *maravedis* (*Cr. 1419*, chapter CII, p. 177); years later, the same monarch received from Dinis a loan of 16,000 marks of silver (*Cr. 1419*, chapter CVI, p. 182); the monarch paid a debt that the Lisbon municipality owned to Italian merchants in 1296, *LM-1*, doc. 28, p. 195; in 1305 he lent 1,500 *l.* to a society of fishmongers together with the concession of the monopoly of fisheries for 10 years (*DP*, vol. I, doc. 33, pp. 24-25).

Fig. 8 – Fiscal and Institutional Innovations in Portugal and Castile

| Innovation | Date of Introduction | Portugal |
|--|----------------------|----------|
| Central Accounting Institution (Pt. <i>Casa dos Contos</i> , Cast. <i>Contaduria Mayor</i>) | 369-81 | nt. 1296 |
| Central Financial Planning (Pt. <i>Vedor da Fazenda</i> , Cast. <i>Consejo de Hacienda</i>) | 523 | 341 |
| Kingdom-wide grid of fiscal districts (Pt. <i>almojarifados</i>) | ever | 340 |
| Kingdom-wide custom system (Pt. <i>Alfandega</i>) | ever | . 1280 |
| Abolition of coinage rights (Pt. <i>monetarium</i> ; Cast. <i>moneda</i>) | 202 | 254 |
| | Leon) | |
| Kingdom-wide subsidies (Cast. <i>servicios</i>) | 208 | 308 |
| Kingdom-wide Sales Taxes (Pt. <i>Sisa</i> , Cast. <i>Alcabala</i>) | 338 | 372 |

Sources: see notes 537-47; Pereira, *Para a História das Alfândegas*, pp. 10-15 and 22-6.

Fig. 8 illustrates clearly how similar institutional backgrounds devolved at completely contrasting rhythms. The contrast could not be greater than with contemporary war-weary Castile, where institutional development lags behind the inventive search for new forms of revenue. In Portugal, the first mentions to specialised auditors, *contadores*, dates from the 1270s and of whom a permanent board, the *Casa dos Contos*, was already in work by 1296; whereas in Castile these accountants can only be detected in the documentation from 1351 and were only constituted into a formal, sedentary body, the *Casa de Cuentas*, in 1432. For Castile, it was only in this late period when the archaic

maior domus ceased to have functions;¹⁶⁹ whereas in Portugal this office was merely honorary by the times of Dinis I (1279-1325). However, these precocious institutional developments only compensated for the lack of new revenues. Castile had a kingdom-wide *sisá* under Sancho IV (1284-1295) and subsidies were often collected since the early thirteenth century. In short, Castile-Leon led the way in devising new taxes, whereas Portugal put forward new institutions. Time would prove that the treasury bequeathed by the Portuguese kings was not enough.

Twelfth-century and thirteenth-century Portugal was to a large extent the creation of its expansionist monarchy. However, this did not imply that the monarchy had a uniform grip on whole of the territory. Municipal charters and customary laws assured the survival of previous forms of organisation. Both individual municipalities and nobles took hold of revenues that were nominally the king's. In these circumstances, it is no wonder that a stable, operative territorial framework for fiscal administration was slow to emerge. By contrast, two non-national organisations, the Church and the kingdom-wide 'Community of the Jews,' possessed a coherent spatial framework. Like Castile, the finances of the Portuguese monarchy were initially built upon the institutional capacities of these: the coherent grid formed by the bishoprics and the capacity of the Jewry to concentrate and move monies within the territory. Yet in Castile, the lucrative transfers of ecclesiastical and Jewish capitals and institutional capacities did not stimulate the neighbouring monarchy to create autonomous territorial organisation. In the words of Ladero Quesada, 'the kings of Castile had no royal domain either in lands or immovables capable of producing revenues.'¹⁷⁰ Instead, they regarded the Jews as the 'treasury of the kingdom.'

The contrast with contemporary Castile and Aragon, two monarchies sharing a similar institutional background is highly telling. More intensive military efforts and, presumably, larger and readier financial markets made them favour loans, instead of accumulating small revenues. Portuguese kings, constrained by the kingdom's fiscal constitution and by a smaller tax-base, opted for hoarding and controlling expenditure. Between 1280 and 1340, the Portuguese

¹⁶⁹ For the dates relating to Castile see Valdeavellano, *Curso de Historia*, pp. 592-593.

¹⁷⁰ Ladero Quesada, Miguel Angel, 'Castile in the Middle Ages', *RFS*, p. 180. On Castile, see Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y Poder Real*.

crown was able to impose an 'undifferentiated', kingdom-wide system of custody of the royal revenues which overcame the kingdom's seemingly irreducible contrasting backgrounds. Moreover, the monarchy did it with the clear goal of recovering the capacity for accumulation that the first decades of the thirteenth century had destroyed without compromising its redistributive function. In this sense, it is hard to agree with Mattoso or Homem when they claim that royal finances lacked purpose. Indeed, nowhere is the monarchy's aim of hoarding of expendable income clearer than in the framing of the Lisbon fiscal resources. The exceptional status conferred to Lisbon is eloquent enough about the 'coherence' of the 'system' with its goals.

PART II – ‘WARS CAME AND A NEW WORLD WAS BORN’ (1369-1527)

‘Wars came and a new world was born, a world very contrary to the one before.’ Thus read the Prologue of the 1430s chronicle of King Fernando I by Fernão Lopes.¹ This emphatic statement had a significant fiscal dimension to it: the depletion of the treasury, the feeble war coinage and the hitherto unknown material burdens withstood by the *Povos*, the sales taxes in particular, were part of the substance of the post-war ‘world’ the chronicler thought he himself belonged to.

To a large extent, historians have worked along the lines drawn by Fernão Lopes and saw war as the cause for the wide transformations they perceived in fifteenth-century finances. As explained (see *supra* section 2.4), Vitorino Magalhães Godinho and A. H. Oliveira Marques saw in the wars of kings Fernando I and João I the birth of the *almojarifado*. Many other historians highlighted the depreciation of coinage that started with Fernando I and plagued the reign of João I (1385-1433) and related it to the ongoing military efforts.² Patient research on general taxation by Iria Gonçalves demonstrated that once rare kingdom-wide taxes became common from the wars of succession of Fernando I onwards.³ The explanation was seemingly obvious: increasing military activity throughout the fifteenth century intensified the recourse to direct taxation. This increase in extraordinary taxation led, in turn, to a more frequent meeting of the *Cortes* for fiscal purposes.⁴ But more than anything else, late-fourteenth-century wars were pointed up by historiography as the direct cause for the adoption of permanent taxation in the shape of the *sisas*.⁵ This view, already present in the pages of Fernão Lopes,⁶ was further elaborated by Iria Gonçalves who, in spite of the evidence assembled by Jorge Faro, assigned the

¹ ‘Quando começou a guerra (...) nação outro mundo novo muito contrario ao primeiro.’ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 4.

² Barros, *História da Administração Pública em Portugal*, vol. III, p. 147; Marques, *Portugal na Crise*, pp. 206-10.

³ See chronology in *PEP*, pp. 205-20.

⁴ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 255-6.

⁵ *Sisas* is the plural of *sisas*. The singular form, denoting an extraordinary yearly levy on the sale of a single product, as in *sisas do vinho*, is older. However, as most of the times the tax was applied to many products and it lasted for periods longer than one year, the plural form became far commoner. When all or nearly all sales were liable to the payment of a *sisas*, administrative documents speak of *sisas*, sometimes qualified as *gerais*, or universal.

⁶ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapter CCI, p. 459.

sisas to the reign of Fernando I.⁷ In other words, Lopes' chronicles and national historiography agreed that war was the prime factor in the transformation of the crown revenues.

The role of the present part is to confront the thesis of warfare-led fiscal revolution with the Portuguese case. First of all, the impact of wars on the revenues will be considered in chapter 5 after reasonable figures for the receipt are constructed. The impact of the late fourteenth-century wars on the fiscal-constitutional problems will be left for the next chapter, while the question of whether war triggered the fiscal transformations of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries will be the subject of chapter 3. Finally, chapter 4 will test the same assertion by constructing and interpreting a reliable picture of the expenditure of the Portuguese crown.

⁷ Significantly, Iria Gonçalves ignored Jorge Faro's clear evidence of earlier *sisas*. She claimed that the first *sisas* demanded by a king was in 1372, a crucial moment of the Fernandine Wars, while Faro provided many examples of municipalities that held the tax since the 1330s to meet royal (and non-royal) demands.

Chapter 5 - Revenue Revolution?

Unknowingly, the opinion advanced by Fernão Lopes and expanded by twentieth-century historiography of wars abruptly transforming the crown's finances fitted fiscal history's orthodoxy of warfare-led 'fiscal revolutions'. In the Portuguese case, the revolution implied resorting to new forms of revenue, namely the *sisas*, the minting profits and kingdom-wide direct taxes. Initially the *sisas* were extraordinary but the long duration and the threat of war allowed the king to turn them into permanent revenues. According to this view, the fiscal revolution was first and foremost the burgeoning of the receipt driven by military expenditure. All the relevant historians, Faro, Gonçalves, Magalhães Godinho, Sousa and Oliveira Marques, hailed the adoption of the *sisas* as a permanent revenue as the cornerstone of this revolution. Though they agreed in that *sisas* were very lucrative and that they stood for a 'modern' type of taxation, their perception was not accompanied by any noticeable effort in quantifying the crown finances before and after the *sisas* from the scanty evidence available. The purpose of this part is to respond to this challenge by constructing some workable figures.

Section 5.1 - The *Sisas*

The participants of the fifteenth-century *Cortes* would have no difficulty in understanding the gist of fiscal history's idea of a transition from 'domain' to 'tax state'. From their words it is clear that royal revenues were twofold: the *direitos reais* and the *sisas*. For them, this distinction was as much a historical as a constitutional one – while the former encompassed the ancient dues managed within the *almoxarifados* since the time of the 'old kings', the *sisas* had been granted to the crown by the *Cortes* during the war against Castile.⁸ As a 1439 grievance explained, subtly hinting at the Roman *fiscum*, the *direitos reais* were intrinsic to the Crown (*comfiscasas com a Coroa*) and worked as a permanent

⁸ Some examples of direct contrast between *sisas* and *direitos reais*: TT, Suplemento de Cortes, maço 4, doc. 41 (1439); TT, Maço 2 de Cortes, doc. 14 (Cortes of 1459).

endowment for the upholding of the king's 'state' or condition (*manuntenção do seu estado*). The *sisas*, by contrast, were a voluntary, and hence precarious, grant to the monarchy. As the *Povos* would repeatedly remind the monarchs well into the sixteenth century, they were not to be mistaken for a *direito real*.⁹ Nonetheless, as these very objections show, the *Povos* ultimately came to regard the *sisas* no longer as a subsidy but as a proper tax, in the sense that it was imposed upon them by the ruler, regardless of their consent. For them, it was clear that the adoption of the *sisas* during the wars made contemporary crown finances wholly different from those of the 'old kings'.

Parliamentary discourse, however, omitted an essential datum: the *sisas* had been municipal taxes well before the wars of Fernando I and João I. Fernão Lopes, who worked as secretary of prince Duarte, provides in his chronicle of João I an educated response to the claims of the contemporary municipal representatives: 'because some reckon and avow nowadays that the kings made up this yoke and set it upon the people and because things did not go this way, we want to dispel this opinion: (...) since the time of Afonso IV before the great pestilence (...) the *Povos* held *sisas* among them in their towns (...). As the kings saw the income of these *sisas*, they yearned for them and they evoked past or future necessities to ask for these taxes graciously for no more than two or three years.'¹⁰

This version was adopted by most historians, namely J. Faro and I. Gonçalves who corroborated the pages of Fernão Lopes: under the pretext of wars, Fernando I and João I obtained from their 'vassal' municipalities the *sisas* and dodged later complaints about their constitutional illegality. Both Faro and Gonçalves followed the hint left by Fernão Lopes and identified a few cases of *sisas* held within the municipality in the reign of Afonso IV.¹¹ By and large, for these two historians, the *sisas* was a municipal tax hijacked by the monarchy for its own profit. The hidden assumption was that, well before the kingdom made the transition from 'domain state' into 'tax state', there were already 'tax municipalities' which met their extraordinary needs with universal, sophisticated

⁹ Barros, *História da Administração*, IX, pp. 509-28.

¹⁰ *E vendo os Reis taes remdas de sissas, avemdo vontade de as aver, mostravã ao povo necessidades pasadas ou que eram por vir e pedimdo-lhas graciosamente por dous ou tres anos que logo as leixariom.* Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapter CCI, p. 459.

¹¹ 'Introduction,' *RED*, pp. LXXVIII-LXXX.

and acceptable taxation. This was, after all, a seducing narrative that presented state-building as a bottom-up construct and suited an older, nineteenth-century thesis of the balanced, 'municipalist' 'medieval' state being overtaken by a 'centralising' monarchy on its way to absolutism.

With Faro, Gonçalves and other historians like Magalhães Godinho and Oliveira Marques, the *sisas* earned the distinction of being a 'modern' tax.¹² As presented by these authors, to borrow a concept from economists, the *sisas* would draw a perfect 'Laffer Curve': that is to say they strike a perfect balance between efficiency and equity. Surprisingly perhaps, a few fourteenth-century documents confirmed that the adoption of the *sisas* resulted largely from a conscious choice of the very taxpayers at the municipal level. Jorge Faro pointed out that the use of the *sisas* directly responded to the problems created by the older taxes, the *talhas* and *fintas*.¹³ The fact that these taxes were based upon property and rent implied some individual and collective privileges and exemptions which meant that a great deal of the taxable wealth was out of the scope of the tax. Conversely, the *sisas* on wines was presented by the representatives of Porto in 1368 as 'a common and beneficial good to all', as 'as both great and small paid communally according to what they spent'.¹⁴ According to the same document sent by the municipality of Porto to the king, the *sisas* also avoided the endless disputes brought by the application of the *talha*.¹⁵ But the *sisas* was not simply equitable, it was also efficient. According to Jorge Faro, what made sales taxes so attractive to the municipal authorities was the speed with which the money was assembled, in contrast with the costly and lengthy procedures arising from taxes based on landed revenue.¹⁶ The municipalities which regulated the functioning of the local markets could just as well monitor the volume of the transactions and later tax the vendors.¹⁷ Considering the data assembled by Faro and also by Gonçalves, it would seem

¹² It helped that the first municipalities known to have held *sisas* are (mostly southern) ports: Lisbon (1336, 1339, 1341) Porto (1336) Santarem (1338) Setubal (between 1325 and 1357) and the Algarvian ones (before 1347). Significantly, all towns involved were sea harbours, with the exception of Santarem, a major river port. Only later did the *sisas* spread to other northern centres: Gaia (1360) Porto de Mós (1363) Braga (1363) Guimaraes (1371).

¹³ 'Introduction,' *RED*, pp. LXXVIII-LXX. The *talha* was based upon the annual revenue (*renda*) while the *finta* taxed the estimated value of the property. On these taxes, see Henriques, António Castro, 'Talha I' and 'Finta', *Gloss.*

¹⁴ Document abridged in *Vereações. Anos de 1401-1449*, ed. J. A. Pinto Ferreira, Porto, 1980, pp. 364-366.

¹⁵ Documents summarised by Faro in 'Introduction', *RED*, pp. LXXVIII-LXXX.

¹⁶ 'Introduction', *RED*, p. LXXXI.

¹⁷ At least in fifteenth-century jurisprudence, tax-collection bore upon the seller who had to keep the *sisas* of the buyer. Barros, *História da Administração*, vol. IX, p. 473.

that fourteenth-century Portuguese municipalities had found a tax that was as acceptable as it was productive.

Fig. 9 – Some Yields of *Sisas*, 1336-1378

| Years | Municipality | Sales taxed | Duration (in years) | Yearly receipt (in l.) |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| [between 1325 and 1348] | Setúbal | Wine | 1 (?) | 4,000 |
| <i>Idem</i> | Setúbal | All things | 1 (?) | 500 |
| 1336 | Lisbon | Wine | 2 | 25,000 |
| 1367 | Lisbon | Wine | 2 | 36,000 |
| 1368 | Porto | Wine | 1 | 19,000 |
| 1377-8 | Lisbon | ? | 4 | 40,000 |

Sources: [1325-1357], *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapter CCI; 1336: *LM-2*, doc. 3, pp.13-15; 1367: *LM-1*, doc. 5, p. 33-7; 1368: *TT*, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 1, fols. 30v-31; 1377-8: *TT*, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 4, fols. 7v-19; 1382: *AML*, Livro I de Sentenças, doc. 9.

A monograph on the *sisas* lies beyond the scope of the present dissertation.¹⁸ Nonetheless, some aspects of the narrative offered by Jorge Faro and Iria Gonçalves furthering the views of Fernão Lopes require a brief critical revision. In fact, the first documented occurrence of a *sis*a is not to be found among the municipalities but among the Jewry in 1316 as a new form of apportioning their annual service (*serviço*) to the king.¹⁹ Only two decades later can we find the first evidence of a *sis*a held by the municipalities of Lisbon and Porto in 1336 in two royal letters kept in the respective archives of those cities.²⁰ These first recognisable municipal *sisas* are not municipal taxes but a *serviço*, a subsidy required by the crown for its own purposes.²¹ The decision-making process is more explicit in the letter sent by King Afonso IV to the municipality of Lisbon causing it to summon the municipal assembly in order to authorise

¹⁸ On the problems of the origins, vocabulary and constitutional evolution, see Henriques, 'Sisas I', 'Sisas II' e 'Sisas III', *Gloss.*

¹⁹ As can be seen in a letter inserted in the chancery registers of King Dinis. *TT*, Chanc. Dinis I, Livro 3, fol. 104, 'on account of the *sis*a that they [the Jews] held among them to pay my services'; *per razom da ssisa que antressi fezerom pera pagarem a mim os meus serviços*. The Jews were still using the *sis*a, as shown by the mention of debt 'of the *sis*a due to the king' of a Jew, Judas Tintureiro, in 1328. *TT*, Gaveta XII, maço 4, doc. 24. The same method was in use in 1344 when Afonso IV commanded the notaries of Lisbon to authorise the Jews to access their registers, as the Jews chose to pay their service in the form of *sisas*. *Chanc Afonso IV*, vol. III, doc. 416, p. 327.

²⁰ In Lisbon, *LM-2*, doc. 3, pp. 13-15 (25 January 1336); *AMP*, Livro 1 de Pergaminhos, doc. 18 (18 February 1336). As it has not been possible to access the latter document, I used its abridgment by A. Magalhães Basto (*V1*, pp. 394-6).

²¹ In early 1336 King Afonso IV was already preparing an attack on Castile that would result in the war of 1336-8. Martins, 'A Guerra Esquiva,' pp. 27-9. From the document mentioned in the earlier note, it would seem that the *sis*a held in Porto was assigned to the 'expenses and maintenance of the *naves* and other ships'. *V1*, p. 395.

(*outorgar*) the application of a tax. It was neither a question of 'if' nor 'when' but of 'how'. Moreover, in the text, it is the monarch who induces the municipality to pay the subsidy by means of a *sisa do vinho*, as this would be 'common profit' of all and would not 'burden the poor'. In brief, *sisa* was held and farmed by the municipality only in order to respond to the demand for a *serviço* on behalf of the monarchy. The same arguments were used in the case of Porto to justify the option for the *sisas* instead of the troublesome taxes on rent (*talhas*) 'of which some would be exempt'.²²

In short, unlike Faro and Gonçalves suggested, the *sisa* was confirmed by the municipality after the monarchy itself had presented it as the better way to apportion a subsidy to which the municipality was willy-nilly bound. Instances of *sisas* held by the municipalities to pay for their own works, mainly fortifications, are only documented after 1355.²³ In some cases, like that of Porto in 1367, *sisas* originally meant to pay as a service to the king were diverted to repair the city walls with authorisation from royal authority (*outorga*).²⁴ In spite of Lopes' emphatic claim that the monarchy diverted the *sisas* to its own purposes, the surviving documentation suggests the opposite.

The relevant question is not whether it was the monarchy, the Jewry or the municipality that created the *sisas* – which largely remains an open problem – but whether the narrative offered by F. Lopes and furthered by twentieth-century historiography of the autonomous development of the *sisas* by the municipalities and its subsequent alienation by the monarchy is congruent with the existing sources. Through the cases of the *sisas* held in Lisbon and Porto in 1336 it is clear that the *sisas* could not be held without the initiative or at least the intervention of the monarchy. Jorge Faro himself supplied another relevant case: facing the fiscal evasion of the clergy and their dependants, the Algarve towns witnessed a serious diminution in the receipt of the *sisas* they held to pay for constructing watching-towers against Muslim piracy. Thus, their representatives required King Afonso IV to compel the clergy to participate in these *sisas*, whose purposes were in the interest of all.²⁵

²² AMP, Livro 1 de Pergaminhos, doc. 18 (18 June 1336).

²³ LM-1, doc. 6, p. 33 (07 June 1355).

²⁴ AMP, Livro A, fol. 149 (11 June 1357).

²⁵ According to Faro, these *sisas* were held before 1347. 'Introduction RED, p. LXXXIX.

With this information in mind, we can better understand the arguments about the greater acceptability of the *sisas* proposed by Faro and Gonçalves. After all, the efficiency of the tax required universal liability; otherwise the privileged would channel the taxed merchandises. In societies where most of the rich are privileged, tax efficiency and universality are two sides of the same coin. Similarly, privilege opened the way for fraud.²⁶ Provided that the king temporarily granted his binding 'universal' authority, the *sisas* could indeed provide liquidity. Indeed, in the *sisas*, most of the pleas revolved around privilege. Already, in the 1336 letter to Lisbon, the monarch explicitly indicated that he would allow the men of his lands (*reguengos*) within the municipality to be taxed by the *sisas* on their wine. In the chancery registers and municipal archives, most of the documentation mentioning the *sisas* concerned group privileges: the wine traders of the boroughs near Lisbon, the Corsican merchants in Lisbon, the men living in the king's lands in Gaia, the Mendicant Orders in Porto, the archbishop's men in Braga.²⁷ Indeed, municipalities could not legally compel all categories of their diverse populations without the assistance of the monarchy. Though living within the boundaries of the municipality, nobles, clergy and men living on royal lands (the *reguengueiros*) all had a distinct status. The monarchy, in exchange, had the authority to universally coerce the men living in the kingdom and, when *sisas* were held, could temporarily lend this capacity to the municipal governments. For the municipalities, the *sisas* provided an opportunity to extend their fiscal base to those who managed to dodge the typical municipal forms of taxation, the *finta* and the *talha*. All in all, it would be an over-simplification to understand the control of the *sisas* as a zero-sum game, that is to say in purely distributive terms, as Fernão Lopes and the fifteenth-century *Cortes* did. The *sisas* represented an instance where two institutions negotiated and even cooperated in order to maximise their interests: the municipality conferred the capacity for the monarchy to control the market, while the monarchy temporarily lent its wider, 'universal' authority to the municipality.

²⁶ This is stated by João I in 1398 answering to the grievances of the nobility in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1398: 'if some people were exempt from the said *sisas*, there would be so many frauds that the *sisas* would yield little, which would be great loss.' OA, Book II, title 59 §1.

²⁷ By the same order: AML, Livro I de Sentenças, doc. 9 (2 December 1357); LM-1, doc. 7, p. 27 (7 June 1355); *Chanc. Pedro I*, doc. 475, p. 187 (October 1360) and doc. 811, p. 363 (26 May 1361) and doc. 822, p. 370 (15 June 1363).

A second observation on the view offered by Faro and Gonçalves concerns the allegedly superior liquidity brought by the *sisas*. These authors, just like Fernão Lopes, assume that the *sisas* collected by the monarchy was identical to the extraordinary *sisas* paid within the municipalities. However, the word *sisas* was applied to a tax that could assume two different forms: *ad valorem* or *ad ponderum*. From 1336 to 1372, all the known municipal *sisas*, mostly but not exclusively on wine, were levied per capacity and weight units, that is to say *ad ponderum*. Indeed, the *sisas* applied in Porto in 1336 and in Lisbon in 1355 were paid on the wine entering the town to be sold, in bulk or in retail. *Sisas* were not yet exactly sales taxes and their reflection on the consumer was less direct. In fact, they are close to the tolls set in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century municipal charters – the *portaticum* and the tenth – that taxed the transport of merchandise into the municipal boundaries. Like these, the *sisas* applied an *ad ponderum* rate to the commodities within the municipal boundaries. Bar special privileges, all non-nobles were bound to this levy. However, whilst aliens had to pay tolls and tenths in any circumstance, locals had the privilege to be exempt by simply paying a small annual fee.²⁸ Thus, the *sisas* brought two differences: they were temporary and, crucially, they admitted no exceptions. However, as Fig. 10 shows, the *sisas* would still suffer a radical change.

²⁸ Local men could pay an annual due of 1 s. and were free to import their merchandise to their town or city. Fernando I unsuccessfully tried to abolish this custom in Lisbon in 1371. See TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 1, fols. 84v-86.

Fig. 10 – Rates of the *Sisas*, 1336-1408

| Date | Level | Rate | Liability |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1336 | Municipal (Porto) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales |
| 1355 | Municipal (Lisbon) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales |
| 1357 | Municipal (Lisbon) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales |
| 1368 | Municipal (Porto) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales |
| 1371 | Municipal (Porto) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | All things sold |
| 1372-5 | Kingdom-wide | 3.2% - 8 d./1 l. | All things sold |
| 1373 | Municipal (Lisbon) | 1.6% - 4 d./1 l. | All things sold |
| 1376-8 | Kingdom-wide | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales |
| 1377-8 | Municipal (Lisbon) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales |
| 1382-3 | Kingdom-wide | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales & All things sold |
| 1384 | Municipal (Montemor, Évora) | <i>Ad ponderum</i> | Wine Sales & All things sold |
| 1386 | Kingdom-wide | 5% - 12 d./1 l. | All things sold |
| 1387 | Kingdom-wide | 10% - 24 d./1 l. | All things sold |
| 1401 | Kingdom-wide | 6.6% -16 d./1 l. | All things sold |
| 1408-1530 | Kingdom-wide | 10% - 24 d./1 l. | All things sold |

Sources: 1336: V1, p. 395; 1355: LM-2, doc. 6, p. 23 and AML, Livro I de Sentenças, doc. 9; 1357: AML, Livro I de Sentenças, Doc. 9, fol. 17v; 1367-8: LM-2, doc. 5, pp. 33-7; 1368: TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 1, fol. 30v-31; 1372-5: AML, Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 4; 1373- Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 4 (15 February 1373); 1376: TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 4, fol. 28 (Óbidos); 1377: TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 4, fol. 7v and 19; 1382-3 and 1384: TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 3-96; TT, Gav. XII, Maço 1, doc. 13 (copy of the regulation, used in 1384 for Évora); RED, doc. 1, pp. 1-7 (*sisas* collected in Montemor); 1386 and 1387: AML, Livro I de Cortes, doc. 7, fol. 63 and AMP, Livro A, fol. 177v-180; RED, doc. 6, pp. 48-50.

Notes: Only *sisas* about which either the 'rate' or the 'object' is known were included.

In 1372, in the context of the second Fernandine War, the monarchy imposed in all the lands of the kingdom, instead of demanding them directly to each and every municipality. This first kingdom-wide *sisas* brought yet another decisive change: it became an *ad valorem* sales tax. The reasons for this innovation are to be found in the interests of the monarchy. It is highly telling that the first *sisas* levied at *ad valorem* dates from a period when King Fernando's monetary manipulations were at their liveliest (see Fig. 5). In a period of rapid inflation, the yield of the customary rate of 1 s. per 15 litres (*almude*) would be severely affected. Conversely, collecting an *ad valorem* tax on sales would leave the purchasing power of their revenue unscathed from all debasement- or taxation-fuelled inflation.

The change to an *ad valorem* rate was deeply resented by the municipalities because it was seen as contributing towards dearth in the taxed products. *Sisas* bore heavily on trade, and this threatened the small centres in the hinterland. Mós and Torre de Moncorvo, two remote North-Eastern municipalities, argued that *sisas* amplified the cost of living and had imposed a standstill on regional commerce.²⁹ The men of Lisbon also claimed that 'the *sisas* on goods sold by weight, cloth, wood and other things were very expensive, namely 4 *d.* per *l.* the buyer and 4 *d.* the seller *d.*, which caused scandal among the people'.³⁰ Indeed, from the moment the *sisas* became *ad valorem* the references to the equity of the *sisas* disappeared from the municipal documentation in the 1330s, 1350s and 1360s. The praise that impressed Jorge Faro and other historians was replaced by complaints against the *sisas* and municipal attempts to resort to direct taxation.³¹ After protesting against the 'scandal' of the *ad valorem* rates in 1375, the municipal government of Lisbon agreed with Fernando I that the city would never pay *sisas* again.³² After the death of Fernando I, one of the first demands of the *Povos* to the newly-acclaimed João I was to cancel all the *sisas* being collected offering instead to pay the same value by means of a direct tax.³³

The receipts from the revolutionary 1372 kingdom-wide *sisas* are unknown and, as such, cannot be compared with the revenues of the municipal *sisas* (Fig. 9). If no quantitative figures remain from the first general *sisas* collected by the monarch, the values of the tax-farms of the 1382-4 *sisas* agreed in the winter of 1381-2 provide a workable sum, although incomplete (Fig. 11).³⁴

²⁹ This was felt by municipalities as diverse as Mós or Torre de Moncorvo, in Trás-os-Montes, Lisbon, and Sousel in Alentejo. Arquivo Distrital de Bragança, Pergaminhos, doc. 32; *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, pp. 141-3; AML, Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 4.

³⁰ AML, Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 4 (15 February 1373).

³¹ See p. 158, note 12.

³² AML, Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 6 (25 July 1375).

³³ Barros, *História da Administração*, vol. IX, p. 419; Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 111-2 (article 6 of the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385).

³⁴ None of the tax-farm contracts contain the rates of the *sisas* *geral*. The regulation of 1382 survived in the farm contract for the *sisas* of Évora in 1384 where it is stated that these 1384 excises were to be collected 'in the same manner as the municipality had recently paid to King Fernando'. Thus, these values relate to *ad ponderum* taxes. TT, Gaveta XII, m. 1, doc. 13.

Fig. 11 – Tax-Farms for the 1382 *sisas*, by Judicial District (in *l.*)

| Trás-os-Montes | Algarve | Beira | Porto [^] | Lisbon [*] | Alentejo ^º | Estremadura ^º | Entre Douro e Minho [*] |
|----------------|---------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 20,200 | 13,000 | 40,000 | 22,000 | 105,000 | c. 95,500 | c. 79,000 | Unknwon |

Notes: ^ - Porto was part of the *comarca* of Entre Douro e Minho and it is the only municipality whose tax-farming contract survived; given its status as the second city of the realm in population and wealth, it makes sense to isolate it, rather than present its considerable 22,000 *l.* as an average value for Entre Douro e Minho; * - Lisbon was not technically speaking a *comarca*, or judicial province, on its own but had a separate organisation from the *comarca* system; º - while the *comarcas* of Algarve, Trás-os-Montes and Beira were farmed as a whole, those of Alentejo and Estremadura were not. Of the 45 towns of the *comarca* of Alentejo, only 11 were farmed (or at least, have surviving tax-farm contracts). As there is no reason to think that only the richest or the poorest were tax-farmed, the average of these 11 towns' values has been multiplied by 45 in order to obtain a notional value for the *comarca*. The same procedure has been followed for the 16, out of 38, towns of Estremadura, which had 32,910 *l.*

Source: TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fols. 3-96.

The 1382-4 *sisas* were expected to yield approximately 400,000 *l.* per annum.³⁵ Considering Pedro I's notional ordinary revenue of 960,000 *l.*, this would represent an increment of 41%. In the last years of the reign of Fernando I the proportion would be even higher, on account of at least three factors: a) the effect of war on production and trade; b) the assignment of sources of revenue to nobles; c) the debasements of 1369 which deteriorated the value of the fixed rents. In fact, a proportion higher than 41% appears to be confirmed by the case of the Algarve, whose *Direitos Reais* were farmed at 27,000 *l.* in 1383.³⁶ That is to say the *sisas* were roughly half (48%) the total yield of the royal revenues. This implies an immense growth, but a few disperse municipalities, for which the sums for the *sisas* and *direitos reais* exist, show that the introduction of *sisas* could be even more decisive.

³⁵ The sum of Fig. 11 is 374,724 *l.*, but the *comarca* of Entre Douro e Minho, the most populated of the realm, could easily provide the remaining 25,226 *l.*. The value of 400,000 *l.* makes sense as in 1385, the popular representatives proposed to King João I a subsidy of 400,000 *l.* to compensate the monarchy for the loss of the *sisas* (*PEP*, p. 136; Barros, *História da Administração*, vol. IX, p. 419, note 2; Arquivo Distrital de Bragança, Pergaminhos, doc. 050). This datum makes it even more likely that the predictable yield of the kingdom's *sisas* was indeed 400,000 *l.*

³⁶ *DP*, Supplement to vol. I, doc. 485, p. 420.

Fig. 12 – Municipal rents and *Sisa* farms in 1382 Compared (in *l.*)

| Municipality | <i>Sisas</i> farmed | rents | <i>Sisa</i> as part of Rents |
|------------------|---------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Arronches | 1000 | 1500 | 66% |
| Lamas de Orelhão | 1250 | 200 | 625% |
| Portalegre | 2000 | 1200 | 166% |
| Sintra | 4400 | 3400 | 129% |
| Torres Vedras | 2000 | 3000 | 66% |
| Vila Viçosa | 2167 | 1000 | 216% |

Source: for 1382 *sisas*, TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 3 (Torres Vedras), 18v (Lamas de Orelhão), 20 (Arronches), 37 (Vila Viçosa), 54 (Portalegre), 86-86v (Sintra); for municipal rents, TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 20 (Arronches, 1371), TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 195 (Lamas de Orelhão, 1259), LL, doc. 68, p. 207 (Portalegre e Sintra, 1297), SS, doc. 2, p. 168 (Torres Vedras, 1223), TT, Chanc. Dinis, Livro 3, fol. 1v (Vila Viçosa, 1297).

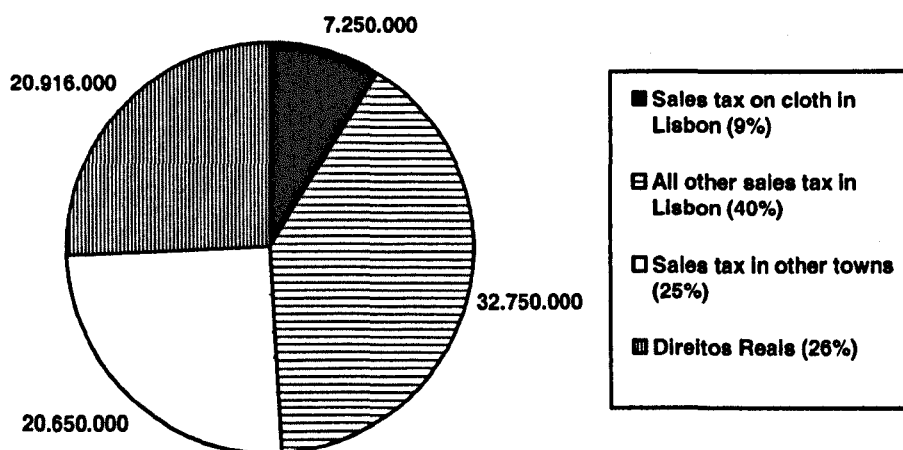
The farms of the *sisas* agreed in 1382 indicate that the *sisas* vastly enhanced the strict fiscal base of the *direitos reais*, in particular within the relatively inelastic municipal rents. Fig. 12 shows that the *sisas* allowed the monarchy to tap the wealth that escaped the contributions established in the mostly thirteenth-century municipal charters. The case of Lamas de Orelhão, located in a region where many municipal charters included standing farms (Trás-os-Montes), is paradigmatic. In 1259 the municipal charter farmed the land to the municipality for a sum equivalent to 200 *l.*³⁷ In 1382, the tax-farmer, a local squire, was confident of raising more than six times that amount by means of the *sisas*. The purchasing power of 200 *l.* in 1259 and of 1,250 *l.*, one hundred and twenty years later was perhaps comparable. What matters in this case is that were it not for the *sisas* the whole contribution of that particular municipality would be limited to the nominal 200 *l.* as it was for more than a century.

Indeed, inflation is decisive in understanding the monarchy's preference for the *sisas*. These taxes achieved more than just simply to tap hitherto hidden inaccessible wealth. As sales *ad valorem* taxes, the *sisas* were pegged to

³⁷ In the municipal charter, the dwellers of Lamas de Orelhão and the king settled for 150 Leonese *maravedis* (TT, Chanc. Afonso III, Livro 1, fol. 195) which were worth 1.(3) *l.* (See the conversion of the rents of Braganza: TT, Chanc. Dinis, Livro 1, fol. 122 and TT, Chanc. Dinis, Livro 3, fol. 104v). This means that the 200 *l.* are not exactly nominal. However, this has little importance as there is no indication that the customary rate of conversion was altered by the monarchy.

inflation and, as such, their yield was 'immune' to its effects. In a period when price rises and debasement threatened the fixed rents, this was a decisive advantage for the monarchy. For this reason, João I sought to extract from the reluctant *Povos* yearly concessions of *sisas* that protected royal revenue from the effects of debasement. Virtually no quantitative data whatsoever can be supplied for the years of intense war between the death of Fernando I and 1401. However, a combination of three different sources, including again the chronicles of Fernão Lopes, for the year 1401 allows for a rough breakdown estimate of the revenues of the Portuguese crown, displayed in Fig. 13.

Fig. 13 – Estimate of Royal Revenue in 1401 (in *l.*)



Sources: Lopes, *Crónica de D. João I*, part 2, chapter CCI, p. 210; *MH*, doc. 134.; TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 61.³⁸

In 1401, after three decades of war, the nominal revenue of the monarchy rocketed: it was roughly 80 times higher than in 1367. Even more meaningful is the change in the structure of the receipt: by 1401 the *sisas* had become the mainstay of royal finances, accounting for 74% of the revenue. In 1382, as shown above, the *sisas* had accounted for roughly 41% of the notional revenue.

³⁸ These values should be regarded as notional. The total figure of 81,600,000 comes from Lopes, *Cron. João*, part 2, chapter CCI, p. 210. The values of the Lisbon sales tax are deduced from an information that the 20 000 *l.* correspond to 1/3 of the sales tax before the truces with Castile (the 1400 Segovia truce) given by the king in the parliament (Cortes) of Évora in 1408 (*MH*, vol. I, doc. 134, pp. 317-319). The cloth sales tax of 1401-4 was valued at 29,000,000 for the four years. (TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 61).

Is this inversion to be explained by the decadence of the *direitos reais* or by the growth of the *sisas*?

The answer is: both. Naturally, considering that a substantial part of this growth might reflect the erosion of the Portuguese coinage wrought by demand- and debasement-driven inflation, the meaningfulness of the nominal growth is unclear. Considering the intense debasement of the *l.*, which by 1401 had 48 times less metal than in 1382,³⁹ the 22-fold increase of the *direitos reais* in relation to the times of the 'old kings' is no increase at all in terms of silver content. Contemporary price increases made things worse and, consequently, the *Direitos Reais* were caught by the 'scissors movement' of debasement and inflation. Conversely, the increase of the *sisas* was remarkable. The kingdom-wide *sisas* which were valued at 400,000 *l.* in 1382 were, by 1401, worth 60,650,000 *l.* This nominal augmentation of 151 times from 1382 to 1401 clearly exceeds the 48-fold degradation of intrinsic value in that period. This nominal surge stands for a metallic gain of 300% and reflects an effective enlargement of the tax-base that largely compensated the slump of the traditional revenue.

Although it does not tell the whole history, metallic content hints at a basic fact: whilst the revenue of the *Direitos Reais* slumped dramatically, the *sisas* emerged as the mainstay of the royal finances. This substitution cannot be regarded as a consequence of the crown's neglect for its old fiscal structure. Indeed, King João I sought to preserve the value of the *Direitos Reais*. The profit-orientated usage of minting rights,⁴⁰ the alienation of ecclesiastical jurisdictions justified by wars⁴¹ and the 1393 reform of the *jugada* (an old land-tax in the South)⁴² are three clear examples of enlargement of the tax-base. The crown tried as well to give new life to its old revenues, notably the fixed revenues, by issuing in 1393 and 1399 laws stating that in payments of rates expressed in 'old money' each old *l.* had to be redeemed by five and later ten current, 'new' *l.*, diminishing the effects of the depreciation of the Portuguese coinage (see *infra* section 6.2). These laws allowed for a tenfold increase of the

³⁹ The metallic contents are 4,106 g Ag per *l.* in 1382 and 0,085 g Ag per *l.* in 1401. In 1367 the value was 11,08 g Ag per *l.*

⁴⁰ Given their conservative coinage policy, the 'kings of old' did not greatly benefit from the profits of minting. The mint in 1402 was valued at 15,000,000 *l.* RED, doc. 4, pp. 20-21.

⁴¹ In 1405, King João gave back to the bishop of Oporto his rights and jurisdiction in the city which he had wrestled in the 1380s 'because of the great necessities brought by wars' (*polas grandes neecessidades das gerras*). These were sizeable rights, valued at 300,000 *l.* TT, Gaveta I, maço 1, doc. 15.

⁴² RED, doc. 2, pp. 8-12.

yield of fixed payments whose importance has already been shown (see Fig. 8). Yet, these measures had but a palliative effect. The very structure of the traditional revenues upon which the municipal farms were based – tolls, customs, land taxes – was quantified on twelfth-century and thirteenth-century currencies. In 1401 the Lisbon customs and tolls, whose contribution to the royal income was highlighted by Fernão Lopes, were collected according to *ad ponderum* rates set around 1377, well before the wartime coinage slump. As the moderate success of these measures shows, the *Direitos Reais* offered limited elasticity.

By contrast, the revenue of sales taxes grew significantly in real terms.⁴³ How can this performance in such difficult times be explained? The decrease of the *Direitos Reais* explains *a contrario* the ascendancy of the sales taxes: from 1387 onwards the latter were collected at a standing rate of 10% (2 s. per l.) and, as such, were immune to the intrinsic devaluation and even to inflation itself. The *ad valorem* collection was not the default option: the 400,000 l.-worth 1382 *sisas* were *ad ponderum*, as were those conceded in 1384 by the municipalities to João, *qua* 'defender of the realm'. In these conditions, for King João I the *sisas* were no better than a subsidy based on landed wealth.⁴⁴ This changed in 1387 when, after three years of continuous devaluations, the *Cortes* accepted the *ad valorem* sales taxes for one year (see *infra* section 6.2). From that moment onwards, the monarchy did not go a single year without the *sisas*, a testament to the superior adaptability of the sales taxes to the economic conditions prevailing in times of war.

Equipped with the *sisas*, the monarchy could well ride the waves of inflation. As *ad valorem* taxes, the *sisas* could, and did, protect royal revenues from the effects of inflation, both accidental (wartime difficulties in supply) and self-inflicted (debasements). The theory that wartime *sisas* bolstered royal finances is compatible with the existing data and is to be accepted, insofar as by *sisas* we mean *ad valorem* taxes and not simply sales taxes. The changes of

⁴³ Average wine prices in the five years before 1369 was 0.53 l. and 34 l. in 1401, a price 64.15 times higher. The price grew in wheat was roughly the same: 64.7 times (from 0.76 to 49 l.). Viana, Mário, 'Alguns Preços de Vinho em Portugal,' *Arquipélago. História*, vol. 5, Ponta Delgada, 2001, pp. 605-26.

⁴⁴ Except perhaps in the speed of collection. The assessment and collection of the *pedido* were very time-consuming processes.

the royal revenue from 1367 to the times of the old kings stand for a major shift. Would it have long-term effects?

Section 5.2 Ratchet Effect?

'Ratchet Effect' can be defined as the failure of the wartime fiscal burden to return to peacetime levels. The last chapter showed how in Portugal the permanent adoption of the war-related *sisas* stood for a radical change in the finances of the monarchy. Roughly three-quarters of the royal revenues now came from taxation, overwhelming the contribution of the old *direitos reais* which stood for the remaining quarter. However, the 1401 estimate is insufficient to demonstrate whether the fiscal effects of war survived in the long term.

Under the present heuristic conditions, the financial effects of the fiscal regime during the war can be better assessed by comparing a few isolated receipt figures. For the period 1367-1527, there are six general accounts of the receipt with rough intervals of 30 years between each of them: 1367, 1401, 1433, 1473, 1511 and 1527.⁴⁵ All these accounts have a very different nature. The earlier two, the estimates provided by Fernão Lopes for the reign of Pedro I and for 1401, have already been discussed and explored (sections 0.2, 4.5 and 5.1). The figure for 1433 is a round figure provided by the *Infante* João in a letter to his brother the king.⁴⁶ All the remaining accounts arise from the same budgetary system, although they do not exactly convey the same stage of the accounting process. For 1473 we have the *précis* of the receipt, while the document for 1511 appears to be a 'book of summary' which contained the

⁴⁵ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5 (1367); Lopes, *Cron. João I*, Part 2, chapter CCI, p. 457 (1401); Duarte, King of Portugal, *Livro dos Conselhos de el-Rei D. Duarte*, ed. João Alves Dias, Lisbon, 1982, doc. 6, p. 47; *RED*, doc. 4, pp. 82-5 (1473); TT, Núcleo Antigo, doc. 352 (1511); Pereira, *O Orçamento do Estado*, pp. 62-5 (1527).

⁴⁶ Claiming that it was useless to 'store in the treasury a hundred or two hundred millions, such is the wealth of this realm.' Admittedly, the decision to include this crude estimate provided by the *infante* João in his letter to Duarte I is arguable. A. H. Oliveira Marques looked askance on this figure, lacking as it does a statement as to which currency was being referred to: two hundred million *libras* appeared him to be too insignificant, while two hundred million *reais* seemed an excessively hefty sum; furthermore, the extremely broad interval of one hundred million between the two sums indicated total ignorance of the kingdom's finances on behalf of its ruling elite. Yet, from the comparison with the figures for 1401 and 1473, there can be no doubt that the sum is expressed in *libras*, the default money of account before the establishment of the *real* as the money of account, in 1435. The second criticism is also largely unjustified. To allege that the expression 'the wealth of this realm' (*a riqueza desta terra*) related to all the taxable wealth would be a more substantial objection. However, João is arguing that it would be useless to hoard all monies collected in one year, as the two hundred million *libras* would be willy-nilly spent.

distribution of the predicted expenditure along with the predicted revenue; for 1527 the existing source is the annual balance.⁴⁷

A detailed comparison is impossible, given the elementary nature of the first three, barely more than a notional figure. The only dimension that can properly be compared within these five estimates is the total net receipt. What cannot be doubted, as it is clear from the receipt detailed in the letters of acquittal granted to the *almoxarifes*, is that the sales taxes provided the lion's share of royal finances.⁴⁸ As such, fluctuations of the royal receipt can be broadly regarded as a function of the yield of the *sisas*.

As has been noted earlier, the sudden rise of the royal revenue in times of war was chiefly, though not purely, nominal. Wars were fought by means of constant steep devaluations which dictated that the diminutive *libra* which circulated in the reign of João I had no resemblance with the coinage of the 'old kings'. As such, the 8500% nominal rise observable between 1367 and 1401 cannot be taken at face value and should be balanced by a comparison in metallic terms.⁴⁹ Yet, even this comparison should also be deemed insufficient, moreover in a period when Europe suffered from a 'silver famine' that was particularly acute in Portugal.⁵⁰ Estimates of the metallic content of the crown's yearly receipt ought to be complemented by another 'deflator': an estimate of the acquisitive power of the receipt in terms of two basic, and relatively well-documented, agricultural commodities: wheat and wine.⁵¹

Contemporaries, or at least chroniclers like Fernão Lopes and Rui de Pina and learned men like King Duarte, did not work with these measurements when attempting to make diachronic comparisons of the revenues. Instead they

⁴⁷ On the Portuguese budgetary technique, see Pereira, 'A Receita do Estado,' p. 50.

⁴⁸ Few letters of quittance display the particulars of the receipt. Those which did are unanimous: *sisas* stood for c. 90% of the receipt. The proportion of the *sisas* in the total receipt presented by the *almoxarife* of Beja in 1440 and 1441 (TT, Chanc. Alfonso V, Livro 27, fol. 164) *sisas* represent 89%; The same proportion can be found in the *almoxarifado* of Guarda in 1436 (TT, Chanc. Alfonso V, Livro 18, fols. 63-65) and 1449 (TT, Chanc. Alfonso V, Livro 11, fol. 47).

⁴⁹ *HMMP*, pp. 75, 113, 121-2 and 136 (1367, 1401, 1433 and 1473); TT, NA, doc. 318 (dated 1506, used for 1511 and 1527).

⁵⁰ Ferro, Maria José Pimenta, *Estudos de História Monetária Portuguesa (1383-1438)* Lisbon, 1974, pp. 21-5.

⁵¹ There being simply no price series available, I resorted to the prices lists compiled for the two better document commodities (wine and wheat). Wheat prices were taken from Viana, Mário, 'Alguns Preços de Cereais em Portugal (séculos XIII-XVI)', *Arquipélago. História*, n. 12, Ponta Delgada, 2008 (forthcoming) and Farinha, Sérgio, *Preços e Salários em Portugal na Baixa Idade Média*, Porto, 2007. Older price lists provided by Marques, A. H. de Oliveira, *Introdução à História da Agricultura em Portugal. A Questão Cerealífera durante a Idade Média*, 3rd, Lisbon, 1978 and Coelho, *O Baixo Mondego* were also consulted. Wine prices were taken exclusively from Viana, 'Alguns Preços de Vinho em Portugal.'

resorted to equivalences in the stable golden coins of their time. This allowed their contemporaries to gauge the value of the old revenues in the currencies of their own time; nevertheless, it is hard to come across a gold currency susceptible to provide a diachronic measure for this case.⁵² The Castilian *dobra*, used frequently by Fernão Lopes, lost all its importance after the minting of the Portuguese *cruzado* in 1457 and disappeared altogether in its native country in 1475.⁵³ The French *couronne* which was widely used by the kings throughout the fifteenth century would be the ideal candidate, were it not that it was not used in Portugal before 1405 and, worse still, it was converted at an official, static rate of 120 *r.* in 1472.⁵⁴ Being a function of the nominal variations, the *couronne* would constitute an entirely redundant measurement for the post-1472 period. For these reasons, the gold currencies adopted for the calculations that follow are the Moorish *dobra* and its Portuguese replica, the *escudo* of 1435. Although these coins were not as important as those mentioned, they circulated within the realm and they are mentioned often enough to provide the historian with adequate conversions for the entire period.⁵⁵

Though both purchasing power and metallic content constitute apt 'deflators',⁵⁶ it should be noticed that price inflation was not a direct threat to the Portuguese crown, which owned vast wheat-fields and vineyards. For heuristic reasons, it is not possible to interpret the evolution of the receipt in terms of the monarchy's most significant item of consumption - military wages. However, two other meaningful items have been included here: the yearly subsidy to the nobles in order to maintain their fighting equipment and horse, the *contia*,⁵⁷ and

⁵² Spufford's *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* provides little information on the Portuguese currencies. Spufford, Peter, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, London, 1986, p. 162.

⁵³ Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães, *L'Économie de l'Empire Portugais aux XVIème et XVIIème Siècles*, Paris, 1969, p. 133.

⁵⁴ This is the conversion rate throughout the reigns of Afonso V and Manuel I as countless examples from their chancery registers indicate: e. g. TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 30, fol. 93-4 (1475); TT, Chanc. Manuel, Livro 42, fol. 133 (1502)

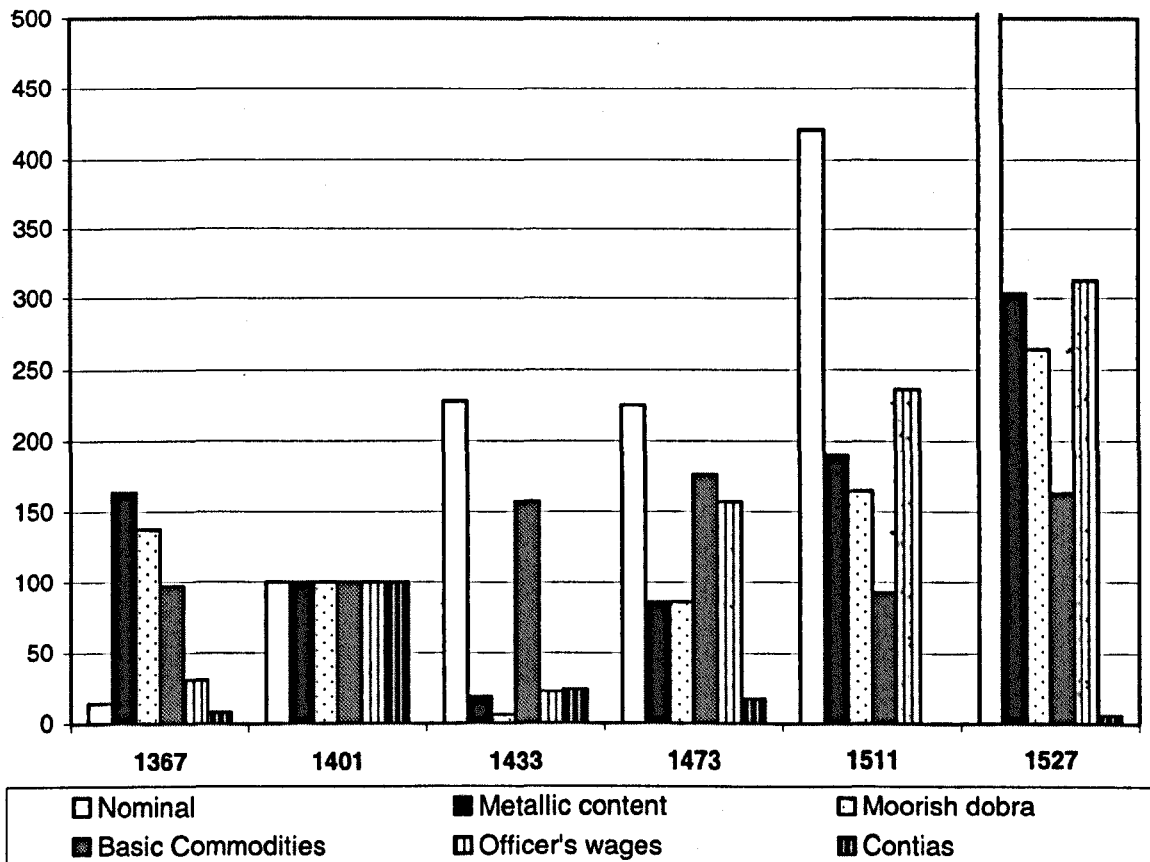
⁵⁵ In 1367, 1 *dobra* = 4 *l.* (Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, Prologue, p. 5); in 1401, 1 *dobra* = 440 *l.* (Lopes, *Cronc. João I*, part 2, chapter CCI, p. 457); in 1433, 1 *dobra* = 150 *r.* (OA, Book 4, title 2 § 13); in 1473, 1 *dobra* = 295 *r.* (RED, doc. 6, p. 70); in 1511 and 1527 1 *dobra* = 370 *r.*; TT, Manuel I, Livro 25, fol. 14v (7th December 1515), Livro 10, fol. 7v.

⁵⁶ On the choice of the right 'deflator' for long-term analysis, see Fischer, David Hackett, *The Great Wave. Price Revolutions and the Rhythm of History*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 285-6.

⁵⁷ For the present exercise we will use the minimal *contias*, those paid per knight. For 1367, we will use the 100 *l.* paid in the reign of Pedro I, according to Fernão Lopes (Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, Prologue, p. 5); for 1401, we will resort to the *contia* paid to a knight in 1398, 4000 *l.* in 1398 (OA, Book II, title 59 §24); for 1433, we will use the valuation at 1,000 *r.* (Chaves, Álvaro Lopes de, *Livro de Apontamentos de Álvaro Lopes de Chaves*, ed. Salgado, Anastasia Mestrinho and Salgado, Abílio, Lisbon, 1983, p. 175); for 1473, it was calculated at 2,500 *r.*, given that this was the value determined by João II in 1483 (Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos*, p. 179) and this was the value for a

the wages of the scribes of the *Contos*, a particularly well-documented office that has been closely studied by Maria José Ferro.⁵⁸ Its lacunae notwithstanding, this exercise provides a coherent perspective on the long-term evolution of the royal finances.

Fig. 14 – The Receipt of the Portuguese Crown in 1367, 1401, 1433, 1473, 1511 and 1527 (1401 = 100)



Sources: see notes 596-606

In 1401, when decisive truces were celebrated and King João I organised his finances, the results of the protracted wars became visible: despite the dramatic nominal growth, the crown saw its income strongly decline in terms of the metallic content and in relation to the foreign gold currencies. This was a

moradia of a knight/*cavaleiro* in 1474 (*RED*, n. 6, p. 206); for 1511 and 1527, we will use the *moradia* of 2,500 *r.* because this value established the obligation of a *morador* to serve the king in an expedition.

⁵⁸ The wages of the *contos* scribes were standardised and we are relatively well-informed about them. For 1367, I used the wages paid in 1389 (360 *l.*/year) and for 1401 I used the yearly wages for that year (9,770 *l.*). In 1432, the standing wages were of 102,025 *l.* per annum. Ferro, *Estudos de História Monetária*, pp. 57-8 and 133-5. For the year 1473, I have employed the yearly 48,000 *rs.* paid in 1469 (TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 31, fol. 97). For 1509 and 1527, I resorted to the 5,000 and 6,000 that were being paid in 1502 and 1521 respectively (TT, Chanc. D. Manuel I, Livro 2, fol. 46v and TT, Chanc. D. Manuel I, Livro 39, fol. 69-69v).

direct consequence of the systematic debasements to which João I resorted to fight, and win, his wars (see *infra* chapter 7). The steep nominal increase does not mask the intense depreciation of the Portuguese *libras*. However, as the *sisas* were applied according to *ad valorem* taxes, this new 'metallic poverty' did not affect the crown's notional purchasing power, which remained the same despite inflation. As such, the purchasing power of those who depended on the crown's payments remained unscathed.

Considering wealth in its monetary sense, it would seem that Fernão Lopes' opinion that the 'old kings' were wealthier than the 'New World' ones is correct. Yet, Fig. 14 shows that there was something that the kings who inhabited the 'New World' of the chronicler could secure in far greater quantity than their 'Old World' counterparts: labour. Considering the threats posed by wars, more important to the monarchy than the metallic content was its capacity to defray its specialised workforce. Under João I, the state managed to turn inflation to its favour by postponing the adjustment between inflation and wages: administrative officers worked for a purchasing power that was three times inferior to that of their predecessors,⁵⁹ whilst the knightly *contia* whose nominal value of 4000 *l.* was forty times higher than in 1367 had its purchasing power halved.⁶⁰ The priority was to secure military service with the resources at the disposal of the king. By defining the intrinsic value of money and the nominal terms of *contias*, João I could pay many *contias*. Later monarchies would do the same with officer's wages, while the value of no-longer important *contias* was left high. In both cases, there was no other employer competing with the state in the labour market. These were the effects of war on the total receipt. Would they last?

The post-war period shows no signs of having ratcheted forward at all, except in nominal terms. Indeed, thirty years later, 'ratchet effect' seems even more illusory: notwithstanding a steep nominal growth, 'metallic poverty' and 'foreign exchange poverty' had become even more extreme in 1433. There are indications in the reign of Duarte I (1433-8) and Regency of Pedro (1440-8) the

⁵⁹ A concrete complaint of an officer about the devastating effects of the 'great dearth' (*grande carestia*) on his wages can be found at TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 6 (20 July 1389).

⁶⁰ With his annual 360 *l.*, a *contos* scribe of 1367 could buy 305 wine and wheat units, while his counterpart of 1401 could merely buy 110 wine and wheat units with his apparently hefty 9,770 *l.* If he had a *contia*, a knight could buy 45 wine and wheat units in 1401, while his predecessor of 1367 could only buy 85 with his lot of 100 *l.*

revenues slumped.⁶¹ The values in Fig. 14 reflect the coinage devaluations which constituted a lasting wartime legacy. Similarly, the poor capacity to hire administrative and military labour meant that the situation of 1401 was reversed: in 1433 the crown's position in terms of specialised labour mirrored the times of the old kings.

'Metallic' and 'foreign exchange poverty' were still felt seven decades later, when the debasements had stopped, an impeccable gold currency had been created when the gold ingots of the African coast flowed to the royal treasuries. The reasons for this are not visible in Fig. 14: the steep debasements of the 1400s and 1410s that further deteriorated the metal content of the income and the slump of prices that lasted from 1445 to 1473.⁶² Indeed, a particularly counter-intuitive consequence of sales taxes is that deflation affects the monarchy. While for most subjects sudden price inflation is a life-or-death matter, for a monarchy with lands of its own and with a fiscal system based in sales taxes, the dearth of basic commodities could hardly be perceived as a problem. Indeed, given that most payments were set in fixed rates, it might prove an advantage: price inflation would benefit the monarchy by giving it far more money from each sale. By the same token, deflation worked against the crown as it limited the amounts paid. Thus, the crown's purchasing power of basic commodities underwent a significant growth in 1433 (157% that of 1401) and 1473 (175%) during the difficult decades of the middle fifteenth century. However, this wealth in commodities did not compensate the monarchy for the loss of the receipt in metallic and foreign exchange terms.

The long-term outcome of the wartime shift to sales taxes and coinage debasement was the weakening of the crown's financial position in times of deflation. This seems to have been the case in the middle of the fifteenth century, as implied by the receipt for 1473.⁶³ In other aspects, some war-related features were reversed. Fig. 14 shows that the post-war rise of the *contia* deprived the monarchy of the military capacity it possessed in 1401.

⁶¹ *Chanc. Duarte I*, vol. III, doc. 618 and 621, pp. 450-55 (the farmers of the *sisas* of Elvas and Santarém see their chatels seized by the king for not meeting the bid, in 1434). Also, the letter sent by the *infante* Pedro to Coimbra in 1441, BACL, Série Azul, Códice 409, pp. 160-2.

⁶² Marques, *Introdução à História da Agricultura*, p. 220.

⁶³ Both the summaries of receipt and expenditure from 1473 and 1477 indicate deficits. *RED*, doc. 8, doc. 25.

In 1473, the benefits of the appreciation of the coinage of the previous decades were already visible. Although it did not match the 'old kings' and not even the reign of João I, royal receipt was clearly past the low point of the 1430s. In 1511 the metallic wealth of the 'old kings' was clearly exceeded and the potential commodity wealth was roughly matched. Indeed, after 1489, the kingdom resumed the monetary stability interrupted by more than a century of constant manipulations. This stability is reflected in the parallel growth of nominal and intrinsic receipt, a phenomenon that had not occurred in 1401 and 1473. However, the value for the *contia* in 1527 is still very high for the finances of the monarchy, showing how exceptional circumstances in 1401 had been.

The estimates for 1511 and 1527 are remarkably similar. Both testify to an overall growth, be it in metallic terms or in golden coins, in wages paid and even in commodities. Unlike the transition from the old kings to wartime, the transition from the middle decades of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century testifies to an effective growth in all respects, except commodities: foreign exchange, acquirable public administration, nominal and metallic value.⁶⁴

For all the patent limitations of the present exercise, the analysis of the revenues allows us to draw some coherent conclusions.⁶⁵ According to Fig. 14, the long-term evolution of the Portuguese finances can hardly be regarded as a straightforward 'ratchet effect'. It can be safely said that the 'real' revenue was not bolstered by wartime taxation except in nominal terms. The alleged central consequence of the wars – the institution of a permanent sales tax – cannot be seen as directly causing a ratchet effect. Rather than a solid growth of the receipt, metallic depreciation and low wages were the decisive legacy of wars, as visible in 1401.

The suggestion that the *sisas* were chosen in order to allow the revenues of the monarchy to keep up with the purchasing power in a time of galloping inflation (see *supra* section 5.1) is confirmed. In fact, Fig. 14 makes visible the

⁶⁴ The early sixteenth century, which so obviously appears as a period of steady growth of the receipt in metallic and 'real' terms, was a period of intense military activity for the Portuguese crown in North Africa, in the Atlantic and in the Indian Ocean. Yet, this circumstance is not to be explained by Ratchet Effect, as this was not a period of great fiscal innovations and the introduction of new taxes. Explanation is to be found elsewhere, as shown on the following section.

⁶⁵ It should be noted that in broad terms the evolution is coherent to that of Castile as described by Miguel Angel Ladero Quesada; 'Castile in the Middle Ages', *RFS*, pp. 182-4.

existence of an inverse correlation between the rise of the receipt in terms of commodities and the same rise in metallic terms. The periods displaying a high amount of acquirable commodities are comparatively poorer in terms of metallic content and foreign currency. Indeed, during the periods of stagnant prices the sales taxes revealed their downturn: fifteenth-century kings became far more sensitive than their 'old' predecessors to the ups and downs of the economy. Simply put, for an *sisas*-based monarchy whose expenditure was set in fixed terms, the lower the prices the lower the utility of the income.

The early sixteenth-century rise in the prices was therefore accompanied by a steady growth of the receipt. Considering that this increase cannot be explained by the 'ratchet effect' theory, the fluctuations of the receipt should be explained not in terms of the direct consequences of the wars but rather in relation to the economy itself.

Section 5.3 - Fiscal Buoyancy

The evolution of the receipt showed the limitations of the theory of the war-driven 'ratchet effect'. The stagnation or decadence of the crown's 'real' income in the decades after the war shows how military factors alone are insufficient to explain the evolution of Portuguese royal finances. By exploring the available quantitative evidence, it was possible to indicate a different hypothesis: the evolution of the *sisas*-based receipt was tied to the fluctuations of the economy, and, most of all, to inflation.

The confirmation of this hypothesis requires more detailed data than the crude totals provided in Fig. 14. In the present heuristic conditions, only the letters of quittance conserved in the chancery books provide a more dynamic and accurate view of the royal revenues than that used in the previous chapter. Sporadically, information from these letters can be complemented by stray tax-farming contracts and the figures of general accounts. The chronological coverage of the letters of quittance is nonetheless very unbalanced: while no registers of letters of quittance survive for the reign of João I and only three letters of quittance were conserved in the chancery records of King Duarte (1433-38), the chancery register of King Manuel I (1495-1521) preserved more

than seven hundred letters of quittance of several officers.⁶⁶ The chancery registers of his predecessors Afonso V (1438-81) and João II (1481-95) are less imposing but nonetheless significant, yielding eighty-three and ninety-one letters respectively. Although these registers of letters of quittance had the same legal effects, they did not follow a standard format. Some merely state the names of the officers, while others provide the total sum of the revenue collected. Only a few of these documents break down the receipt and the expenses thereof. Whilst all the Emmanueline letters provide either sums or detailed accounts of the monies managed by the officer, the three letters of quittance passed by King Duarte that survive in his chancery record are devoid of any figures. Furthermore, sometimes the sums managed by the officer acquitted have no relevance for present purposes, as is the case with most of the ninety-one letters of João II, of which only eighteen convey usable quantitative evidence.

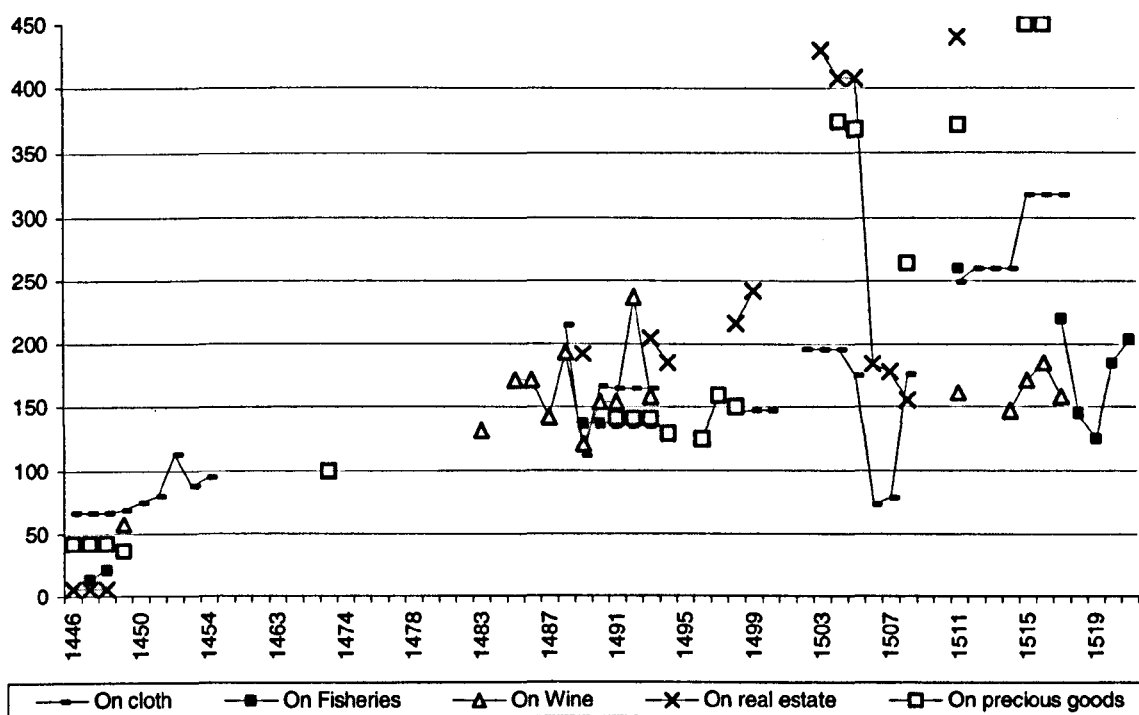
All in all, when combined, these sources display an impressive growth of the revenue, confirming the trends earlier sketched (see *supra* section 5.2). Though the construction of a proper series of revenues is impossible, there is enough fragmentary evidence to supply a consistent picture of the evolution of a handful of relatively well-documented sources of revenue. For no apparent reason, the sets of data that have the widest chronological spread come from two contrasting settings: the undisputed mainstay of the royal finances -the *sisas* of Lisbon- and the hinterland province of Beira, where the *almoxarifados* of Guarda and Lamego stood and whose figures for the tenth on imported cloth survive. These two settings provide complementary evidence.

The growth of revenues from the middle of the fifteenth century to the first two decades of the sixteenth was very considerable. The steep increases of the income provided by five of the twelve 'branches' of the Lisbon *sisas* provide a particularly wide-ranging and consistent set of data as displayed on Fig. 15.⁶⁷

Fig. 15 – The Main *Sisas* collected in Lisbon, 1446-1521 (100=1473)

⁶⁶ One could say that for the reign of Manuel I there is near-serial data for most of the country's *almoxarifados*. The letters of quittance in this reign were published between 1906 and 1916 by A. Braancamp Freire (*CQM*).

⁶⁷ Since debasements became less intense from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards and considering that a 'deflated' picture of the crown's receipt through different indicators has already been drawn, it is now convenient to present revenues in nominal currency.



Sources: TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 3, fol. 29 and 30; Lv. 13, fol. 28 and 35v; Lv. 34, fol. 157v; TT, LN, Estremadura, 8, fol. 250, 283v; TT, NA 532, fol. 68; CQM, 1, 2, 12, 29, 36, 152, 155, 156, 173, 174, 179, 190, 191, 206, 211, 230, 236, 257, 310, 335, 357, 371, 381, 434, 511-14, 550, 555, 557, 619, 656, 679, 700; RED, doc. 8

Although figures are lacking for the 1460s and 1470s, the data are consistent enough to provide a discernible evolution of the *sisas*. Statistical consistency apart,⁶⁸ some coherent traits are immediately observable: the slump of 1506 followed by a swift recovery three years later and the more stable yield of the *sisas* on wine and fisheries, two essential parts of the Lisbon staple diet, and thus less elastic, and the volatility of the remaining *sisas*, all levied on less essential goods. The explosion of the revenue provided by the *sisas* on precious goods after 1500 is likely a direct reflection of the opening of the Cape route to the highly-valued Indian spices in 1498.

After a period of modest, and perhaps stagnant, income in the 1440s, the indexed year, 1473, stands for a steady growth of the nominal revenue of all the documented *sisas*. To some extent, this growth masked the continuation of

⁶⁸Internal statistics show that these data have a fair degree of consistency: there is very strong positive correlation between the evolution of the yield of the *sisas* on fisheries and that of real estate (1 and 0.998) while the strong correlations between cloth and fisheries (0.829363) between cloth and spice (0.831095) and between the latter and real estates (0.862613) are noteworthy.

debasements⁶⁹ but the rapid increase of the yield of the *sisas* of wine in the 1480s and in the *sisas* on fisheries and cloth immediately afterwards was no longer attributable to the degradation of coinage, as the last meaningful manipulation of the coinage occurred in 1472 (with the creation of the *chinfrão*). The stabilisation of the coinage was followed by a period of sensible, but not explosive, development of the revenues. In 1493, another year for which there is information for all these five *sisas*, the revenues of the major *sisas* were 7,153,000 *r.*, 161% of their revenue in 1473 and 294% of their revenue in 1447-8. The increase became exponential around 1500, thanks to the sudden expansion of the *sisas* on spice, on land transactions and on fishing. As a result, in 1527 the receipt of these five major *sisas* was worth 18,890,000 *r.*, 393% of their value in 1473 and 777% the value of eight years before.

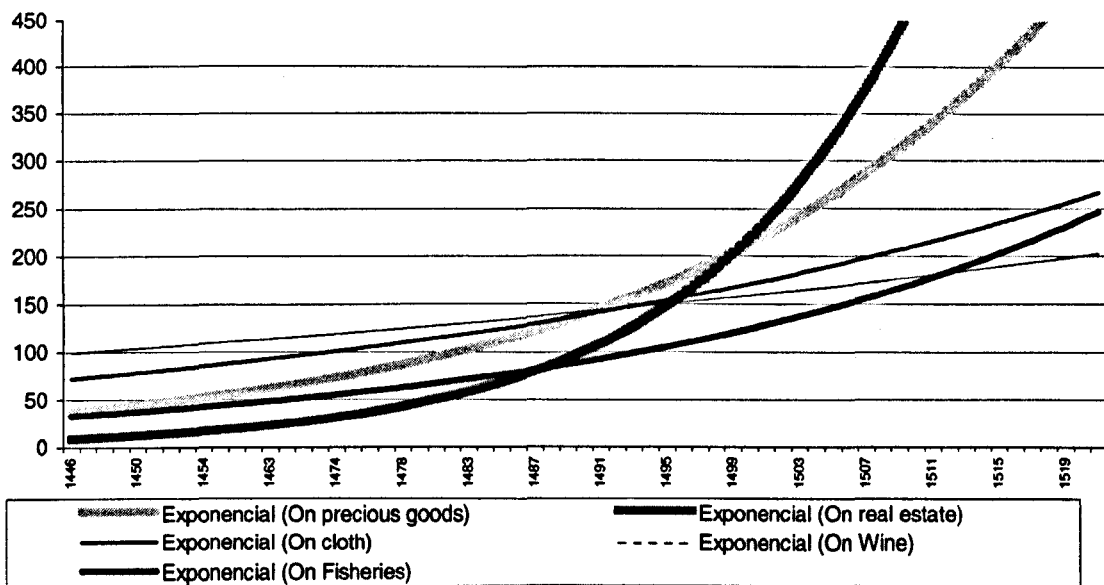
The *sisas* of Lisbon reflect what seems to be a kingdom-wide upward trend. In 1430s and 1440s the average income of the eminently rural *almoxarifado* of Lamego was 468,125 *r.*, in the 1510s it was of 2,644,196 and would near 4,000,000 *r.* in 1527. The rent of Guarda reached in 1527 the sum of 9,483,000 *r.*, an impressive achievement for an *almoxarifado* that a century earlier struggled to obtain a tenth of that value. Examples of such increases are not hard to come by among the letters of acquittal, rather than exclusive to Beira or Lisbon. In 1426-30 the average receipt of the *almoxarifado* of Coimbra was 388,589 *r.* while in 1496-1500 the average was of 2,035,737 *r.* and it yielded 3,930,000 in 1527; in 1441, the *sisas* on the cloth in Setúbal was worth 38,571 *r.*, in 1509 it was worth 337,846 *r.* The income of the Northernmost *almoxarifado* of Ponte de Lima was only 690,449 *r.* in 1442, thirty years later it remained at 766,000 *r.*, whilst in 1506 it had grown to 1,843,250 *r.* and to 3,673,000 *r.* in 1527. The Customs of Lisbon were farmed at 6,000,000 *l.* (=1,714,285 *r.*) in 1397, in 1473 they grew to 4,700,000 *r.* and finally in 1527 they were worth 12,120,000 *r.*. As argued in last chapter, the observable increase of the crown's revenues between 1473 and 1527 implied more than simple nominal growth. While it is open to dispute whether the *sisas*-endowed monarchy of 1401 was wealthier than the old kings c. 1367, the figures for 1509

⁶⁹ In 1447-8, the year for which the figures for five *sisas* exist, the receipt was 2,469,000 *r.* sum was 38.8% of the income in 1473. However, in metallic terms these revenues in 1447-8 were equivalent to 63.154 Ag g (2,429,000 *r.* * 0.026 g per *r.*) whilst in 1473 they were worth 53.340 Ag g (5,334,000 *r.* * 0.01 g per *r.*). On the last debasement, see *HMMP*, p. 136.

and 1527 show that the royal finances of the early sixteenth century were definitely in better shape.

The relevance of the Lisbon *sisas* for our purpose does not end here. If analysed from a slightly different angle, they reveal that the late fifteenth-century enrichment of the crown suggested in the previous chapter was directly related to the enrichment of the country, rather than to any other factor.

Fig. 16 – The Main *Sisas* collected in Lisbon, 1446-1521 (exponential representation)



Source: Fig. 15.

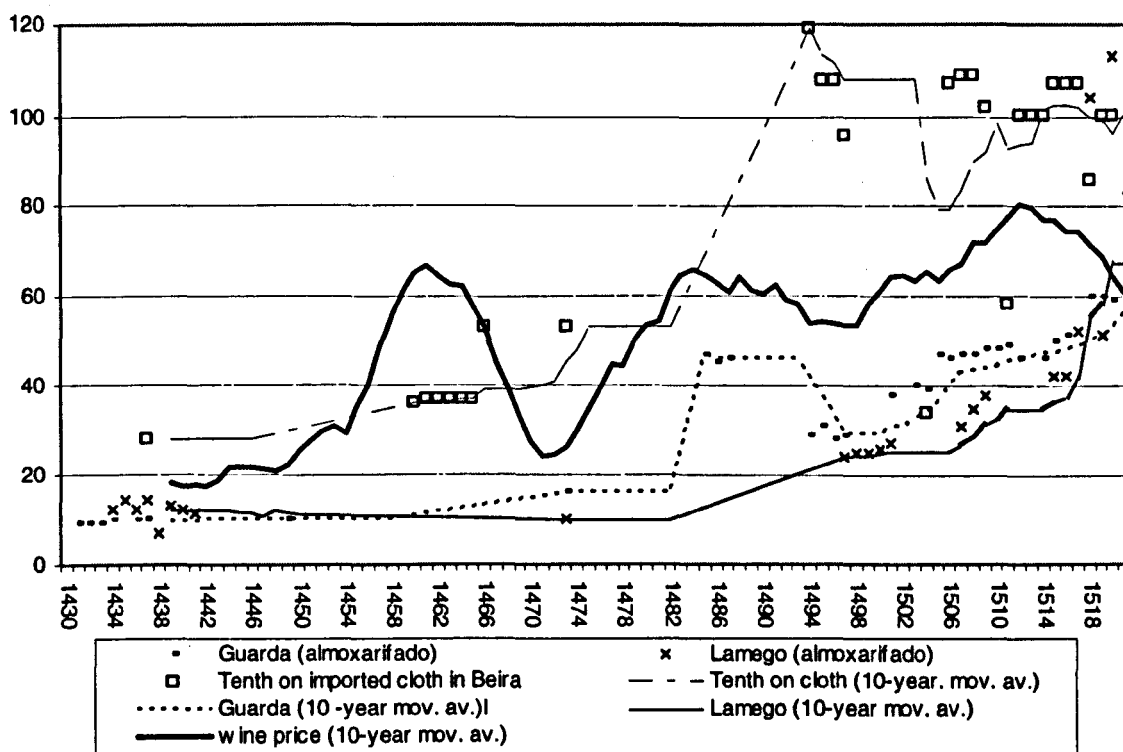
As presented on Fig. 16, the data on the *sisas* of Lisbon are extremely telling about the changes in the tax base. While in the 1440s the higher revenues came from an essential product, wine, eighty years later the *sisas* on real estate and precious goods were the most productive 'branches' of the Lisbon *sisas*. The *sisas* on cloth kept growing but had a less impressive expansion. The growth of these two latter *sisas* is even more impressive and meaningful: whilst the *sisas* on real estate was worth a paltry 39,000 *r.* in 1446, in 1527 it was farmed at 3,434,000 *r.*; the *sisas* on precious goods (*sisas da marçaria*) yielded 382,000 *r.* in 1446 and rose to 5,770,000 *r.* in 1516 and to 6,060,000 *r.* in 1527. By comparison with these imposing changes, the *sisas* on wine increased from 409,000 *r.* in 1448 to only 1,104,000 *r.* in 1516 and finally

to 2,124,000 *r.* in 1527. The tax-base was enlarged mainly within less essential goods, while the most essential of the products documented underwent a comparatively modest evolution. In other words, the crown's tax-base was had become far more affluent and was spending much more money. Accordingly, revenues soared, based as they were on *ad valorem* sales taxes.

After the 1470s, with the effective enlargement of Portuguese economic life, the monarchy enjoyed the advantages of relying on *ad valorem* taxes. Endowed with the *sisas*, the revenues of the monarchy, so to speak, floated thanks to the upward economic trend, seemingly without need for institutional changes. The hypothesis sketched above of a close link between inflation and the growth of the fiscal receipt can be tested by plotting an indicator of price movements against the curve of the revenue. This has been done in Fig. 17, with the revenues from Beira, using the only available proxy for the inflation of the period: wine prices.⁷⁰ Fig. 17 also aims at testing the influence of inflation on the *sisas* of Beira, by comparing their yield with an *ad ponderum* source of revenue – the tenth paid in imports of cloth – in the same region.

⁷⁰ Based on Viana, 'Alguns Preços de Vinho.'

Fig. 17 - Price Movements and Revenues in Beira, 1430-1520 (100=1527)



Sources: for the *almojarifado* of Guarda: 1431-4 - *Marrocos*, vol. I, pp. 18-36; 1436 - TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 5, fol. 83v-85; 1449 - TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 11, fol. 47; 1473 - *RED*, doc. 8; 1485-7 - *CQM*, 215; 1494-5 - *CQM*, 332; 1496 - *CQM*, 53; 1497 - *CQM*, 215; 1498 - *CQM*, 93; 1501 - *CQM*, 141 (incl. chancery payments within the *Comarca* of Beira); 1503-4 - *CQM*, 142; 1505 - *CQM*, 176; 1506-7 - *CQM*, 143; 1508 - *CQM*, 145 (incl. 'other revenues'); 1509 - TT, Núcleo Antigo 532, fol. 150-1; 1510 - *CQM*, 146; 1513-4 - *CQM*, 147; 1515-6 - *CQM*, 148; 1518-9 - *CQM*, 555; for the *almojarifado* of Lamego: 1434-40 - TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 50, fol. 133-9v (farm); 1441 - TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 27, fol. 116v-117 (farm); 1473 - *RED*, doc. 87¹; 1497-1501 - *CQM*, 535-6; 1508 - *CQM*, 408; 1515-6 - *CQM*, 410; 1517 - *CQM*, 579; 1519-20 - *CQM*, 626; for the *sis*a on imported cloth in Beira: 1437 - TT, *Leitura Nova*, Beira, Livro 2, fol. 92; 1460-64 - TT, *Leitura Nova*, Beira, Livro 2, fol. 21-22v⁷²; 1465 - TT, *Leitura Nova*, Beira, Livro 2, 21v (includes the *sis*a); 1494-5 - *CQM*, 332; 1496-7 - *CQM*, 53; 1509 - TT, Núcleo Antigo, n. 532, fol. 26; 1511-2 - *CQM*, 303 (value for the effective receipt, as the tax-farmers did not meet their goal); 1513-6 - *CQM*, 304, 305, 306; 1519-20 - *CQM*, 624 (farm).

The existing sums for the income of the *almojarifados* of Guarda and Lamego and for the yield of the cloth entering the borders of Beira are plotted in against the 10-year moving average curve of wine prices in Fig. 17. In what concerns the revenues, the graph offers an already familiar picture: little or no growth in the first three quarters of the fifteenth century, with signs of a sudden

⁷¹ Included as part of Viseu, calculated at 45% the rent of Viseu, as it can be seen from other years for which there are sources.

⁷² Pieces of cloth known as *de Castela* were priced at 1,000 *r.*, given that is the price given to the *fustão* in neighbouring Alentejo and that those pieces were priced at 1/3 the cloth of Bristol. Ferreira, *Preços e Salários*, p. 252-4.

rise between 1473 and 1482 (for the *almoxarifado* of Guarda, at least) and steady expansion in the last two decades of the century. Falling revenues in the next decade are followed by signs of a gentle, sustained increase that continues up to the end of the period.

As hinted at while commenting Fig. 14, a great deal of these changes can be attributed to inflation. As the wine price curve shows, the low income in both *almoxarifados* in the 1430s is associated with a period of extremely low inflation. After two ill-document decades (1450s and 60s) the figures for the receipt and inflation run again parallel and from the 1490s onwards the fluctuations of the incomes of Guarda and Lamego mirror those of the prices.⁷³ The fact that the lines drawn by the revenues of Guarda and Lamego run broadly parallel to the course of inflation is natural insomuch their income was essentially that of the *sisas*. The relationship between wine prices and the revenues of the 'hinterland' sources of revenue confirm that general inflation had a long-term beneficial effect on the fifteenth-century receipt. From the curves of the two *almoxarifados*, one could infer that the monarchy simply reaped the benefits of price inflation and, moreover, of price inflation with a stable coinage.

However, the figures on the tenth of cloth entering Beira demonstrate that the revenue expansion was not simply a function of the price inflation. Even if sometimes farmed out in money,⁷⁴ the tenth of the cloth paid at the border outposts was an *ad ponderum* tax, most often paid in kind, at a rate of one piece of cloth per ten pieces imported. As such, the interpretation of the line of the tenth on cloth is somewhat different, as it reflects that the crown did also benefit from 'real' expansion of the country's economy. As such, observable fiscal buoyancy does not simply reflect inflation, which was beneficial for the crown, but also the effective growth of the tax-base, with more imports made. It

⁷³ The option for 10-year moving average allows to convey short- and medium-term fluctuations. The linear plotting of the revenues and prices would show a perfectly parallel line. Indeed, long-term increase of price inflation equalled that of the income of Guarda and Lamego. This demonstration was not done here for the sake of space economy; otherwise, it would be clear that these two curves are indicators of the same phenomenon: the rise of prices and the economic improvement. Naturally, this does not imply that there is a mechanic correlation, let alone causation, between wine (!) prices and the receipt of the *almoxarifado*.

⁷⁴ For Fig. 19, I have converted in *r.* the value of the cloth collected in 1437 (TT, *Leitura Nova*, Livro 2 da Beira, fol. 92) and 1460-64 (TT, *Leitura Nova*, Livro 2 da Beira, fols. 21-22v) using the current prices (compiled in Ferreira, *Preços e Salários*, pp 252-4. Both cases refer to farmed revenues. In 1511 and 1512, the revenues were farmed out in monies, but ended up by being received by the king's officers (CQM, 303).

was not simply a matter of more money being paid for the same things but of more things being paid for.⁷⁵

The figures for Beira and Lisbon have been explored from various angles the impressive growth of the crown's revenue in the late fifteenth century and have been used to argue that the *sisas* allowed the monarchy to take part in the kingdom's steady economic development. This is why one can regard the introduction of the sales taxes as a genuine revenue revolution that ended the fiscal system of the 'kings of old'. The difference between the booming income of João II and Manuel I and that of their prosperous great-great-grandfathers can also be explored using the existing figures for the Lisbon customs which were hailed by Fernão Lopes as the fiscal mainstay of the 'old world' monarchy.

Fig. 18 – The Lisbon Customs and the Revenue of the Kingdom, 1367-1527

| Years | Lisbon Customs | Approx. Total Receipt | Customs as % of Total Receipt |
|---------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| c. 1367 | 160,000 <i>l.</i> | 960,000 <i>l.</i> | 16.6% |
| 1392 | 800,000 <i>l.</i> [farm] | unknown | unknown |
| c. 1400 | 6,000,000 <i>l.</i> | 81,640,000 <i>l.</i> | 7.3% |
| 1473 | 4,700,000 <i>r.</i> | 52,500,000 <i>r.</i> | 8.9% |
| 1495 | 6,000,000 <i>r.</i> [farm] | unknown | Unknown |
| 1511 | 10,723,000 <i>r.</i> | 98,360,000 <i>r.</i> (min.) | 10.9% |
| 1527 | 12,120,000 <i>r.</i> | 156,940,000 <i>r.</i> | 7.7% |
| 1557 | 50,500,000 <i>r.</i> | 336,320,000 <i>r.</i> | 15% |

Sources: 1367 – Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, Prologue; 1392 - ANTT, *Chanc.D. João I*, liv. 5, fol. 125v; 1398-9 - RED, doc. 4; 1473 – RED, doc. 8; 1495 – CQM, n. 190; 1509 – TT, Núcleo Antigo 532, fol. 5; 1527 - Pereira, *O Orçamento do Estado*, p. 62; 1557 – *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, vol. I, ed. Centro de Estudos Ultramarinos, Lisbon, 1960, pp. 891-5.

⁷⁵ The problem of the 'cause' of this growth should not concern this dissertation. However, it is important to stress that the region underwent a strong demographic growth between 1496 and 1527 as attested by João Alves Dias. Dias, João Alves, 'A Beira Interior em 1496 (Sociedade, Administração, Demografia)' *Arquipélago. Revista da Universidade dos Açores*, Série Ciências Humanas, vol. IV, January, 1982, p. 142.

The Lisbon customs, the most important segment of the *Direitos Reais*, provides a counter-model to the *sisas*. As Portuguese early customs mostly collected *ad ponderum* or proportional duties, according to the items, they did not possess the adaptability of the *sisas*.⁷⁶ As such, in spite of the continuing dynamics of this major sea harbour, the customs of Lisbon lost part of their pristine fiscal importance in periods of affluence fuelled by the *sisas*, as in 1401 and 1527. It is remarkable that in a period of intense trade and importation such as the first half of the sixteenth century, the rise of customs income was only of 13%. In the same period, the peripheral *almoxarifados* of Trás-Montes, Vilar Real and Torre de Moncorvo, grew 192% and 149% respectively.

The values for 1557 provide evidence *a contrario* for the same claim.⁷⁷ Indeed, as the devolution of the *sisas* to the municipalities in 1538 contributed towards the slow growth of the king's overall revenues,⁷⁸ the share of the customs in Portuguese finances grew considerably.⁷⁹

The relative stagnation of the customs throws a final light on the problem of fiscal buoyancy: the escalation of the income at the disposal of the monarch can hardly be explained by legal and institutional factors. Throughout the fifteenth century there was, as the petitions presented in the *Cortes* testify alterations in the taxation on some sensitive items like warhorses and weaponry as well as grain or bread, in years of dearth. Nonetheless, never did the default *ad valorem* rate of 1408 change. The only momentous change was the exemption of the clergy in 1498.⁸⁰ The rates and the methods of collection of the *sisas* were compiled by the Regulation of 1476 that kept its validity until 1527. Essentially, this regulation embodied the rich jurisprudence on the *sisas*, including the answers to the fifteenth-century petitions in the *Cortes*. At any rate, neither in the *Regimento* of 1476 nor in the ulterior jurisprudence were the key principles of the *sisas* ever challenged: universal (including the king)

⁷⁶ See individual descriptions for all coastal customs in Pereira, 'Portos do Mar,' *Portugal na Era de Quinhentos. Estudos Vários*, Cascais, 2003, pp. 9-117. Also, Pereira, João Cordeiro, *Para a História das Alfândegas em Portugal no Início do Século XVI (Vila do Conde - Organização e Movimento)* Lisbon, 1983.

⁷⁷ The growth in importance of the Lisbon customs would continue for the next century. See figures in Hespanha, António Manuel, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 18, n. 5 [Special Issue: *Cities and States in Europe, 1000- 1800*, Sep. 1989, p. 712.

⁷⁸ Cruz, *Os Vedores da Fazenda*, p. 242-4.

⁷⁹ In his João Cordeiro Pereira provides indications of purposeful attempts to improve the yield of the customs in the 1530s and 1540s, that is to say after the *sisas* were devoluted. Pereira, 'Portos do Mar,' pp. 87, 103, 106-7.

⁸⁰ Serrão, Joaquim Veríssimo, 'Lisboa, Cortes de (1498)', in Serrão, Joel, ed., *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, Joel Serrão, ed., vol. 4, 2nd, Porto, 1999, pp. 24-5.

payment of one tenth of the value of the thing bought, sold or exchanged, paid half by the vendor and half by the seller.⁸¹ The presence of a competitive tax-farming market, where Jewish and foreign capital played a part,⁸² prevented the ossification of the incomes. The settlement between the king and the municipalities in 1538 by which the *sisas* were reduced to a standing sum cannot have failed to halt Portugal's fiscal buoyancy. Thus, from 1387 to 1538 the *sisas* made Portugal a full-blown 'tax state.' Afterwards, the monarchy was forced to rely again on the external trade as it had done in the time of the old kings.

The key effect of war on the royal finances was not to make the kings 'richer' but to change the nature of the revenues. As the *sisas* became permanent, the monarchy's fortunes became totally intertwined with the economic dynamics of the kingdom. In the war years, the *ad valorem* sales tax allowed the monarchs to skip the self-inflicted harms of debasement, which had borne heavily on the thirteenth-century Portuguese monarchs. Conversely, in 1420s and 1430s when prices decreased or stagnated, this had a very negative effect on the monarchy's finances, as seen in section 5.2. It is no coincidence that this was the period when Lopes wrote his nostalgic praise for the financial bliss of the 'old kings'.⁸³ After this period, the *sisas* ensured that the massive economic expansion of the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century resulted in a period of effective 'fiscal buoyancy' for the kings of Portugal. Indeed, from the comparison of the total receipt between 1473 and 1527 it is possible to calculate a 6.8% per annum growth of the revenues, a figure far above that of the inflation of commodities (1.8%).⁸⁴ Thanks to the *sisas*, the Portuguese kings could count on a wider tax-base as, having stabilised the currency once more, they became richer even in metallic terms.⁸⁵ Given their

⁸¹ Barros, *História da Administração*, vol. IX, pp. 422-507

⁸² Marques, *Portugal na Crise dos Séculos XIV e XV*, pp. 313-4.

⁸³ Even if the figures for 1433 are possibly too low, this was a negative phase for the crown finances. This was also the ideal period for direct taxes. This relationship will be explored *infra* on chapter 6.

⁸⁴ Between 1473 and 1527 the annual rate of inflation, as measured in wine and wheat prices, the only commodities for which there is available data, was between 0.3 (wheat) and 1.8% (wine). Viana, 'Alguns Preços de Vinho'; Viana, 'Alguns preços de cereais'.

⁸⁵ It is essential to bear in mind that this metallic reinforcement is notional, as most of the effectively circulating currency was in copper. Still, it makes sense to employ notional figures of weight in silver, as copper and silver or gold coins were interchangeable.

condition as producers, the effects of inflation on the purchasing power were relatively unimportant for the monarchs.⁸⁶

In sum, the 'revenue revolution' that was explored in this chapter does not refer to a mere quantitative growth, war-driven or not; it refers to a wholly new relationship between the 'new kings' and the economic life of the realm. While the 'old kings' dominated the more cashable segments of the economy, the Portuguese 'Tax state' depended on the market. In this sense, as this chapter has discussed, *sisas* were every bit as revolutionary as claimed by Iria Gonçalves, A. H. Oliveira Marques or V. Magalhães Godinho.⁸⁷ However, the confirmation of the importance of the *sisas* only enhances the need for one further step in this research. Considering the strict limitations that bore upon the financial dealings between crown and subjects in the time of the 'old kings', how did the subjects come to accept the collection of the sales taxes? How could a threatened dynasty, 'chosen and elected' in parliament,⁸⁸ adopt and keep the *sisas* during and after the war?

⁸⁶ Except as 'redistributors' of revenue, as will be revealed in part 8.

⁸⁷ Naturally, the suggestion that the monarchy 'chose' this sales tax because it was a 'better' or more 'modern' tax, as occasionally argued, flies in the face of any reasonable understanding of political agency.

⁸⁸ This is all the more impressive as in 1538 a far wealthier and established monarch as João III agreed with their 'devolution' to the municipalities Cruz, Leonor Garcia da, *A Governação de D. João II: A Fazenda Real e os seus Vedores*, Lisboa, 2005, p. 242-4.

Chapter 6 - A New Fiscal Constitution?

Constitutional historians have highlighted how the reign of João I represented a clear break with the previous period. In fact, his legitimacy was altogether different from the previous monarchs. Whereas Fernando I had been, like his predecessors, the undisputed successor of an old lineage of kings, João I owed his royal status to the 'election and appointment'¹ of the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385. Ultimately, his legitimacy derived from the very choice of the realm in consideration of his personal aptitude and of his deeds, in one word, of his 'merit'. Moreover, not only the three strands of the *Cortes* called to themselves the responsibility of choosing a monarch for the vacant throne as, ultimately, the very existence of a monarchy was their choice.² These ideas were systematised in the influential 'Act of Election' of João I (1385).

To a large extent, the discourse of the municipalities in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 re-enacted the ideology and the concrete claims of the opposition to Fernando I in 1369 and 1371.³ Circumstances, however, did not favour a rigid, nonnegotiable stand, grounded in firm principles. Firstly, there was an imminent, full-scale Castilian threat about to materialise and, secondly, João I showed himself reluctant to accept the throne without receiving formal assurance of adequate financial and military support from the barons, municipalities and prelates of the realm.⁴ In the letter of the 'Act of Election',⁵ the prelates, knights and the municipalities through their proctors 'pledged to assist him with bodies and properties and to sustain all the burdens of the

¹ These ('*Jnliçom e nomeaçom*') are the terms used in the very act of election struck in the *Cortes* of Coimbra. see Caetano, Marcello, 'As Cortes de 1385', *A Crise Nacional de 1383-85. Subsídios Para o Seu Estudo*, Lisbon, 1985, p. 98, *in fine*.

² 'Veendo nos que ... Rey que ssenpre acustumarom a auver que nos e os dictos Reygnos aJam de manteer em directo e eem Justiça E nos deffenda e ffaça todo aquello que compre para nom Cajrrmos em ssogeição... E por que outrossi guardar e enparar estes Reygnos per nos nom podiamos veendo ainda mais que em tal Caso e neçessidade a nos era compridoiro perteeçia nomear escolher e tomar e receber alguma pessoa dypna e tal qual compria pera os dictos Reynos reger gouernar deffernder auudo primeiramente consselho deliberaçom e acordo antre nos sobre todo entedemos e Somos çertos per aquello que (...) Dom Joham (...) he tam noble boom e muito a esto compridoiro ssoficiante dipno auto e conuinhuil e que outrossi trabalhou e trabalha tanto por defenssom dos dictos Reygnos que mereço e merece esta onrra dinidade e estado.' Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385', p. 96.

³ This can be seen comparing the claims aired in the *Cortes* of Leiria and Porto (1371) and the general articles of grievances presented in the *Cortes* of 1385. However, this comparison exceeds the ambit of the present work. On the *Cortes* of Coimbra, Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385' and Sousa, 'O Discurso Político dos Concelhos nas Cortes de 1385', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História*, II Serie, n. 2, Porto, 1985, pp. 9-43.

⁴ For discussion and references, see Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385', pp. 10-11, 98.

⁵ This act was only struck after the redaction of the grievances Sousa, 'O Discurso Político,' p. 22.

expenses and services that are required for him to maintain the regal status.⁶ The 'Act of Election' goes even further in this line: as the *Povos* wanted to be ruled by a king, they would have to 'aid both with our bodies and goods in order to sustain the expenses and services required to maintain the regal honours and status and to take on the war'.⁷

The present chapter aims at comparing the post-1385 constitutional experience in terms of royal finances with the previous period using the same concept of 'fiscal constitution', as described in chapter 2. The first stage of this enquiry is naturally to assess whether there were constraints on the monarchy's fiscal powers, namely on the two main principles of pre-Fernandine fiscal constitution – limitations on monetary manipulations (sections 6.1 and 6.2) and consent to extraordinary taxes (section 6.2) – were observed. Only then, it will be possible to understand this period as a whole (section 6.4).

Section 6.1 - Debasement and Consent

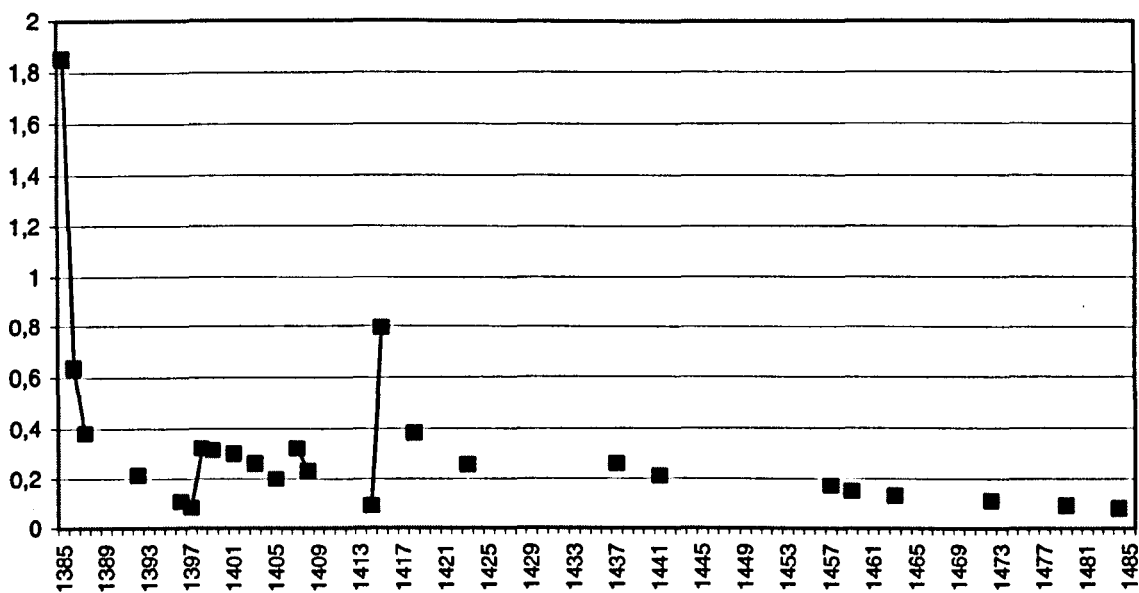
Before the constitutional fight over debasements is approached, there is a need for presenting some background of contemporary monetary history. Steep devaluation of the bullion has been singled out by different authors as the key feature of fifteenth-century Portuguese monetary and financial history.⁸ Yet, it is important to stress that decrease of the intrinsic value of the coinage was not linear. The complexity of the post-war monetary policy appears more clearly when considering the monetary unit – the *real* – in relation to the coinage (rather than the isolated intrinsic features) that a more understandable pattern emerges. The long-term picture can be seen in Fig. 19.

⁶ '*Offerecendo nos sobredictos prelados Caualeiros fidalgos e procuradores dos Conçelhos (...) a o ajudar com nossos corpos e beens e a ssosteer os encargos das despesas e sseruiços que lhe eram compridoiras para manter o estado e honra de rey.*' Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 98.

⁷ '*Ajudar com os nossos corpos e beens e a ssosteer os encargos das despesas e sseruiços que lhe eram compridoiras pera manteer o estado e honra de rey e pera outrossi leuar sua guerra em deante*', Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 98. On the other hand, it must be noted, João I shared his power with a representative counsel, dominated by representatives of the cities. Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' pp. 9-57.

⁸ Mário Gomes Marques (*HMMP*, pp.182-7) A. H. Oliveira Marques (*Portugal na Crise*, pp. 205-212) V. Magalhães Godinho (*Os Descobrimentos*, vol. I, p. 97) and Maria José Pimenta Ferro (*Estudos de História Monetária*, pp. 25-36).

Fig 19 - Intrinsic Value of the *r.*, 1385-1485 (in g Ag/r.)



Note: There is no systematic study of the post-1485 coinages.

Source: *HMMP*, pp. 106-124.

Fig. 19 confirms that the long-term metallic decadence of Portuguese coinage⁹ is an indisputable fact. Yet, it also reveals two contrasting phases: a period of ups and downs is followed by another phase with a gradual, if gentle, downwards curve. As such, following Maria José Pimenta Ferro, it is useful to distinguish two phases: the first roughly coinciding with the reign of João I (1385-1435) and the second covering the remaining decades (1435-1485). The last decades of the century like the first twenty years of the sixteenth century can be taken as a third phase, with entirely different features, namely the nearly complete substitution of bullion by copper coinage.¹⁰

These phases can be easily distinguished. For numismatists and historians from the nineteenth century onwards, the reign of João I was notorious for the decay in the coinage standards. Successive, gradually poorer coins were issued depriving the Portuguese *libra* of nearly all its metallic content. Eventually, half a century after João I's election as king, each *real* had

⁹ From c. 1435 the *real* became the standard money of account instead of the old *libras* which had become cumbersome to use for large sums, given their abrupt decadence. The *real* used to be a coin of half *libra* but eventually became the equivalent of 35 / For the evolution of the *real*, see Fig. 20.

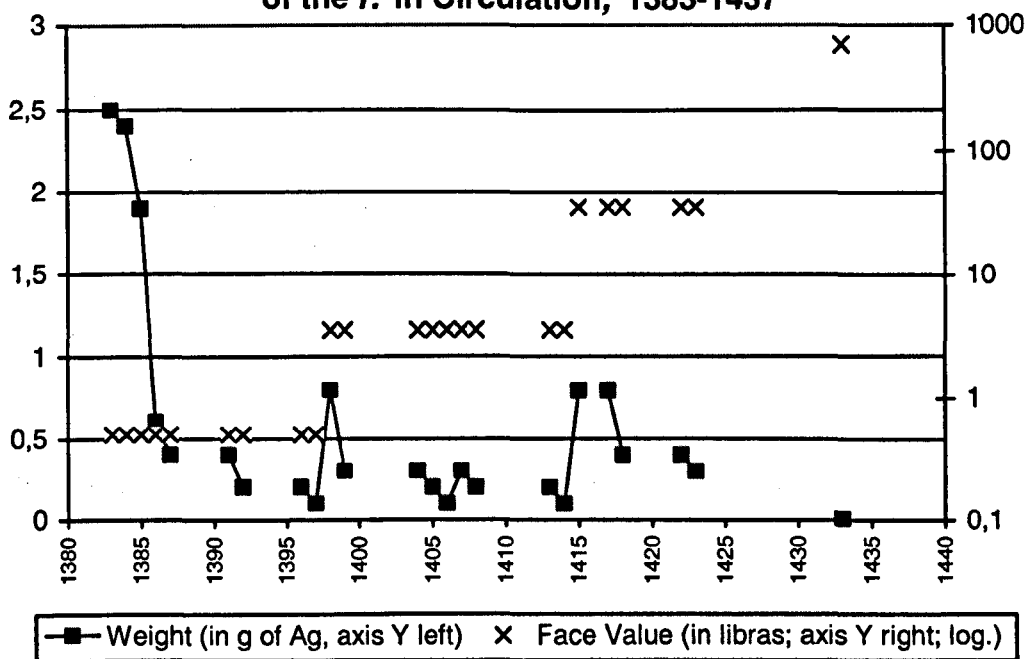
about one hundredth of their previous silver weight value and a seven-hundred times higher facial value. By the years 1435 and 1436, Duarte I tried to halt the degradation of the coinage by constructing a wholly new system comprising strong gold and silver coins (*escudo* and *leal*, respectively), bullion (the *real branco*) and fiduciary copper currency (the *real preto*, worth 3,5 *libras*). From 1435 onwards, the *real* (or *real branco*) replaced the *libra* as the money of account. This system and its derivatives survived half a century, until the day when João II ordered that all bullion currencies were to be replaced by copper coinages, opening up what specialists consider a 'modern' period of slowly depreciating stable coinage.¹¹ Can these changes in policy be explained in terms of royal prerogative?

The first period, 1385-1435, features dramatic ups and downs. Fig. 19 made clear that the monetary modifications withstood by the coinage in the reign of João I went far beyond in scope and frequency than the occasional, and largely failed, intervention of Fernando I. The facial and metallic alterations in the staple coinage used (the *r.*, valued at 0.5 *l.* in 1385) from the beginning of the war to the adoption of the system of account based in the *real* are systematised in Fig. 20. How far did these cycles follow or evade the constitutional principle of consent to coinage manipulations that surfaced in the reign of Fernando I?

¹⁰ From c. 1435 the *real* became the standard money of account instead of the old *libras* which had become cumbersome to use for large sums, given their scarce value. The *real* used to be a coin of half *libra* but eventually became the equivalent of 35 *l.* For the evolution of the *real*, see Fig. 20.

¹¹ HMMP, p. 187, 194-5. Ferro, *Subsídios para a História.*, p. 8.

Fig. 20 - Intrinsic and Nominal Values of the *r.* in Circulation, 1383-1437



Source: *HMMP*, pp. 106-124.

The cycles on Fig. 20 can be described in abstract terms: for little more than a decade, a type of silver bullion was minted in a fast succession of emissions with gradually decreasing quantities of precious metal; when the quantity of silver per coin became very low,¹² the coin was discontinued and replaced by a different, finer type with a higher nominal value than the previous. Under João I, this cycle was withstood by four coinages: the *real de dez soldos* (until 1397), the *real de três libras e meia* (1398-1406), the *meio real cruzado* (1407-13),¹³ and the *real branco* (from 1414).¹⁴ This last cycle has a noteworthy particularity, as it introduced fiduciary species, namely the *reais pretos*, small

¹² In both 1397 and 1409 the coinages of the last minting had less than 0.5 g./mark, see Fig. 19.

¹³ The minting of the *meio real cruzado* in 1407 has a different feature from the other three cycles: it was based on a coinage considered as a fraction (1/2) of the *real de três libras e meia*. As there was no appreciation of the nominal value (its value was simply half the nominal value of the previous coinage) contemporaries considered this coin as belonging to the same system as the previous one (see *OA*, Book IV, title 1 §12-13).

¹⁴ The essential details can be presented here:

| Name | First issued | Nominal value (in <i>l.</i>) | Ag g at first emission | Ag g at last emission |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>De dez soldos</i> | 1384 | 0.5 | 2.39 | 0.081 |
| <i>De três libras e meia</i> | 1398 | 3.5 | 0.318 | 0.198 |
| <i>Meio real cruzado</i> | 1407 | 1.75 | 0.159 | 0.159 |
| <i>Branco or de dez reais</i> | 1415 | 35 | 0.796 | 0.254 |
| <i>Leal</i> | 1436 | 350 | 2.63 | 2.63 |

copper coins valued at a tenth of the *real branco*.¹⁵ The cyclical pattern was temporarily halted when King Duarte managed to mint a strong silver coin called *leal* ('loyal') with the value of ten of the previous *reais brancos*.¹⁶ Did the aggressive monetary policy of João I count with the consent of the *Cortes*?

As noticed earlier on, in 1385, the stance of the municipal proctors on matters of coinage was very similar to the opposition to Fernando I: the minting of coin was, like declaring war or peace or like the marriage of the heir to the throne, subject to the agreement of the *Povos*.¹⁷ The very text where this request is articulated, the seventh chapter presented in Coimbra/1385, resounds entirely of the anti-Fernandine *Cortes* of 1371 and 1372: after evoking a recognisable version of the principle of *quod omnes tangit, debet ab omnibus approbari*,¹⁸ the chapter stated that João I's predecessor had 'deprived the *Povos* of their right to be called to discuss the issues of war, peace and royal marriages.

Thus, the *Povos* demanded that the king should not agree peace, declare war or entail wedding negotiations without calling on the *Cortes*, adding in the last clause, 'nor likewise should you mint coin.'¹⁹ The king's answer was evasive and omitted coinage²⁰ but Fernão Lopes plainly states in his 'Chronicle of João I' that the new *reais* were minted by the newly-elected king with the 'consent of all.'²¹ Given that the twenty-fourth article of the *Povos* demanded the enforcement of the recently-debased *real de dez soldos* (a coin that already

¹⁵ For the first time in Portuguese monetary history, bullion gave way to a system where copper currency, corresponding to one monetary unit – 1 *real*, was used for everyday transactions. *HMMP*, pp. 137-42.

¹⁶ By that time, silver coinage lost most of the former political relevance as the payment of rents, taxes and lease contracts was performed in copper currency. The minting of a strong golden coin in 1457 – the *cruzado* – implied that gold stood again at the apex of the Portuguese monetary system. *HMMP*, pp. 51-2. Henceforward, Portuguese coinage resumed its previous acceptance. Gonçalves, Iria, *O Património do Mosteiro de Alcobaça nos Séculos XIV e XV*, Lisbon, 1989, pp. 515-19.

¹⁷ It is important to note, however, that, unlike the articles on decision-making which were presented as a demand, this article has the form of a petition. On the difference between the demanding, proposing and petitioning article, see Sousa, 'O Discurso Político,' p. 17.

¹⁸ '*Porque he direito que as cousas, que a todos pertencem e de que todos sentem carrego, sejam a ello chamados.*' Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 112.

¹⁹ '*Pedem os Povos que nam tomedes guerra, nem façades pás sem seu acordo, nem tomedes casamento outrosi nem façades moeda.*' Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 112.

²⁰ The king stated that the present war was fought for the 'honour and defence' of these realms and no other war was envisaged, while as for peace, he would call on the *Povos* 'if necessary', while royal weddings could not be controlled by the opinions of the *Povos*.

²¹ '*E assim foi que por acordo de todos mandou el-rei lavar moeda de reais.*' Lopes, *Cron. João I*, Part 2, chapter III, p. 11.

existed in the reign of Fernando I), there can be no doubt that Lopes' claim holds good and that the new coinage enjoyed the endorsement of the *Cortes*.

The stance of the *Povos* in 1385 reinstated a fundamental principle of the old constitution, even if pointing to abstract reasons rather than to the constitutional traditions of the realm. However, after a decade of Fernandine coinage, the immutability of the old standard was by then a lost cause. In 1385 the role of the *Povos*, like Fernando strove to impose, was to give their approbation to the royal decisions. Would this principle hold for the remaining monetary changes? Did the *Cortes* have the right to refuse alterations in coinage? The fundamental heuristic difficulties surrounding the Portuguese *Cortes* make this a difficult question to answer.²² The only method is to observe closely each of King João's monetary changes in relation to the meetings of *Cortes* that took place in its date.

The first cycle of devaluation started before João I was elected king in Coimbra. First issued in 1384, the *real* had already been debased twice when the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 came about. As was mentioned, in these *Cortes*, the municipal proctors backed the impoverished version of the *real de dez soldos* that João I had recently introduced with the value of half a *libra*. In October 1385, barely six months after the *Cortes* of Coimbra, João I resorted to yet another monetary devaluation, his first as a king, and yet another emission was minted in 1386. As neither *Cortes* nor other formal assemblies met before February 1387,²³ it is clear that the petition of the *Povos* had no immediate direct effects.

The adherence to the seventh petition of 1385 is even harder to trace for the remaining four emissions, dated between 1387 and 1397. Imprecise dates and lack of adequate records for the opening negotiations of the *Cortes*²⁴ make it nearly impossible to associate these emissions, or dissociate from, the eight

²² The surviving documentation of the *Cortes* concerns the chapters of grievances and their answers and occasional legislation rather than the 'agenda' of these meetings or the decisions taken. As a consequence, no direct evidence of consent or negotiation of monetary matters can be expected to be found. Of the twenty-six *Cortes* reunited in his reign, all studied critically by Armindo de Sousa, there is no explicit indication that a single one especially met for debating monetary purposes. Obviously, this fact does not preclude that changes of coinage had been indeed debated, negotiated or consented in those assemblies. General and municipal 'articles' might include some allusions to the subjects debated and many summons indicate that the matter to be discussed was 'to devise how to obtain monies to pursue the war', an intention that could be met by debasement. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 291-345.

²³ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 291-5, 431-35.

²⁴ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 310.

Cortes and the two *Ajuntamentos*, or formal encounters with the municipalities (Coimbra/1387 and Serra d'El-Rei/1393) that occurred in those ten years.²⁵ The purpose of the *Cortes* of Braga/1387, Lisbon/1389, Viseu/1391, Coimbra/1394 and Santarém/1396, as surviving summons indicates, was to obtain funds for the war.²⁶ *Sisas* were consented in the first two and the monarchy obtained subsidies in those of 1391 and 1394. Thus, the *Cortes* appear to have been summoned because of taxation rather than because of debasement. Only the *Cortes* of Santarém/1396 can be related to the debasement which occurred in January 1396 as in that year neither subsidies nor sales taxes were consented.²⁷ These *Cortes*, as those of Braga/1387, Lisbon/1389, Viseu/1391, met to subsidise an imminent campaign by the monarchy. Thus, even if the only clear indication points to the fact that at least some debasements – those of October 1385 and 1386 – occurred without the consent of the *Cortes*, it is likely that the depletion of coinage for a specific campaign evaded consent, because it was first and foremost a military demand (see *supra* Fig. 27). It should be recalled that in his evasive answer to the seventh petition of 1385, King João reserved to himself the right to wage war. Presumably, in his interpretation the prerogative of waging war implied the right to debase the normal currency *ad hoc*. Debasement was so closely linked to military activities that the former could well be perceived as necessary to the latter. As such, the *Povos* could well regard these *ad hoc* debasements as part of the war effort.

In 1398, King João I introduced the *real de três libras e meia*. This was a wholly new coin and not simply an alteration of standard. It contained four times more silver than the last emission of the *real de dez soldos*. Appreciation was however illusory, as the nominal value in *l.* assigned to the coin was sevenfold larger. As such, the introduction of the *real de três libras e meia* was very similar to King Fernando's much-maligned manipulations. It can be said that it met with considerable, if barely perceptible in the sources, opposition in the *Cortes*. Indeed, uniquely for the *Cortes* of the period, there is unequivocal evidence that the minting of a new coinage was brought to the assembly of

²⁵ See lists in Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 464-6.

²⁶ Here I follow the 'objectives' for these assemblies as critically established by A. de Sousa. *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 297-9, 301, 306-310, 312-3.

²⁷ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 313-4. On the date of the coinage, *HMMP*, pp. 108-9.

Coimbra/1398 in January of that year.²⁸ However, the ensuing confrontation was between the 'cities and towns' and 'prelates and noblemen,' not between the king and the *Povos*. Very likely, the disagreement concerned the nominal valuation of the coinage, rather than its actual standard or fineness.²⁹ Indeed, the high nominal value of this new *real* made it burdensome to the church and the nobles as recipients of rents, military wages, annuities and land-letting contracts. As such, opposition came probably from the ranks of the privileged, rather than from the *Povos*. The subsequent depreciations of the *real de três libras e meia* remain undated and cannot be related to any *Cortes*. What can be said is that all the five emissions of the *real de três libras e meia* were put to circulation in a time of truce or low-intensity military activity.

Unlike the other coinages, the minting of the *meio real cruzado* did not respond to the immediate needs of the monarchy. Indeed, it was a direct answer to a problem that, as parliamentary grievances testify, was a permanent concern of the *Povos*: the drain of silver from the realm. In 1407, war was slowly diluting itself in truces and prorogations of truces. The solution proposed by the monarchy was to issue a coin with smaller silver content than the *real de três libras e meia*, presumably because foreigner merchants valued it below its silver content, forcing the denizen to pay more. The *meio real cruzado*, however, was not deemed a new coinage, for it followed the standard of the *real de três libras e meia*. It can be argued that the *Cortes* of Santarém/1406 were identified with this decision, although it is not clear to what extent. According to Armindo de Sousa these *Cortes* were simply summoned to obtain a loan to pay for the demonetization of the previous species and the minting of the new.³⁰ However, the fact that eventually a subsidy was collected for this purpose does not imply that this had been the primary aim of this assembly. It is equally plausible to think that the subsidy collected resulted from parliamentary bargaining between the king and the *Povos*.

²⁸ OA, Book 2, title 59 §7. *A este responde el-rey que ja sobre esto fallou com os prelados e fidalgos e com os procuradores das cidades e vilas que vieraom as sobreditas Cortes e ouviu as razões que foram alegadas pelas partes segundo eles bem sabem e que porende com seu conselho porá tal meio, qual entender, que cumpre a seu serviço e a prol de sua terra.*

²⁹ It should be reminded that the text where this debate can be read is a law regulating the nominal value of the coins.

³⁰ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 328.

At least in this interpretation, the minting of the *meio real cruzado* reveals that the *Cortes* had a say on the key decisions of monetary policy. Even if, contrarily to the old constitution of the old kings, debasements resembled an undisputed royal prerogative, wider reforms could not be realised without the intervention of the *Cortes*. If by *moeda* ('coinage') we understand the denomination and the species rather than its intrinsic specificities, it can be said that the plea made in Coimbra/1385 to summon the parliament for war and *moeda* held good in a period of war. By contrast, the process of creation of the *real de trinta e cinco libras* in 1414 reveals that in the middle of the reign of João I monetary policy had already become a royal prerogative. Narrative sources describe that, when considering how to finance a large-scale attack on North Africa, João I considered either collecting a subsidy or debasing the coinage yet again. Eventually, the latter – complemented with a general prise of salt – was chosen, because the military target of the expedition had to remain undisclosed and subsidies could not be obtained without the summoning of the *Cortes*.³¹ Thus, in the period of peace collecting a subsidy still implied consent and negotiation; radical reform of the coinage did not. Naturally, further debasements took part without any intervention of the *Cortes*, as the non-coincidence between devaluated coin emissions (between Aug. 1417 and Jan. 1422 and then in 1423)³² and *Cortes* (1416, 1417, 1418, 1427, 1429, 1430, 1433) demonstrate.

It is particularly striking that no *Cortes* met to approve the *real de trinca e cinco libras*, as this coin implied a radical shift from all the previous systems: the use of copper coinage. The new *real*, a bullion coin with little silver in it, was redeemable by ten *reais pretos* of copper. This implied fiduciary circulation that, by driving down the cost of money, endowed the monarchy with greater autonomy in monetary terms. As it happens with the previous coinage cycles, in the general chapters of the *Povos* no protests surface. Considering the vocal opposition to Fernando, the tolerance of the municipality towards the creation of a whole new system expressly for offensive war without the approval of those

³¹ Some details of the decision-making surrounding the attack on Ceuta are well explicit in the chronicle written by Zurara, Gomes Eanes de, *Crónica da Tomada de Ceuta*, ed. A. Reis Brasil, 4th ed., Lisbon, 1992, chapter XIII, pp. 72-5.

³² HMMP, p. 122.

whom this touched - the *Povos* as well as the noblemen and ecclesiastics- is surprising.

In spite of the anti-Fernandine tirades that were still heard in the chapters presented at the *Cortes* in the 1380s and 1390s, the *Povos* did not formulate any complain against the weak coinage minted by João I. Indeed, the complaints against the forced conversion of the nominal terms of the lease contracts and renders, together with the request formulated at the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 that the circulation of the new, weakened coinage had to be universally enforced, hints at where the interest of the *Povos* laid: the debasement. The *Povos* could come to terms with the loss of metallic value.³³ At least some municipalities linked to the external trade could see the advantages brought by the debasements, as they had done in the reign of Fernando I.³⁴ For the *Povos*, debasement, at least when done in order to fund the defence of the realm, had become acceptable. Whatever the reasons -and many can be tentatively singled out- it is clear that debasement no longer constituted an essential constitutional cause for the *Povos* and the observance of the immutable standard, as stated in the *Instrumentum Super Facto Monete*, was now irrelevant to the *Povos*.

Evidence for the principle that *Cortes* had to consent in monetary decisions is even less consistent for the period after 1435. None of the important currency alterations can be associated with any parliamentary intervention. No *Cortes* met when King Duarte minted an entire monetary system, comprising solid golden and silver coins, bullion and copper currencies in 1436.³⁵ That no consent of the *Cortes* or consultation of the *Povos* approved the nominal valuation of the *leal* that took place five years later is evident from the letter sent to the accounting officers of Estremadura by the regent Pedro on this matter in 9 March, five days before he issued the summons to the *Cortes*.³⁶

³³ From the early days of the interregnum future King João I and his supporters considered that the cause had to be funded by strong debasement of the coinage. He started by minting a *real* of excellent quality that was well received by the populations and, later, used as amulets and charms. Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 1, chapters XLVIII-XLIX.

³⁴ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 83 (2nd article to the *Cortes* of Porto/1372).

³⁵ *HMMP*, pp. 183-5.

³⁶ BACL, Série Azul, Códice 409, pp. 163-4 (eighteenth-century copy); on this change, *HMMP*, p. 126. This document is extremely important as, had it not survived, any historian would be tempted to ascribe the nominal alteration made in this period to the *Cortes* of Torres Vedras/1441 (summoned March 14th and met April 25th) whose declared aim was to deal with 'matters pertaining the finances of the said lord [the king]' ('*cousas que perteemçem aa fazenda do dito senhor [reij]*') BACL, Série Azul, Códice 409, pp. 165-6). Moreover, according to Sousa, a lost

Considering chronological proximity, the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1456 could be linked to the minting of the *cruzado* (lit. 'crusader', a gold coin) and to a new nominal valuation of the *leal*, rated at 15 *reais*.³⁷ The discussion of these matters in the *Cortes* remains a theoretical possibility, but the critical appreciation of this assembly by Sousa shows that these brief (two-week long) *Cortes* met for devising the means to pay for a planned 'crusade' against the Turk.³⁸ Furthermore, the chronicler who mentions the creation of the gold *cruzado* makes no reference to the role of the *Cortes*. In what concerns the issue of the *real grosso*, datable from 1462,³⁹ there is no doubt that it did not pertain to any assembly (the last *Cortes* had been those of Évora/1460). Similarly, the re-definition of the nominal values of the circulating bullion was made in February 1479, nearly a year after the last *Cortes*.⁴⁰

The great changes in the late fifteenth century –de-monetization of all older silver coins (1484) and the introduction of a new monetary system (1492) - dispensed with the consent from the *Cortes*. The most radical change, the de-monetization of all circulating species ordered by João II in 1484, was not considered in any *Cortes* but 'spoken with those in our [king's] council, with the mint officer and with other experienced people in this matter.'⁴¹ As such, the publicising of the minting of the *chinfrão*, the last Portuguese bullion, during the *Cortes* of Coimbra-Évora/1472-3 was an exception-.⁴²

While the anti-Fernandine constitutional opposition seemed well alive in 1385 or perhaps was even made stronger by abstract principles and by the concrete experience of electing a king, the wars that dragged up to the 1410s eluded the attempts to establish a strong monetary constitution. João I and his successors went far beyond the stop-and-go, tentative monetary manipulations of Fernando I. Nonetheless, unlike what happened with King Fernando I, there

'Ordinance of Matters of Coinage' was published in the (not 'by the') *Cortes*. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 361.

³⁷ The former possibly took place in 1457, while the latter is first detectable in a transaction dated 2 February 1457. On these innovations and respective sources, *HMMP*, pp. 50, 126 and 251.

³⁸ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 379.

³⁹ *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 37, p. 390. (in this law the pre-1462 and post-1463 are rated differently). This agrees with the suggestion of Gomes Marques that the *reais grossos* were minted 'probably in 1463', *HMMP*, p. 127.

⁴⁰ *HMMP*, p. 126.

⁴¹ *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 44, pp. 394-5 (25 December 1489).

⁴² *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 36, pp. 386-9 (16 September 1471).

remain no traces of widespread opposition against coinage manipulation in the *Cortes* of João I and his successors. Unlike what was expected, the loud criticism heard in the parliaments of Fernando I against depleted coinage disappeared from the chapters of grievances presented in the *Cortes*. Not once in the surviving 347 chapters presented in the *Cortes* under João I did the *Povos* complain about debasement, let alone question its legitimacy.⁴³ Conversely, surviving parliamentary grievances only mention coinage to protest against the obstacles on the circulation of the debased coins.⁴⁴

Being inextricably connected to his military operations and to 'the defence of the kingdom', the debasements wrought by João I and the considerable profits thereof were acceptable to the *Povos* who all but supported the circulation of his depleted bullion. After the peace of 1411, a new war unfolded between the two bellicose neighbours; this time, however, it was not a war for land, but for silver. Like its bloodier predecessor, this war required overvalued coinage, so that the silver drain to the neighbour could be averted. A great deal of the monarchy's monetary policy was intended to keep the money supply and avoid the drain of silver.⁴⁵ The municipal representatives were also aware of these circumstances and the restraints on the export of precious metals were a common cause to king and *Povos*.⁴⁶ In the following period, both the creation of new species and the rating of silver coinages were deemed as sorts of current affairs which required no participation. There was seemingly great confidence among the *Povos* in the monarchs' prerogative.

This confidence was not entirely vain. Indeed, the late-fifteenth-century monarchy was able to sacrifice its short-term fiscal interests for the sake of what was perceived as the 'common profit'. Two occasions demonstrate this surprising convergence. As clarified in the previous chapter (5.2 and 5.3), the rise in prices was beneficial to the royal revenues. Contemporary royal advisors

⁴³ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, pp. 225-288. The reader should bear in mind that Armindo de Sousa only presents abridged versions of the original articles. As these remain unpublished, and extremely dispersed through the Portuguese archives and libraries, the systematic reading of the originals is an impossible task for the present study.

⁴⁴ The enforcement of the legal tender of the new coin was demanded by the *Povos* in Coimbra/1385 (24th article) and Santarém/1430; the prohibition of the lord to alter the ratio of conversion in Santarém/1418 (2nd article); the permission to export foreign coinage, at least with strong facial value in Leiria-Santarém/1433 (20th article). Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, pp. 227, 268, 292.

⁴⁵ As Maria José Ferro argued, Ferro, *Estudos de História Monetária*, pp. 71-6.

⁴⁶ Ferro, *Estudos de História Monetária*, p. 74.

clearly understood this phenomenon and c. 1436 this was used as an argument for the continuation of the debasements.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, King Duarte agreed to run the royal mint at a loss when he coined his system of strong coins, as in order to attract silver to the mint, King Duarte abdicated from profits of seigniorage and exempted foreign gold and silver from taxation.⁴⁸ The negative effects that the deflation of the 1430s had on the royal receipt have already been shown. The de-monetisation of 1484 provides another telling example. The forced de-monetisation of the circulating coins is close to the old '*fractio monete*', which twelfth- and thirteenth-century monarchs regarded as their prerogative. As in the *fractio monete*, the bullion was channelled to the Mint, the circulation of old coinages strictly forbidden and the coinage of a new one enforced. However, unlike the *fractio monete*, the law of 1484 aimed not at the profit of the crown, but rather at providing a 'public good', currency. Indeed, the monarchy would experiment slight loss: silver brought by foreigners was exempted from the tenth.⁴⁹

Section 6.2 - The 'Ordinances of Equivalence'

In the post-war period the debasement of the coinage was no longer the bone of contention between the king and the 'realm' as it had been in 1254 and 1261 (see section 2.1). Yet, the effects of the debasements and of the successive changes in the coinage were no less dramatic and wide than in the mid thirteenth century. After a century of monetary stability, contracts, rents and many other transactions between people of all classes were expressed in Portuguese currency. While prices of consumption items could react to debasements, permanent, agreed by an old contract or time-delayed payments could not. Debasement also affected one-off payments deferred in time like

⁴⁷ In the memorandum sent to Duarte I advising the king to mint strong coins, forbid the export of silver and fight the 'debasement-caused price rise' (*aleuantamento das cousas pelas mudanças das moedas*) by fixing prices, the Jewish expert *Catellam* opposes those who think that by doing so the king will lose his revenues 'I believe that whoever claims that [by minting strong coinage] you deplete your revenues he is wrong, as even if all your rents decrease because of low prices, you cannot lose [because you can buy the same]' (*se alguim vos diser que perdeis de vosas rendas a mim parece que errara...a verdade senhor he que asy como se vosas rendas abayxam pelo abaixamento das cousas em que vos fallo... vos perder nom podees*). *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. , 32, p. 377 (dated 1435).

⁴⁸ *HMMP*, p. 184. This deprived the monarchy of a sizeable source of revenue: the mint. The tax-farm of the mint for 1401-4 yielded a sizeable 20,000,000 l. *RED*, doc. 4. This represents accounts for 6.17% of the crown's notional revenue.

⁴⁹ *Descr.*, vol. I, doc. 44, p. 394.

bequests, loans, legacies and arrears of debt. Crucially, it also affected disbursements for which there was no market, including military wages and redistributive payments, such as pensions paid in noble households and *contias*. The dramatic changes of value were a cause for litigation between privates. As such, the combination of depreciation of the nominal currency with inflation was a potential liability to different interests and individual agents.

Like many other agents, the monarchy was both a rent-collector and a rent-payer. As owners of the *Direitos Reais*, Portuguese kings collected many revenues expressed in fixed sums whose value was often set in the thirteenth-century (see section 5.1). On the other hand, given that it was liable to standing obligations towards some of its subjects that were also expressed in nominal values, such as annuities, pensions, wages, *contias*, the monarchy was also a rent-payer. Indeed, the purpose of the debasements was precisely to pay the military that defended the realm. In the wars and the centuries following, inflation and debasement hardly affected the crown. The key agricultural lands of the monarchy, the paddy fields of the Tagus and the fertile lands in the outskirts of Lisbon, were either exploited directly or were let in exchange for a portion of the product. Moreover, their yield was partly consumed by court and, after 1415, it was diverted to sustain the Portuguese North African strongholds. Moreover, the revenues of João I depended on the *sisas* which were, so to speak, 'debasement-proof.' The negative effects of the degradation of the standing rents were avoided and transferred to the nobles, since a great deal of the land-based *Direitos Reais* were assigned to nobles in payment of *contias*. Thus, debasement allowed the monarchy to control its disbursements and did not affect its income. With João I, rather than a hidden tax, depreciation was a way of transferring the burden of the crown to those who benefited from wages, annuities and rents.

However, given its widely devastating effects, the turnover of coinage types and the metallic depletion caused the monarchy to intervene as an arbitrator. The situation created by decades of monetary manipulations called the monarchy yet another form of financial intervention: to update the payments expressed in nominal terms. The monarchy intervened by issuing the so-called 'ordinances of equivalence' which defined the correspondence between older nominal units (*libras*) and the money in circulation. The number of *libras* of a

fixed payment was multiplied according to the denominator established in the law. Thus, the 100 *l.* due as a rent by the municipality of Algodres since the reign of Sancho II, an example among countless others, would be redeemed by 1000 *l.* in coins of *reais de três libras e meia* (minted 1398-1407). After 1409, the original 100 *l.* were reckoned at 5000 *l.* in the current *meios reais cruzados*, and so forth (see Fig. 21). At last, by the early sixteenth century the sum of 100 'old' *l.* was redeemed by 700,000 *l.* or 20,000 *r.*⁵⁰ These changes are systematised in Fig. 21.

Fig. 21 – Value Assigned to 1 *l.* of a Standing Rent in Current Money

| Coins issued in: | Law of 1393 | Law of 1399 | Law of 1409 | Law of 1417 | Law of 1422 | Law of 1435 | Law of 1473 |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Pre-1386 | 5 | 10 | 50 | [250] ⁵¹ | 500 | 700 | - |
| 1386-98 | 1 | 10 | 5 | [20] | [50] | 500* ⁵² | - |
| 1399-1414 | - | 1 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 500 | - |
| 1415-1435 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| 1446-1473 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1.8 |

Sources: 1393 – OA, Book IV, title 1 §6;⁵³ 1399 – AML, Livro I de D. João I, fol. 88; 1409 - OA, Livro IV, título 1, § 1-27; 1417 - OA, Book IV, title 1 § 28-43, complete in TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 104-106; 1422 - OA, Book IV, title 1 §44-55; 1435 - OA, Book IV, title 1 § 56-65; Azevedo, Pedro de, 'A Lei de 13 de Março de 1473, *Arqueologo Portuguez*, n. 10, 1905, pp. 176-85.

⁵⁰ The nominal value of 100 *l.* can be documented in 1258, 1433 and 1497: 1258 - *Portvgaliae Monvmenta Historica, Inqvisiones*, Vol. I, Pars II, Fascivlo 7, column 790b; 1433 - Sousa, João Silva de, 'Inquirição de D. Duarte aos Almojarifados de Viseu e de Lamego (1433-1424)' *Mare Liberum. Revista de História dos Mares*, n. 11-12, Janeiro-Dezembro 1996, p. 136; 1497 – TT, Chanc. Manuel I, Livro 28, n. 38.

⁵¹ While in the Ordinance of 1417, only the rate for lettings is shown, the subsequent ordinance of 1422 indicates that the rate used since then was 250:1. TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 104-106.

⁵² The limit used is between 1st January 1395 and 1st January 1435.

⁵³ The law converting the old *libras* in five new *libras* is only known through a later law (OA, Book IV, title 1 §6). It is probable that it took place soon after the strong debasement of 1392. A document from the municipal archive of Porto dated 30th June 1394 mentions *liuras de moeda antiga* (*l.* in the old coins) implying that there was a distinction to be made. On the other hand, a privilege conceded by João to the lands of Cadima and *Azevede* claims that the 75 *l.* of old *l.* should be converted at five for one ('as long as it is stated in our ordinance'). *Chanc. João I*, II-1, doc. II-83.

In theory these ordinances can be seen as the 'negative' of the debasement, as attempts to compensate the negative effects of metallic depreciation. They were presented as interventions for the sake of common good. Indeed, they were issued in the context of pleas that were sent to the royal courts. The references against pleas overflowing the courts and the emphasis on contracts, debts and bequeaths, rather than levies to the king, show that the ordinances were not aimed at defending royal revenues. In the Ordinance of 1409, the rates of conversion for debts owed and sums involved in individual contracts were 1:80, while the conversion of rents was rated at 1:50. Similarly, one of the avowed motives for the law of 1433 was to avoid the excessive money-related litigation. Furthermore, these laws fought arbitrary conversions which would affect the weaker parts.

Yet, despite their benign intentions, no other monetary question proved to be as divisive as these ordinances. Indeed, even if the effects of debasement and inflation were more or less universally felt, the concession of these ordinances opened up a dispute between rent-collectors and rent-payers. For the former, it was clear that the post-1384 debasements threatened the purchasing power of their rents. Gradual debasement was particularly harmful to the landowners who leased out their land and to lay or ecclesiastical lords who were recipients of fixed rents.⁵⁴ As such, they saw the inverse political alignment from the debasements: *Povos* were favourable to these but hostile towards conversion ordinances, and the privileged vice-versa. Needless to say, the former would fear that the heavy metallic depreciation dented the value of their fixed rents in the old *libras* of pre-war times. This was especially onerous to the clergy whose material obligations to Rome were expressed in metal and in strong gold coinages. For this reason, in 1409, the clergy secured for some of its rents the privilege of receiving the metallic equivalent.⁵⁵ Nobility, however, would not only see its military wages decrease substantially as well as the revenues from the royal lands assigned by the crown as payment for annuities and other forms of patronage.

⁵⁴ See the complaints of the nobles in 1398 OA, Book II, title 59 §7.

⁵⁵ The ordinance of 1409 established that the clergy could demand the equivalent in metallic terms, at least in visitation. OA, Book IV, title 1 §17. This practice became known as the *costume de Braga* and was still in use in 1506 (TT, NA 318, *passim*). Signs of preferential treatment of the clergy are already present in 1404 (Godinho, *L'Économie*

Historians working with this period have highlighted how mounting depreciation combined with steep inflation to produce a 'scissors' movement susceptible of axing the ecclesiastical and nobles' rents. Indeed, according to them, metallic decrease was made worse by the abrupt price inflation that soared throughout the reign of João I.⁵⁶ As such, one should ask whether these ordinances were indeed issued to protect the nobility, as it has been claimed. The effects of the nominal conversions measured in terms of silver content are shown on Fig. 22.

Fig. 22 – Notional Silver Content of 100 'old' l. (In g of Ag)

| 1369 | 1382 | 1392 | Law of 1393 ⁵⁷ | 1398 | Law of 1399 | 1408 | Law of 1409 | 1416 | Law of 1417 | 1421 | Law of 1422 | 1434 | Law of 1435 | 1472 | Law of 1473 |
|------|------|------|---------------------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|-------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1106 | 478 | 40 | 200 | 23 | 230 | 66 | 330 | 110 | [550] | [100] | 540 | 350 | 520 | 220 | 396 |

Note: It should be noted that these weights refer to the standard bullion. Obviously, from 1414 onwards payments contained little silver as copper coinage dominated.

Sources: Fig. 19, Fig. 20; Azevedo, 'A Lei de 13 de Março'.

As Fig. 22 makes clear, the intrinsic value of standing payments was severely affected during the war period. As such, the monarchy managed to dilute the costs of paying its hosts. The laws of 1393 and 1399 only slightly attenuated the steep loss in metallic content caused by abrupt depreciation. Furthermore, the effects of the first laws were short-lived, as debasements resumed in 1395-97 and 1402-6. In 1409, the new 50:1 raised the metal content to 69% of that of the old *libras*. The following debasements and the minting of the *real de trinta e cinco soldos* (1414) further eroded this recovery and by 1416 the levels had sunk again.

de L'Empire, p. 153) and in 1405, when João I converted the 3,000 l. of the lands given to the bishop of Porto into 300,000 l. (TT, Gaveta I, maço 1, doc. 15).

⁵⁶ Godinho, *L'Économie de l'Empire*, p. 153. Many contemporary texts, like grievances presented in the *Cortes*, complain about the dearth of the prices. The inflation of the wheat prices in nominal terms in the reign of João I had already been spotted by the late A. H. Oliveira Marques in the 1960s. Marques, *Introdução à História da Agricultura*, p. 213.

⁵⁷ There is doubt about the date of this law.

As the monarchy had free rein in debasing currency, these laws did not check the capacity of the monarchy to lower the cost in times of need. The major military encounters – the siege of Lisbon (1383-4), Aljubarrota (1385) and the recovery of the North (1385-6), the invasion of Leon (1387), the conquests of Badajoz (1396) and Tuy (1398) and obviously the assault on Ceuta (1415) - were with strongly debased currency deprived of any updating. Similarly, the effects of these laws could be short-lived in the pre-Ceuta period.

A strong recovery came about in 1417. The ordinance approved in that year elevated the notional metal content of the payments made in *l.* to 5,5 g, that is to say 115% of the metal paid in the reign of Fernando I. A new ordinance in 1422 resulted in payments with 112% of the pre-1385 metallic content. This law sanctioned what had been an informal practice imposed by some lords,⁵⁸ as it is well explicit in an adverse petition presented at the *Cortes* of Santarém/1418. The law of 1435 was even more beneficial. The relatively low decrease of to 73% the former silver content by 1434 was deemed enough to issue a new law, following a representation of the 'nobles and those who held the lands'.⁵⁹ Twenty-five years earlier this value had been considered good enough for restoring the old *libras*. Moreover, the laws of 1422 and 1435 duly followed coinage depreciations.⁶⁰

As seen from metallic content, from 1417 onwards, nobility saw the value of their rents not only restored but reinforced. As Fig. 22 made clear, the nominal adjustments established by the monarchy from 1422 onwards managed to equate the silver content of the standing fixed payments to pre-1384 levels. But how far did those laws avoid the devastating effects of inflation? The answer to this question requires that nominal prices and their approximate metallic content are correlated. Indeed, metallic value means nothing in itself, let alone when fiduciary coinage increased in importance. Lacking concrete evidence on the side of the nobility, the only workable method would be to weight the effect of these ordinances on the purchasing power of

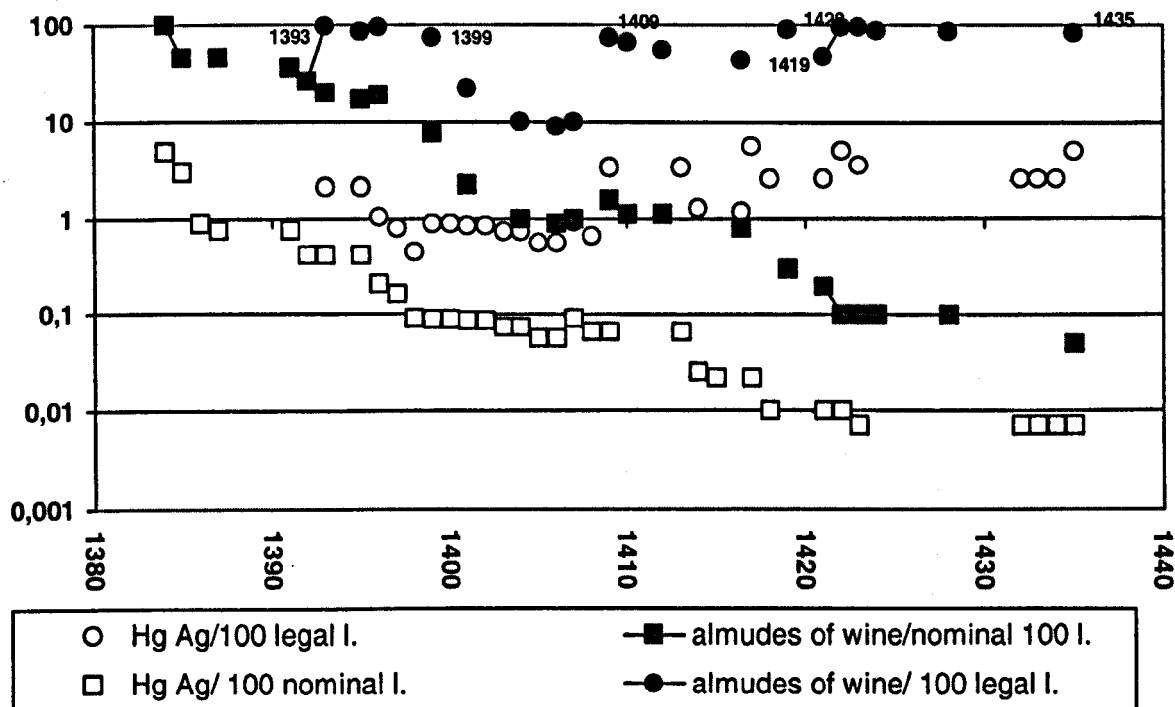
⁵⁸ *HMMP*, pp. 122-4.

⁵⁹ *OA*, Book IV, title 1 § 56.

⁶⁰ *HMMP*, pp. 122-4.

the currency. Fig. 23 uses average wine prices as an indicator for price inflation.⁶¹

Fig. 23 - Metallic Content and Purchasing Power of 100 *l.*, 1385-1435 (logarithmic scale)



Note: It should be noted that these weights refer to the standard bullion. Obviously, from 1414 onwards payments contained little silver as copper coinage dominated.
 Source: Fig. 19 for metallic content, adjusted according to the laws systematised in Fig. 20; for prices, Viana, 'Alguns Preços de Vinho.'⁶²

In spite of faltering wine prices, the results are eloquent. Firstly, it is clear that in the long term nominal prices of wine (the best-known market commodity) were largely a function of the silver content of the nominal unit – the *l.* In fact, for all the lacunae of the data, the first two series, metallic content in nominal *l.* and the wine units paid by 1000 *l.*, draw almost parallel courses. As such, the updating of the metallic content in order to recover the purchasing power made perfect sense. But did it work?

The restoration of 1393 managed to keep the purchasing power at reasonably equal terms to the pre-1385 one, after a decade of swift decay. In

⁶¹ In order to moderate the uncertainty caused by the fact that prices for wine were taken from highly heterogeneous lists rather than from series, each yearly figure plotted stands for the average price of the last five years. It has not been possible to fully access the recent list of wheat prices compiled by Mário Viana: 'Alguns Preços de Cereais.'

⁶² In order to fit the data into the graph, the 112 *l.* for each almude of wine were transformed in 1384 into 100 *l.*

contrast, that of 1398, discussed in *Cortes*, was powerless to stop the effects of inflation, which reached less than 10%.⁶³ It would be up to the Law of 1409 to assure that rents conserved somewhere between 55% and 80% of the purchasing power and would not drop to the severe 10% of the previous decade. The effects of the radical updating ordered in the ordinances of 1417 and 1422 were even more beneficial for the rents, which were kept at 80%. The Law of 1435, passed on request of 'those who hold rents', did even more: it protected purchasing power from 'natural' price inflation, independent of debasements.

Fig. 23 already left in evidence that by the late 1410s and early 1420s the metallic content paid in rents even exceeded that paid in the reign of Fernando I. Thus, nominal adjustments were more than a 'just' attempt to compensate the losses in metallic value. They aimed at compensating rent-holders for the decrease in purchasing power. This is made clear by the ordinance of 1417.⁶⁴ Indeed, the details of the conversions made in 1417, 1422 and 1435 implied a *de facto* reinforcement of the rents' purchasing power. This assured that purchasing power was kept at a respectable level- respectively 89%, 95%, 83% of that of 1384.

Ultimately, ordinances were reinforcements of the metallic content of the rents that preserved their purchasing power from the damages of inflation. Thus, when seen from the angle of purchasing power, the laws appear as intent on fighting the effects of debasement-fuelled inflation and recovering the rent-holders' purchasing power. More than a simple compensation for the loss of metallic content, the ordinances of nominal conversion were intent on preserving the acquisitive power of the rents. Even if, as Coelho claims,⁶⁵ this was a period of difficulties for the seigniorial economy, it is wrong to regard monetary policy as its structural agent.⁶⁶ After the wars, from 1409 to 1435, the monetary policy of the crown clearly sided with the seigniorial party.

Given the wide-ranging impact of these laws, it is vital to check to what extent whether they were merely prerogative decisions or whether they had some intervention by the *Cortes*. To do so, we can compare the dates when

⁶³ It should be noted that the series 'almudes of wine/100 l.' starts at 112 in 1384; it was not indexed at 100.

⁶⁴ This law claimed that prices had increased fivefold in three years, OA, Book IV, title 1 §28.

⁶⁵ Coelho, *O Baixo Mondego nos Finais*, vol. I, pp. 286, 320, 332;

Cortes met with the dates of the 'ordinances of equivalence'. Although this is the same method used to track the relationship between *Cortes* and debasements, the present task is easier, given that all except one of the ordinances of equivalence are dated with precision. The ordinance of 1393 was not approved in *Cortes* as no parliaments met in 1392 or 1393. By contrast, a mention to the opinions of 'some of the municipalities of the realm in the *Cortes*' in the introduction of the orders of the ordinance sent to the municipalities of Coimbra and Lisbon indicate that the second ordinance of conversion was published in the sequence of the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1398.⁶⁷

Yet, the consent given in the *Cortes* of Coimbra would prove to be exceptional. In the very text of the law, the monarch proclaimed his total independence in relation to the 'counsels' of the 'parts'.⁶⁸ The subsequent decisions confirm the absence of any constitutional limitation to royal prerogative in this regard. The possibility that the laws of 1409, 1417, 1422 and 1435 were approved in *Cortes* can be safely precluded. All of them were issued in the royal courts, as their very texts state. Additionally, they did not closely follow any meeting of *Cortes*. No *Cortes* had recently met when the ordinance of 1409 was issued in 'the king's court';⁶⁹ similarly, the law of 1422 was issued during an audience of the same court and cannot be related to any parliament; the text of the law of 1435 presented it as a response to a collective representation outside the *Cortes* of the noblemen (*fidalgos*), the queen and all 'those who held lands,' plainly hinting at where landlords' interests laid.

After the prerogative adjustment ordered by Duarte I in 1435, the question became dormant for three and half decades. From 1436 onwards the *real* became the default money of account, contracts were no longer struck in *libras*, but in *reais* or, alternatively, in strong gold coinages and the frequency and intensity of debasement decreased. Moreover, the growing predominance of copper coinage on everyday transactions made the problem less acute. Yet, the difficulties of the royal finances in the middle of the fifteenth century

⁶⁶ Gonçalves, *O Património do Mosteiro*, pp. 515-9.

⁶⁷ AML, Livro I de D. João I, Códice 10, fol. 88. OA, Book II, title 59 §7. *A este responde el-rey que ja sobre esto fallou com os prelados e fidalgos e com os procuradores das cidades e vilas que vieraom as sobreditas Cortes e ouviu as razões que foram alegadas pelas partes segundo eles bem sabem.*

⁶⁸ OA, Book II, title 59 §7. *E ouviu as razões que foram alegadas pelas partes segundo eles bem sabem e que porende com seu conselho porá tal meio, qual entender, que cumpre a seu serviço e a prol de sua terra.*

⁶⁹ OA, Book II, title 59 § 27.

prompted the monarchy to improve its revenues by this mean. As Armindo de Sousa detected,⁷⁰ in Santarém/1468 the *Povos* had protested against another issuing of a conversion ordinance and received the assurance that the king would not do it without first listening to the advice of the municipalities in *Cortes*. Three years later, Afonso V finally decided to expressly summon the municipalities in order to discuss 'the upgrading the content of the *libras*'.⁷¹ In these *Cortes*, the advice of the towns was adverse to a new regulation and the *Povos* held their ground against Afonso V with arguments that remain unknown but could hardly have been constitutional.⁷² Finally, the law of 1473 was issued after being opposed by the *Povos* in the *Cortes* of Coimbra-Evora/1472-3 and Lisbon/1473. Although, as Armindo de Sousa has critically established, this ordinance was published days after the official closure of the *Cortes*, its content had nonetheless been debated in the meeting, as hinted in the prologue and in other textual references.⁷³

While the laws of 1398 and 1473 were discussed in *Cortes*, between 1409 and 1435 the *Cortes* took no part in the approval of the ordinances regulating conversions. After the war years these were issued by the crown without the consent of *Povos*, nobles and prelates. In sum, there was no working constitutional obligation of the monarch to seek consent for these laws whose consequences were comparable to debasements. This pattern closely resembles that of the debasements: intense war coincided with more debate on coinage being brought to the *Cortes*, while times of peace saw a more independent rule.

The discretion enjoyed by the kings in matters of coinage seems surprising when one considers that the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 reinstated the principle that changes in coinage had to be approved by those affected by it. Post-Fernandine monarchy freed itself from the monetary limitations of the fiscal constitution of the old kings. Not only the limitations on the minting prerogatives were altogether forgotten, but also the very claim in Coimbra/1385 that

⁷⁰ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 393.

⁷¹ '*Às cidades e certas vilas de nossos reinos que houvessem de vir à nossa vila de Santarém (...) sobre o acrescentamento das libras.*' quoted in Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 393.

⁷² According to by A. de Sousa, the demand of the king met with flat refusal, without any legal or moral argument. Tellingly, in the document of the law of 1473, the king merely says that in parliament the *Povos* 'had said nothing that mattered'. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 394.

decisions on 'coinage' ought to be brought to the *Cortes* failed once the wars finished. In political terms, the debasements, conversions ordinances and the other modifications might have been popular or at least acceptable measures, but in constitutional terms, they were purely prerogative. Eventually, as a result of constant, unopposed debasements everyday coinage would be assured by copper coins with no trace of silver, while the purchasing power of the rents was assured. At any rate, the stringent constitution that was invoked against Fernando I made little sense in a context dominated by fiduciary currency and nominal adjustments remaining firmly within royal prerogative.

The death of bullion contributed to the prevention of disagreements between *Povos* and king on monetary issues. Indeed, Portuguese copper currencies were indexed to strong and stable silver coins. On the other hand, João I and his successors were far less vulnerable to the harms of debasement than the 'old kings' had been, as the former possessed an antidote to price inflation in the form of *sisas*. It is thus small wonder that the monarchy could organise his financial policy – which was simply to assign the number of copper coins to silver standard – without a single hint from the *Cortes*. Post-1484 monetary policy was not based in debasement but in the definition of official rates of exchange between Portuguese copper, gold and silver coins and between Portuguese and foreign currencies.⁷⁴

Section 6.3 - Unite and Rule: The Cortes and Extraordinary Taxation

In Coimbra/1385, the very first petition presented by the *Povos* to the king they had just elected and acclaimed was that all subsidies held from the time of King Fernando should be cancelled.⁷⁵ Two reasons were backed this demand: the 400,000 *l. pedido* that the *Povos* had already advanced and the 'scandal' caused by the *sisas*. The petition was deferred by João I 'given that

⁷³ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 393; Azevedo, Pedro de, 'A Lei de 13 de Março de 1473 sobre as Libras', *Arqueologo Portuguez*, n. 10, 1905, pp. 176-85.

⁷⁴ Dias, João Alves, 'A Moeda,' in Marques, A. H. de Oliveira (ed.) *Portugal do Renascimento à Crise Dinástica*, Lisbon, 1998, pp. 254-7, 260-5.

⁷⁵ The petition to end with King Fernando's levies is in the 6th article but, as Caetano and Sousa agree, the first four general articles of Coimbra/1385 are resolutions and the fifth is an appeal (*moção*). Thus, article 6 ends up by being the first 'petition' proper. Sousa, 'O Discurso Político', p. 16.

they [the people] have promised what was needed for the war... he [the king] does not envisage to introduce on the *Povos* other payments, *pedidos* nor *sisas* and he cancels all the *sisas* that are now being collected'.⁷⁶ As was mentioned earlier, João I only accepted the kingship after being assured that those who elected him would 'help him with their bodies and goods to pay the expenses and the services needed to upkeep the kingly condition and honour as well as to continue the war'⁷⁷ As the *Povos* made their word good by granting 400,000 *l.* to the cause,⁷⁸ the cancellation of all *sisas* and *pedidos* demanded by Fernando I was a more than reasonable request. Moreover, the newly-elected king had to accept that instead of being delivered to the king's treasury, the receipt of the *pedido* would be managed by a treasurer appointed by the *Povos* who would watch the destination of the monies collected. How far would this model stand as a precedent to the ulterior fiscal-constitutional relationship between the monarchy and the kingdom, embodied in the *Cortes* to whom ultimately it owed the throne?

Extraordinary subsidies were the subject of the pioneering, and still unsurpassed, work of Iria Gonçalves in the 1960s. Yet, by using the 'Middle Ages' as a timeframe, she focused on the similar features of the kingdom-wide subsidies from the thirteenth to the late fifteenth centuries. The synchronic focus on all 'medieval' subsidies was certainly an adept approach to a meagre and scattered archive, but it entailed the risk of overlooking subtle but significant shifts in both constitutional and technical aspects of general taxation. Given the chronological imbalance of the 'archive', well-documented features of the fifteenth-century *pedidos* were projected onto the poorly-known subsidies of the previous centuries. Iria Gonçalves' emphasis on the fifteenth-century *pedidos*, which were taxes on property, had also the consequence of putting the *sisas* aside. While this is acceptable from the 1400s onwards, in the previous epoch,

⁷⁶ *Pois os povos lhe prometeram aquello que lhe compria pra sa guerra, ..., que nam entende lançar aos povos daqui em diante outras peitas, nem pedidos nem sisas, e alça todas as sisas, que se em estes Reinos por ele colhem.* Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 112.

⁷⁷ *Ajudar com os nossos corpos e beens e a ssosteer os encarregos das desspesas e seruiços que lhe eram compridoiras para manter o estado e honra de rey e pera outrossi leuar sua guerra em deante.* Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 98.

⁷⁸ The sum is known through a royal letter of 1392 sent to the municipality of Porto, published in Cruz, António, 'Do Auxílio Prestado a Lisboa pelos Portuenses no Cerco de 1384,' *Duas Cidades ao Serviço de Portugal*, vol. I, Porto, 1947, doc. VIII, p. 62. Very likely the sum of 400,000 *l.* was the equivalent to the global yield of the kingdom-wide tax-farms of the *sisas* for 1383.

both property and sales taxes were merely understood as forms of redeeming a subsidy or a 'service'. While *sisas* and *pedidos* are technically different forms of taxation, in constitutional terms they are indistinguishable and cannot be studied separately. Measuring the impact of late-fourteenth-century wars demands a more analytical stance and, fundamentally, a closer consideration of the subtle traces left by pre-1385 extraordinary taxation, mostly by vocabulary. The present section will examine the fiscal unification of the king in the *Cortes* that started with the Fernandine subsidies and ended up in the *pedidos* of the reign of Afonso V.

As has been hinted, the constitutional profile of the *pedido* of 1385 cannot be understood without some careful consideration on the previous instances of extraordinary subsidies. In the absence of coherent administrative or financial evidence, the words and discourse used in the few remaining municipal and royal letters provide the best window into the constitutional changes brought by the wars of the 1380s and 1390s. As has been argued above (see *supra* section 2.3), the extraordinary subsidies to which the predecessors of Fernando I occasionally resorted were not negotiated at the level of the kingdom. Extraordinary taxes had certainly to be approved by the taxpayers, but this took the form of negotiation between the king and individual municipalities, rather than a reunion of the *Cortes*. In the few cases of extraordinary taxation that are known, two features seem to have been common to all these subsidies: their designation as *serviço* ('service') and the fact that this designation did not apply to a specific form of levying the money (see section 2.3).

The preparation for the last Fernandine War brought, albeit hesitantly, two major changes to the financial relationship between crown and municipalities: firstly, extraordinary subsidies were presented as requested by the king to the realm, rather than to the individual municipalities; secondly, and accordingly, they were uniformly levied throughout the whole of the kingdom. These two changes can be seen as the result of a primordial major modification: consent by a representative institution.

As seen earlier, the *sisas* were discussed in the *Cortes* of Leiria/1372 in October of that year and there is evidence supporting the hypothesis that,

however grudgingly, they were conceded by the *Povos*.⁷⁹ As a letter of exemption passed to a small North-eastern municipality reveals, the *sisas* collected between the 1 November 1372 and 1 November 1375 had had the consent (*consentimento*) of the municipalities.⁸⁰ It is not impossible that the *sisas* collected in 1373-5 resulted from separate negotiations between the crown and each municipality.⁸¹ However, the fact that the *Cortes* of Leiria had place a few weeks before this date seems conclusive enough about the role of the *Cortes* in approving these three-year sales tax (see chapter 2). The principle of consent was also implicit in the 'gathering' (*ajuntamento*) of municipal proctors in Évora, possibly in December 1374,⁸² with the sole aim of 'moderating' of the *sisas*. This was summoned in response to allegations of the municipalities that the *sisas* caused a surge of prices and the breakdown of trade. In the agreement thereof obtained, the king halved the rate of the sales taxes for the last year of the *sisas*.

At any rate, the first instance of general sales taxes implied the direct relationship between consent and taxation of the king's subjects, something decidedly absent from the country's fiscal constitution up to then (see sections 2.1 and 2.2). Indeed, in the old *monetagia* of 1254 and 1261 what was at stake was the king's minting prerogatives, for which those taxes were a compensation agreed by the king and the *Cortes*. Differently, the levy of 1372 was 'requested' to the realm.⁸³

Probably, the request to the *Cortes* applied municipal ideology and practice to the scale of the kingdom. In fact, in the well-established tradition of the *sisas*, the idea that the taxpayers had to approve taxation was as old as the *sisas* themselves. Indeed, in the first known *sisas* at the municipal level, the consent to be taxed was expressed by the taxpayers themselves. Leaving aside the collective decision of the commune of the Jews of the kingdom to hold sales

⁷⁹ Evidence of the *sisas* being collected in many municipalities throughout the reign exists and a terse chancery register in 1375 seems to imply that a general *sisas* had been imposed in 1372. TT, Chanc. Fernando I, livro 1, fol. 183v.

⁸⁰ Two documents from March and April 1375 describe this negotiation: *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 141-3; Arquivo Distrital de Bragança, *Pergaminhos*, doc. 032.

⁸¹ This is also the opinion of Iria Gonçalves. Gonçalves, Iria, 'Sisas', *DHP*, Vol. 6, p. 1-2.

⁸² The editors of *Cortes Portugueses* considered that the meeting in Évora was a proper meeting of *Cortes*. However, the documents quoted in last footnote do not use this word. In the first one the term is '*fizemos juntar em Évora*,' while the second one explicitly uses the technical term '*ajuntamento*.' On the institutional difference, see Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 432-63.

⁸³ *Mandaramos pedir cisas* (my underlining). *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 126.

taxes,⁸⁴ the first known instance of a municipal *sis*a clearly shows that its collection required the direct consent of those taxed. The expressions of the 1336 tax-farming instrument kept in the Lisbon municipal archive are unambiguous: 'the castellan, the judges and the *concelho* unanimously said that this pleased them and commanded and authorised (*outorgaram*) the collection of a *sis*a [...] and all of them said, commanded and authorised (*outorgaram*) that the *sis*a be tax-farmed, as this was better for the king's service and profit of the municipality'.⁸⁵ In the very terms of that instrument we can understand who composed the municipality or *concelho*: the notary recorded the presence of municipal and non-municipal authorities (the general judges, the municipal treasurer, the king's admiral, the *almoxarifes*, knights), and commented that 'also attending [were] many others knights, citizens and craftsmen all together in the municipal palace after the meeting had been proclaimed to all men'.⁸⁶ In other words, the approval by the *concelho* implied 'universal' consent. In 1355, the principle of consent of the taxpayers was even more clearly stated: in need of a great sum of monies that could not be obtained except from the *talha* or the *sis*a on wine, the municipal government 'seeing that this could be done without the authorisation of the said *concelho* commanded that it should be called'.⁸⁷ Throughout the fourteenth century the administration of the *sis*as qua subsidies remained firmly in the hands of the municipality. Only João I would try to create offices independent from the municipality.⁸⁸

The 1372-75 *sis*as were not the only kingdom-wide extraordinary taxation collected under King Fernando: *sis*as were collected again in 1376-8 and 1382-3 and an extraordinary tax was held in 1382.⁸⁹ The intervention of the *Cortes* in

⁸⁴ The *sis*a was chosen as the way of writing off their collective (The 'service' of the Jews) and individual debt. TT, Chanc. Dinis, Livro 3, fol. 104.

⁸⁵ LM-2, doc. 3, p. 14.

⁸⁶ *Estando presentes outros muytos cavaleyros e çidadãaos e muytos meesteyraes da dita çidade, todos juntos no Paço do Conçelho seendo o Conçelho todo apregoado.* LM-2, doc.3, p. 13.

⁸⁷ LM-2, doc. 6, pp. 24.

⁸⁸ Confirm the privilege granted to Lisbon by João I letting the city chose the judges of the *sis*as 'as they had done under King Fernando.' AML, Livro dos Pregos, doc. 152 (January 1389).

⁸⁹ These dates require some explanation. For 1381-3, documents registered in Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fols. 1v-2, 2v show that the right to tax-farm the *sis*as from 1 January 1382 to 1 January 1385 was being auctioned since October 1381. For 1376-8, see the agreement with the tax farmer of Obidos, in TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 4, fol. 28. For 1372-5, v. documents cited in the next footnote.

the remaining *sisas* is less clear.⁹⁰ Although consent by the *Cortes* remains a possibility,⁹¹ the content of an ordinance reducing the *sisas* hints at the opposite, given that the reduction of the *sisas*' rate was presented as having been moved by the 'mercy' of the queen towards the 'aggrieved' municipalities. This situation is in flagrant opposition to the halving of the *sisas* agreed in the *ajuntamento* of Évora in 1374. In 1378 opposition to the taxes was dealt with by the qualms and scruples of the queen, rather than by summoning a meeting of those who had granted the *sisas*. Additionally, unlike the references present in the documents that allude to the 1372-5 *sisas*, not once in the ordinance does King Fernando allude to the consent of the municipalities. Even if taxes had been decided in the *Cortes*, the management of the *sisas* evaded their participation. Even if, or precisely because, it was presented as an act of mercy, the ordinance of 1378 was purely prerogative.

The chances that the last general *sisas* of King Fernando I, those of 1381-3, were consented in *Cortes* are even more remote. At least in the case of Lisbon, the crown abruptly wrestled the *sisas* from the municipalities and their tax-farmers without notice, let alone consent.⁹² The public auction for the tax-farmers started in October 1381, whilst the last *Cortes* had last met in August 1380 and, even then, with the sole business of binding the proctors of the *Povos* to the recent peace treaty with Castile.⁹³

The absence of *Cortes* and gatherings between August 1380 and September 1383⁹⁴ indicate that the general subsidy first mentioned in March 1382 did not have the approval of the taxpayers. The documents relating to it present a striking feature: this subsidy was newly labelled as a *pedido* (literally 'request').⁹⁵ The first documented occurrence of the term - a letter of exemption issued to the municipality of Vimieiro- reads the '*pedido* we [the King] are now

⁹⁰ The *sisas* on wines of 1376-8 is known only through two documents: a plea concerning the tax-farming in the town of Óbidos in the king's court that, for some reason, was registered in the chancery and, crucially, an ordinance reducing the rate of the *sisas*. TT Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 4, fls. 9 and 28.

⁹¹ In the hypothetical *Cortes* of Atouguia in September 1375. *Cort. Fernando I*, I, p. 145.

⁹² v. the 1382 judicial letter of complaint (*carta de requerimento*) about the king's officer who ordered in August 1382 that the *sisas* were collected in the name of the king, thus wresting its income from the hands of the tax-farmers working with the municipality since November 1381 in AML, Livro I de Sentenças, Doc. 18.

⁹³ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 165.

⁹⁴ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. II, p. 11.

⁹⁵ TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 7v.

ordering to be introduced in our realms.⁹⁶ This sentence and, moreover, the use of the verb *lançar* (translated as 'to introduce' but literally meaning 'to throw') precludes any chance of parliamentary consent, a circumstance that would have been signalled by the verb *outorgar* (literally, to authorise) or by a reference to the *consentimento*. In consequence, in no way can this tax be related to the formal parliamentary consent in *Cortes*. The same can be said about another *pedido* collected in May 1383 'in order to pay for the wedding of the queen of Castile my daughter.'⁹⁷

For all the fragile evidence, the introduction of this new word *pedido* has constitutional implications and hints at a different political relationship. Instead of 'promised' by a municipality for the 'service of its lord the king,' (see section 2.3) it was 'requested' of the realm by the king. The stress is now on the monarch's initiative. Taxation was thus presented as a demand of the monarch, rather than as a voluntary offer. It would be a step too far to assume that this change in vocabulary implies a total inversion of the political relationship that presided over the *serviços*.⁹⁸ In fact, the *pedidos* inherited the features of the older 'services.' Similarly, just like most of the *serviços*, the *pedidos* took the form of property taxes and employed the assessments made for the *serviços*.⁹⁹ The proximity between these two subsidies is explicit in the designation of *pedido e serviço* once used for the levy of 1382.

What is relevant in the Fernandine subsidies is the universal liability of all municipalities. Even if the new subsidies retained features of their older counterparts, the kingdom-wide approval and application was in stark contrast with the *serviços*. This practical innovation can be associated with a doctrinal novelty: the king's necessity. Both kingdom-wide collection and the idea of a

⁹⁶ *Nom poderá pagar no pedido que ora mandamos lançar em os nossos reynos*. TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 7v.

⁹⁷ TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 69.

⁹⁸ Already services 'promised' by the municipalities could also be a response to some special circumstances hinted at by the monarchy. The municipality of Lisbon's decision to pay the *serviço* of 1357 was preceded by a delegation from the king 'to speak of things concerning my service.' AML, Livro I de *Serviços a El-Rei*, doc. 2. In 1381, King Fernando wrote to the Lisbon municipal leaders to make its dwellers to provide what he called a *serviço*: paying the wine to Edmund Langley and his army. AML, Livro I de *Sentenças*, doc. 19. It is telling that the marriage of the elder daughter, a strong case for a voluntary *serviço*, was replaced by a *pedido*.

⁹⁹ See the case of Santarém. TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 8.

pedido are subtly linked to the introduction of this concept.¹⁰⁰ Not only is this term absent from the letters relating to the old *serviços*, but it contrasts with the notion of 'voluntary' grants that dominated the discourse of the relevant letters. The notion of necessity had played no part in the promise of the *serviços* in 1336 and 1357. The service-for-reward trade-off between the municipalities and their sovereign and countryman present in the *serviços* seems incompatible with the unilateral, vague¹⁰¹ necessity of the ruler. Nonetheless, in the first mention of royal necessity, made for the *sisas* of 1372-5, King Fernando combined the two notions by saying that he would not lack his 'service from which we could not exempt our naturals and our municipalities given our necessity from which we are not yet freed, as would be fitting to our [royal] condition'.¹⁰²

The reconstitution of the Fernandine subsidies indicates that his innovations in fiscal matters were intent on bypassing the role of the municipalities. By summoning the whole of the municipalities together and by employing notions like 'necessity' and *pedido*, Fernando I was creating the realm as a fiscal entity. In fiscal terms, the 'realm' had barely made sense under the old kings whose *serviços* resulted from direct negotiations with the municipalities. Like his adventurous monetary policy, King Fernando's extraordinary taxation pushed the standing constitutional limits. While he stepped back in matters of coinage, he did not in terms of taxation and even managed to impose almost nine years of uninterrupted *sisas*, despite the 'scandal' and 'grievance' alleged by the municipal proctors. How radically would the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 change this situation?

Fiscal negotiation in the *Cortes* Coimbra/1385 was as much a negation of the Fernandine modifications as it stemmed from them. The principle that the financial requests of the ruler would only be valid if consent was sought from the

¹⁰⁰ First occurring in 1375, when the rates of the *sisas* were reduced. *Cort. Fernando I*, I, pp. 141-3. On the contemporary interpretations of this concept, see Scordia, Lydwine, *Le Roi doit Vivre du Sien. La théorie de l'impôt en France (XIIIe-XVe siècles)* Paris, 2005, pp. 131-52.

¹⁰¹ In the four letters mentioning it, there is no hint of a rationale or a justification for the 1382 *pedido*. It must have been of military nature, as some men fighting as knights secured exemption, while some municipalities obtained from the king that its proceedings would be applied in improvement works in the city walls or other fortifications. TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fols. 7v, 11v, 12, 15v.

¹⁰² '*serviço que nom podíamos scusar dos nossos naturaes e dos ditos concelhos por nossa neçessidade de que ainda nom somos fora nem livres como compria ao nosso estado.*' The text appears in two letters sent to different

ruled would henceforward be associated with the famous *Cortes* where the kingdom chose its ruler. In Coimbra/1385, the voluntary 'service' of the individual vassals to which Afonso IV and Pedro I resorted and the prerogative imposition to the realm by the autocratic King Fernando had apparently found a middle route: consent by the whole kingdom. Like nearly three centuries beforehand in the times of Afonso III, the foundation for a new fiscal constitution took the form of a royal promise. As we learn from a later petition brought in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1389, João I himself admitted that when he 'was made king' he 'promised not to collect *sisas* nor taxes without the authorisation of the people'.¹⁰³ Thus, in contrast with the dubious dealings of Fernando I, the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 authoritatively set a principle: extraordinary taxation had to be granted by the *Cortes* assembled. Did this principle take hold? Again, the answer to this question implies a crude task: to relate the known instances of extraordinary, kingdom-wide taxes with the known meetings of *Cortes*, as set out in Fig. 24.

municipalities: *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 142 (11th March 1375); Arquivo Distrital de Bragança, Pergaminhos, Doc. 32 (29th Abril 1375).

¹⁰³ '*Outrossy ao que dizem no xxiiij^o artigo que quando fomos alçado por rey que prometemos de nom poer sisas nem enposições sem outorgamento do poboo.*' This claim was totally opposed to the very 'Act of Election.' As mentioned earlier, in this 'Act of Election' it was the kingdom that promised to sustain 'the royal condition and honour and to continue the war' to a reluctant João I. Yet, there are no reasons to discount the very words of the king. See abridgement at Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p 233 and text at BACL, Série Azul, Códice Azul 410, pp. 279-280 (it was not possible to check the original, kept in the University of Coimbra).

Fig. 24 – Cortes and Extraordinary Taxation, 1372-1525

| CORTES | Year | GENERAL TAXES |
|-----------|--------|----------------------------|
| Leiria | 1372 | 3 yrs <i>Sisas</i> |
| - | 1375 | 3 yrs <i>Sisas</i> (=S) |
| - | 1382 | 3 yrs S & <i>Pedido</i> |
| Coimbra | 1385 | <i>Pedido</i> (=P) |
| Porto | 1387 | - |
| Braga | 1387 | 1 yr S |
| Lisbon | 1389 | S & P |
| Coimbra | 1390 | S & P |
| Évora | 1390-1 | - |
| Viseu | 1391 | P |
| Coimbra | 1394 | P & S (?) |
| Santarém | 1396 | P (?) |
| Coimbra | 1397 | P |
| Coimbra | 1398 | S |
| Porto | 1398 | P |
| Lisbon | 1399 | P |
| Coimbra | 1400 | P (?) |
| Guimarães | 1401 | P & S |
| Montemor | 1402 | - |
| Santarém | 1402 | - |
| Lisbon | 1404 | P. |
| Santarém | 1406 | Loan |
| Évora | 1408 | Permanent S |
| Lisbon | 1410 | - |
| Lisbon | 1412 | - |
| Lisbon | 1413 | - |
| Estremoz | 1416 | Loan |
| Lisbon | 1417 | - |
| Lisbon | 1418 | P |
| Lisbon | 1427 | P |
| - | 1429 | P |
| Santarém | 1430 | - |

| CORTES | Year | GENERAL TAXES |
|----------------|--------|---------------|
| Leiria/Sant. | 1433 | - |
| Évora | 1436 | P |
| Leiria | 1438 | - |
| Torres Novas | 1438 | - |
| Lisbon | 1439 | - |
| Torres Vedras | 1441 | P |
| Évora | 1442 | P |
| Évora | 1444 | P |
| Lisbon | 1446 | - |
| Évora | 1447 | P |
| Santarém | 1451 | P |
| Lisbon | 1455 | P |
| Lisbon | 1456 | P |
| Lisbon | 1459 | P (rejected) |
| Évora | 1460 | P |
| Guarda | 1465 | P (?) |
| Santarém | 1468 | P |
| Santarém | 1471 | - |
| Coimbra/Év. | 1472-3 | - |
| Lisbon | 1473 | P |
| Évora | 1475 | P |
| Montemor | 1477 | P (rejected) |
| Santarém/Lisb. | 1478 | P |
| Évora/Viana | 1481-2 | - |
| Santarém | 1482 | P |
| Évora | 1490 | P |
| Lisbon | 1498 | - |
| Lisbon | 1499 | - |
| Lisbon | 1502 | P |
| Torres Novas | 1525 | P |

Notes: With the *pedidos* of 1478 and 1490 loans were also collected, but there is no indication that they were mandatory.

Sources: PEP; Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais Portuguesas*, I, pp. 291-461; *Cort. Duarte I*; *Cort. Manuel I*, vols. I-III; Serrão, Joaquim Veríssimo, 'Lisboa, Cortes de (1502)', *DHP*, vol. IV, pp. 25-6; Serrão, Joaquim Veríssimo, 'Torres Novas, Cortes de (1525)', *DHP*, vol. VI, p. 178; AML, Códice 10, fol. 72 (for the *pedido* of 1394), TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fls. 10-11 (1,5 *pedido* of 1387 and 1 *pedido* in 1390); Chanc. João I, II-3, doc. 1091 (*pedido* in 1401);

Fig. 24 makes clear that the *pedido* conceded by the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 turned out to be a powerful, virtually unchallenged precedent: taxation could not be levied without being formally granted in the *Cortes*.¹⁰⁴ The strength of this practice cannot simply be ascribed to precedent or even to João I's alleged 'promise'. The principle that taxation had to be approved was already well established at the municipal level and in 1384 the war was fought with the very *sisas* accepted by the populace of the municipalities that stood against Castile.¹⁰⁵ Though seldom formulated, this principle qualifies as a constitutional rule because it was accepted by both parts as prior to concrete political and military decisions, as the well-documented discussion about expansion in Morocco between 1432 and 1438 shows.¹⁰⁶ The same idea was reinstated in the *Cortes de Leiria-Santarém/1433* where the proctors claimed that *pedidos* could only be made in case of 'great necessity' and with the consent of the *Povos*, a claim that the king did not challenge.¹⁰⁷

However, as one of the few contemporary texts which touches the matter, there was also an obligation for the *Povos* to consent, provided that extraordinary taxes had an acceptable goal. As the agreement between the monarchy and the *Cortes* in 1408 read, 'if the revenues that the king now has to uphold his status and the defence of the realm decrease, the said lord [the king] should summon the *Cortes* for this reason, as he has just done, and there what is lacking will be given in goodwill to uphold his status and that of his wife and sons and the honour of the realm, as they [the *Cortes*] have thus far done'.¹⁰⁸

After the war, the notion that paying taxes was not part of their individual legal status was deeply ingrained among the representatives of Portuguese municipalities. The doctrine articulated by the *Povos* throughout this period was consistent: payment without consent was as an infringement of 'liberty'.¹⁰⁹ This dimension emerged nowhere else clearer than in the negotiation between the

¹⁰⁴ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p. 233; BACL, Série Azul, Códice 410, pp. 279-280.

¹⁰⁵ Évora (TT, Gaveta XII, maço 1, doc. 13) and Montemor (RED, doc. 1).

¹⁰⁶ See the letter given by the Count of Arraiolos to King João I on the need to obtain taxation through the *Cortes* in *MH*, vol. IV, doc. 21, p. 106. On the context, in English, Russell, Henry *The Navigator*, pp. 141-3, 160-1.

¹⁰⁷ See 130th article and answer, BNP, Códice 6969, p. 549.

¹⁰⁸ 'E se faça alguma mingua das rendas que ora el Rei tem pera manter o seu estado e defenssom do regno per razom deste terço que se ora mais acreçenta, que o dito senhor mande chamar sobreste a Cortes, así como ora chamou, e que entom se proveja o que minguar, así pera el, como pera os infantes, donde se aja, e lho darom de boon talante pera manter seu estado, e de sua molher, e filhos e honra do reino así como ata aquy fezerom'. RED, doc. 6, p. 49.

¹⁰⁹ 123th article presented at 1481/Évora Viana - TT, *Cortes*, Maço 3, doc. 5.

crown and the men of Madeira for the *pedido* of 1478. Given the recent settlement and exceptional administrative status, none of the municipalities of Madeira was entitled to a place in the *Cortes*. As such, these municipalities used this circumstance to show that this was an imposition. In a series of letters, the islanders claimed they were 'being coerced to pay as mere tributary Jews', as 'unlike the humblest town of the kingdom,' they were not summoned to go to the *Cortes*.¹¹⁰ Again, paying without consent was regarded as an offence to their 'liberties.'¹¹¹

As several episodes throughout the period make clear, approval of extraordinary subsidies by the *Cortes* was far from an idle formality. A good example of the binding strength of consent in the eyes of the monarchy is provided by João I's decision of not collecting a subsidy when preparing his secret expedition to Ceuta in 1415. When considering his options to finance the attack, he had to discard the possibility of a subsidy because this would require convincing the *Cortes* of the goal and, would he have done so, the operation would cease to be secret, as he and his counsellors wished. Instead, João I preferred to resort to other methods of funding unhampered by constitutional limitations such as debasement.¹¹² Consent, indeed, was not automatic. There are even examples of refusal to the demands of the monarchy by the *Cortes*: in Lisbon/1459 and in Santarém/Lisbon/1477.¹¹³ The sole all-out exception, the collection of a subsidy for the wedding of Princess Isabel with the duke of Burgundy in 1429, ends up by confirming the rule: in a letter to the municipality of Porto, crown-prince Duarte declared that his father started the collection of the *pedido* given the urgency and the confidence that this demand would be attended.¹¹⁴ In the next year *Cortes* were summoned to obtain post-factum consent and in the first *Cortes* of his reign, the *Cortes* of Leiria-Santarém/1433,

¹¹⁰ 'Como a mais pequena vila ... judeus peiteyros.' None of the municipalities of Madeira was summoned to the *Cortes*, as technically Madeira was separate from the kingdoms of Portugal and Algarve (as Afonso V stated in the *Cortes* of 1460, BNP, Códice 2639, fol. 93). Its administration was headed by a donatory lord, *capitão-donatário*. On the administrative status of Madeira, in English, see Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 91-4.

¹¹¹ 'Tombo Iº do Registo Geral da Câmara Municipal do Funchal. Primeira Parte,' ed. Luis Francisco Cardoso de Sousa Melo, *Arquivo Histórico da Madeira*, Série Documental, vol. XV, 1972 Funchal, 1972.

¹¹² Zurara, *Crónica da Tomada de Ceuta*, chapter XIII, p. 71.

¹¹³ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 350 and 411.

¹¹⁴ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 344.

King Duarte heard from the *concelhos* that taxes could not be imposed without 'great necessity and consent of the people.'¹¹⁵

In the answer given to the chapters presented in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1389, João I granted that 'he promised not to impose *sisas* or extraordinary duties without the authorisation of the people (*outorgamento do poboo*).'¹¹⁶ Although the present heuristic conditions do not allow for a methodical analysis of vocabulary employed in the *Cortes*, there is a tendency on behalf of the monarchy to employ using the term *povo* while elaborating abstract principles.¹¹⁷ The use of the term 'the people' is intriguing, as technically consent was given by the representatives of the municipalities. Indeed, in stark contrast with England or France, where the representation of the realm was based in discrete administrative units (*shires, élections*) which virtually covered the entire kingdom and could be said to represent the 'people' or the 'community of the realm', Portuguese assemblies convened the kingdom's municipalities, not the kingdom's *almojarifados*. This is a crucial difference as, notwithstanding their fundamental subordination, municipalities were not simply administrative districts; they were political institutions with autonomous instruments vis-à-vis the crown. For this reason, the technical term for the popular member of the *Cortes* was *Povos* (literally 'populations').

In short, *Povos* was not synonymous with *Povo*. This feature expressed an important feature of Portuguese fiscal politics. Municipalities possessed a very articulate memory of their individual military or material contribution to the crown.¹¹⁸ Just like individual vassals, the *concelhos* hoped for retribution for their 'services' to the king. While monarchical persuasion was equally comfortable employing the language of 'service',¹¹⁹ there was a fundamental

¹¹⁵ 'Vos pedymos que leixees vosso poboo de taaes emcarreguos, e quando ouver de seer seyja por gram necesssidade e comsentimento do poboo.' BNP, Códice 6969, p. 549 (article 130th). Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p. 314.

¹¹⁶ 24th article: 'disseram quando fomos alçado por rey que prometemos de nom poer sisas nem enposições sem outorgamento do poboo.'

¹¹⁷ As João II said, 'that [the payment of the *sisas*] the entire *povo* is bound by law (*isso mesmo todo o povo deve e he obrigado per dereito*). Article 123 in 1481/Évora Viana - TT, *Cortes*, maço. 3, doc. 5, fol. 15. The legal compilation by Manuel I also stated that 'authority to mint coin,' to collect a *pedido* when he or his daughter wed' and 'to collect *pedidos* and *imposições* in timw of war or of any other great necesssity' were *Direitos Reais. Ordenações Manuelinas*, Book II, title 15 § 4.

¹¹⁸ See the impressive list of 'services' (material and military) rendered by the city of Porto to the crown in five decades (1384-1436) that was presented to king Duarte in the *Cortes* of Évora. *Cort. Duarte I*, pp. 89-92.

¹¹⁹ See the debate between the oligarchy of Madeira and the crown as presented by Pereira, Fernando Jasmins, *A Participação da Madeira no Pedido e Empréstimo de 1478*, Lisboa, 1980.

cleavage between the values and constitutional principles evoked by both parts and the practicalities of tax-collection. Unlike the old one-off 'services' negotiated between the monarch and the *concelhos*, the subsidies approved in Coimbra/1385 and in the subsequent assemblies were collected according to kingdom-wide regulations rather than delivered to the municipalities. Moreover, these subsidies, labelled *pedidos*, were collected according to assessments of individual wealth. The very term *pedido* acquired the technical meaning of an individual contribution¹²⁰ and by 1436 subsidies were managed at the level of the *almoxarifado*, rather than that of the municipality.¹²¹

In this new context, municipalities lost their power to allocate the burden. The *sisas* also underwent a similar evolution. Indeed, despite that Gama Barros, Iria Gonçalves and Armindo de Sousa all emphasised the consistent opposition to the *sisas* on behalf of the *Povos*, in practice as it clearly emerges from the compilation of the latter, it was only in 1439 that the very collection of the *sisas* was challenged by them. Until then, the bone of contention had been the existence of the judge of the *sisas*, a non-municipal judicial instance of fiscal litigation. That is to say, rather than ending up with taxation, the concern of the *Povos* was with the control of local instances of power. It was only when the *almoxarifado* and the king's personnel took hold of the various fiscal processes that a united, kingdom-wide opposition to the *sisas* emerged.

By imposing a kingdom-wide fiscal framework, the monarchy managed to impose a uniform structure rather than negotiate, moving towards a 'fiscal sovereignty' and effectively ending what can be called 'fiscal suzerainty.'¹²² The notion of collective vassal which the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century municipalities projected made less sense. Subsidies were not about collective vassals but about individual subjects which together formed the *Povo*.

The drive towards a more fiscally uniform kingdom was also felt in the fight against privileges and exemptions. No privilege, even when clearly stated in the municipal charter, privilege or contract, was valid when it was 'necessary to pay

¹²⁰ Based upon the *quantias*, the wealth assessment of free-tenants that was used for military summons.

¹²¹ There are indications that management by *almoxarifado* was already used in 139 TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 50, fol. 133-37v (Lamego, 1437); *PEP*, XV, p. 228 (Torre de Moncorvo, 1441).

¹²² See on this respect, O'Brien, Patrick, 'Historical Conditions for the Evolution of a Successful Fiscal State. Great Britain and its European Rivals from the Treaty of Munster to the Treaty of Vienna,' *La Fiscalità nell'Economia Europea. Secc. XIII-IV. Atti*, vol. I, Florence, 2008, pp. 142-3, 145-7, 150-1. The term 'fiscal suzerainty' was used by Prof. O'Brien in the conference but it does not appear in the written version.

for the defence of the realm'.¹²³ In the 1460s and the 1470s there were attempts to make the nobility participate in the fiscal efforts. The trend is first visible in 1460, when the lower tier of the nobility, which had the privileges of exemption, was called to share the burden, even if using alternative methods of assessment.¹²⁴ A meaningful example of this can be found in the *Cortes* of 1477 Santarém-Lisbon. This assembly met to approve of a new tax, where the future João II, then acting as regent, suggested that for the sake of unanimity, nobility, clergy, municipalities and two representatives of the king would meet as a commission. Indeed, as the crown-prince João said, 'as in the *Cortes* we are set to work for the commonwealth (*bem comum*), I believe that it would be fit that nobles, clergy and people (*povo*) be all together in one sole will and agreement.'¹²⁵ The, largely unsuccessful, attempt to involve the nobility in the tax-base, rather than simply demanding military service, is very close to the dilution of the municipal fiscal autonomy, in the sense that the monarchy sought to create the *povo* as a fiscal identity. This was the culmination of a long process in which, to invert a famous aphorism, the Portuguese monarchy 'united to rule'.

Section 6.4 - The Rise and Fall of 'Public' Finances

In post-war Portugal, the fiscal constitution functioned in the form of the obligation of summoning the *Cortes* for participating in 'in-period' decisions concerning extraordinary taxation. In this respect the legacy of the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 was clear: taxation had to be approved because the declaration of royal 'necessity' was not enough. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the municipal representatives who asserted the right to choose the king did more than simply consent. Thus, the *Povos* chose the form of taxation, namely the *pedido* instead of the dreaded *sisas*.

Choice of taxation poses a fiscal-constitutional problem that has not so far been discussed. Indeed, the precedent of Coimbra/1385 implied that the *Cortes* had also the power to choose the type of taxation used. Considering

¹²³ *Tombo Iº do Registo Geral*, doc. p. 96.

¹²⁴ BNP, *Código* 2639, pp. 91-97.

¹²⁵ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais Portuguesas*, vol. I, p. 250.

that, as Fig. 24 made clear, the *Cortes* did not have simply a fiscal role and that, for all his reserves in 1385, João I summoned the *Cortes* for deciding on political military matters. As with contemporary England, whose constitutional system was admired by the *Povos*,¹²⁶ late fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century *Cortes* could claim a measure of 'partnership in government.'¹²⁷ Did this participation go beyond passive consent or negative refusal?

Fig. 24 made evident that the early stage of the war saw the coexistence of *sisas* and *pedidos*. As it has been stated, in 1385, the *Povos* preferred to pay a property tax as a *pedido* rather than to continue the collection of the *sisas* that was under way since 1382. They even proposed that the dreaded sales taxes would not be demanded again.¹²⁸ *Sisas*, the proctors grieved, brought 'scandal between the *Povos* and the rulers who introduced them.'¹²⁹ João I conformed to the choice of the *Povos* and had to be content with obtaining the 400,000 *l.* he expected to get from the *sisas* (see *supra* section 5.1) through a *pedido*.

The arrangement of 1385 would not last as two years later the *sisas* would be collected with the consent of the *Povos*. The problem emerged in the *Cortes* of Porto/1387, when freshly-married João I required help to assemble his and the queen's households and to organise an expedition against Castile. In this parliament financial help was perhaps refused or delayed, but, as Armindo de Sousa clarified, the *sisas* would be agreed months later in the *ajuntamento* of Coimbra in 1387.¹³⁰ As a contemporary prologue to a royal letter reads, the purpose of this reunion was to devise how to assemble 'with the least damage to the people' the needed monies for 'men-of-arms, fleets, wages for his and the queen's households and for officers and for all other required expenses.' The option for the *sisas*, if indeed it was one, was formally stated by the king and the *Povos* in the document known as the 'Authorisation for the Double *Sisas*'

¹²⁶ Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' pp. 108-9.

¹²⁷ These words are taken from G. L. Harriss, ('Financial Policy', *Henry V. The practice of Kingship*, Oxford, 1985, p. 179). The standard account of fifteenth-century Portuguese *Cortes* is obviously Armindo de Sousa's opus magnum (*As Cortes Medievais*, 2 vols., Porto, 1990). The best analysis of the *Cortes* of Coimbra and the best edition of the relevant materials remains Caetano, Marcello, 'As Cortes de 1385,' pp. 9-90. On the Portuguese *Cortes*, in English, see Duarte, I. M., 'The Portuguese Medieval Parliament: Are we asking the right questions?', *The E-Journal of Portuguese History*, vol. 1, n. 2, 2003, pp. 1-12.

¹²⁸ 'E porque as peitas pedidos sissas lançadas do senhor aos sogeitos geerom escandallo antre os que as poeem e os poboos moormente nas terras em que nom foy acostumado; e por aredar damtre vos e nos este escandalo' Text in Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 79.

¹²⁹ Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 79.

¹³⁰ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 295-8, 432-4.

('Outorgamento das Sisas Dobradas') in the *Cortes* of Braga/1387. This document declared that, according to the same source, in flagrant opposition to 1385 the municipalities chose the *sisas* as the 'less harmful' form of subsidy, in order to avoid the least possible 'scandal and harm of the people'.¹³¹

The grant made in Braga was not permanent, as the collection of the *sisas* had to be halted on 1 January 1389. However, *sisas* were collected on a nearly-permanent basis since 1387. In spite of the agreement struck in Braga, João I gave orders to continue their collection past this date, without consent being given in the *Cortes* or elsewhere.¹³² This decision would be later legitimated as extensions of the *sisas* were formally consented: a one-year extension was agreed in Lisbon/1389, followed by another, probably two-year, extension in Coimbra/1390, as established critically by Armindo de Sousa.¹³³ These *Cortes* were summoned precisely in order that the king could obtain the outorgamento for the keeping up with the sales tax.¹³⁴

From 1390 onwards the concession of the *sisas* becomes very opaque for the present-day observer. A later chapter presented to the *Cortes* in 1481-2 mentions a formal grant of the *sisas* signed on 22 February during the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1390. Although this document has not been found and the precise conditions of the concession remain unknown, it is clear that it was also short-term.¹³⁵ In 1394, the foundations for the regulation of the *sisas* were organised in *Cortes*, largely in response to the grievances and proposals of the *Povos*.¹³⁶ Sousa and Gonçalves are not entirely coincidental as to when the *Cortes* gave away their prerogative to consent on the *sisas*.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, the last

¹³¹ AML, Livro I de Cortes, no. 7, fol. 63. (14th November 1387).

¹³² *A quall [sisas] nos foy outorgada em salvo ataa este primeiro dia de Janeiro que ora foy desta presente era e que sem outorgamento [manda?]amos tirar e correr as sisas por nos.* BACL, Série Azul, Códice 410, p. 279.

¹³³ Sousa claims that the purpose of the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1389, Coimbra/1390, pp. 300-3. The *Cortes* of Viseu/1391 met only late in 1391 and negotiated a *pedido* rather than *sisas*. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 306-7.

¹³⁴ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 300-3.

¹³⁵ Days after the *Cortes* of Évora/1390-1391, a charter of privilege for the fair of Coimbra mentioned the need to pay for the *sisas* 'if they are to be collected.' 'em *sisas* se em as no dicto tempo hi ouer'. *Chanc. João I.*, II-1, doc. II-486 (23rd February 1391).

¹³⁶ Broad agreement on the form of levying the *sisas* had been obtained in 1394 with the responses given by the king in Coimbra/1394 to a large section of the articles dedicated to the powers of the tax-farmers Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, pp. 249-51) which formed the so-called 'settlement of the *sisas*' (according to article 5 in Coimbra/1400, Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p. 255). On the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1394, Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 309.

¹³⁷ Sousa considered likely that the document mentioned was a temporary grant and that new prorogations followed in the *Cortes* of Viseu/1391 and in Coimbra/1394 and that speculates whether the *sisas* were finally alienated to the monarchy in *Cortes* of Guimarães/1401. Iria Gonçalves, on the other hand, thinks that the *sisas* would only be

documental evidence of a grant (*outorgamento*) of the *sisas* dates from the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1398, possibly making it the definitive concession of the *sisas*.¹³⁸ Whatever its precise date, later debates suggests that this concession was some sort of precarious authorisation, possibly with the king's promise of giving it back as soon as the necessity had passed.

However, apart from the brief period between 1385 and 1388, it would be wrong to think that the *sisas* replaced the *pedidos* or even that these forms of subsidy alternated. Taxes on property were agreed in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1389, Coimbra/1390, Viseu/1391, Coimbra/1394, Coimbra/1397, Porto/1398, Lisbon/1399 and Lisbon/1404 (see Fig. 24 and Fig. 25). Kingdom-wide *pedidos* were collected along with the *sisas*, as they were consented in some of these assemblies where the concession of the *sisas* as extended (1389, 1390 and 1394).

The coexistence of *sisas* and *pedidos*, not to mention debasements, seems to indicate the relative strength of the monarchy vis-à-vis perfectly compliant *Cortes*.¹³⁹ The *Povos* could negotiate the apportioning of the tax burden, but the defence of the realm by João I provided an irresistible argument. The rate of the *sisas* was reduced 2/3 when a truce was signed in 1401, but eventually João I got the old rate back with the explicit consent of the *Povos*. The purpose was redistributive rather than military: to acquire monies for the

permanently granted in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1398. *PEP*, p. 198; Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 302-3, 321-2.

¹³⁸ see the prologue to the regulation to the *sisas* contained in the chancery register of João I. TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 50v. At any rate, the concession was prior to the date of the truce of Segovia signed in January 1402 as there is another formal grant of the *sisas* in *Cortes* which mentions the cutting down of the value of the *sisas* 'when the truces were struck. (*RED*, doc. 6, pp. 48-50). The promulgation of truces between Portugal and Castile in early 1402 caused the monarch to cut two thirds the rate of the *sisas* (roughly 40,000 *l.*) possibly before the municipalities in the *Cortes* of Santarém.

¹³⁹ The coexistence of *sisas* and *pedidos* had a good technical reason. After the early years of dogged defence, war finances became based upon estimates of total expenditure, which the *Povos* had to meet (and/or perhaps lower down). One- or two-year *Sisas*, like those chosen by the *Povos* in 1387, implied contingent income, whereas traditional taxes, like *talhas*, *fintas* or *pedidos*, were more apt to apportion a known quantity amongst the taxpayers. Indeed, with some exceptions, pre-war fourteenth-century *sisas* were held for a year, instead of collected until a certain sum was reached. This situation implied that both the *Povos* and the monarchy had to foresee the possibility of further taxes on rent or property in order to reach the demanded sum. The problem is hinted at in the 1387 grant of the *sisas* as it was anticipated that if the municipalities understood that sales taxes would be insufficient, other taxes had to be collected, namely *talhas* and *fintas*. *Os dictos conçealhos ou cada huun delles hussem ou entenderem que per estas ssisas nom poderem aver comprimento daquello que lhes acontecer de pagar da dicta quantia aos dictos tenpos que elles cada huuns em ssuas comarcas possam poer e lançar e tirar dinheiro per talhas ou per fintas ou per moedas ou per outras quaesquer imposições que entenderem por mais sua prol e sem scandollo do poboo sse pode fazer taaes e tamanhas quantias a cada pessoa yualmente ssem nenhuma malícia nem engano que possam chegar e aver comprimento das dictas pagas e que destes enposições ou fintas e talhas que assy lançarem nom sseiam escusadas nenhumas pessoas* (AML, Livro I de Cortes, doc. 7, fol. 63) In this hypothesis, the *pedidos* worked as complimentary revenues to the *sisas*.

lands that would maintain households of the three elder *infantes*, and there was no hint of compensation, except the promise that this rate would be changed again as soon as the required lands would be obtained. The promise was not kept.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the fiscal negotiations of the war years of João I resulted in an undoubted success for the monarchy which obtained perpetual *sisas* with negligible, elusive commitments.¹⁴¹

A great deal of importance was ascribed by Faro and Gonçalves to the notion that the choice of the *sisas* was a no-brainer, given its superiority in terms of justice and efficiency (see section 5.1). By doing so, they attributed the choice of the *sisas* to the mutual interest of monarchy and *Povos*. Yet, the notion that *sisas* were a self-evident option ignores the 'choice' made by great *Cortes* of 1385 of the *pedido* instead of the *sisas*. Both the rejection of the ongoing *sisas* in 1385 and their dismissal as a 'scandal' fly in the face of this hypothesis. Possibly, as the term 'scandal' seemingly confirms, the experience of the *sisas* collected by King Fernando I loomed heavily in the *Povos*.¹⁴² Nevertheless, by no means it can be said that the *sisas* were intrinsically negative to the *Povos*. The grant of the *sisas* of 1387, which followed a long negotiation throughout the year, justifies the use of *sisas* as of all taxes this was the 'least devoid of scandal'.¹⁴³ Moreover, the hypothesis of Faro and Gonçalves finds some confirmation in the perfectly autonomous 'choices' made by the municipal governments (and confirmed by the populace) that supported João in the hard days of 1384.¹⁴⁴

The conflicting visions of the *sisas* show that it would be wrong to mistake the choices of the *Povos* with the, somewhat a-historical, search for the just or

¹⁴⁰ According to Silva de Sousa, the patrimony of the household of *Dom Henrique* was defined in 1411. Sousa, João da Silva de, 'Dos Rendimentos Fundiários da Casa do Infante D. Henrique,' *Do Infante a Tordesilhas*, Cascais, 1995, p. 75.

¹⁴¹ Historians have regarded the integration of the *sisas* in the permanent revenues of the kings as a flagrant alienation from what had been a municipal 'tax'. The genealogy of this narrative is long and illustrious: the *Povos* articulated it first in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1439, followed by other parliamentarians and, crucially, by chronicler Fernão Lopes, whose chronicles moulded the way academic historians regarded the *sisas* (see section 5.1).

¹⁴² 'Scandal' was chosen by the proctors of Lisbon in the negotiation of the 'service' in 1373 and 1375 to describe the antagonism of the *gentes* to the collection of the *sisas*. AML, Livro I de Serviços a El-Rei, doc. 4. Even in the settlement of 1387 there is a reference to need to moderate the *sisas* in order to scale down the 'scandal of the people'; AML, Livro I de Cortes, no. 7, fol. 63.

¹⁴³ AML, Livro I de Cortes, doc. 7, fol. 63.

¹⁴⁴ *Sisas* were chosen by some municipalities to help future-king João in his early days as 'Ruler and Protector of the Realm'. In 1384 he pleaded with the municipalities 'to provide succour through a loan, through *sisas* or through any other form'. This plea is only known through the letters sent to the municipal government of Évora and Montemor in 1384 which choose the *sisas*. Évora - TT, Gaveta XII, maço 1, doc. 13; Montemor - RED, doc. 1, p. 4.

the efficient tax. Indeed, if collecting a municipal *sis*a to pay for a subsidy to the king, self-interested municipal governments would maximise equality at the expense of efficiency, while in raising money for building local infrastructures efficiency would become more important. The early fourteenth-century Portuguese municipalities that devised the *sis*as were not merely interested in equality but also in efficiency. Whilst cities had deemed *sis*as just and equal while sharing a burden within their inhabitants, it does not follow that, on the level of the kingdom, *sis*a was thought an adequate form of distributing a subsidy.¹⁴⁵ The problem of conflicting evidence can only be solved by understanding why concrete decisions were taken: for instance, why isolated municipalities chose the *sis*a in 1384 and the *Povos* rejected it in 1385?

The cleavages in the discourse on the *sis*as are intelligible. As the example of the disputes on taxation in fourteenth-century France shows, the distribution of the fiscal burden was felt very differently by the different interests within the assembly and even within traditional groups.¹⁴⁶ The choice of the municipal governments of Évora and Montemor for the *sis*as with popular approbation in 1384 can be understood as a form of minimising the impact of their subsidy in the farmers and landlords. By contrast, mercantile centres, like Lisbon or Porto, had more to lose if taxation tapped trade instead of land, property or rent (the case of *pedidos*). This is first suggested in the substitution of the sales tax by a direct tax, which had been the response of Lisbon to the demand of *sis*as of Fernando I.¹⁴⁷ Although information on the value of taxation is scarce, it can be argued that *sis*as bore first and foremost on Lisbon and Porto, even if the latter is less documented. The notional general accounts used in the previous chapter are very clear about the role that the Lisbon *sis*as played in the revenues of the kingdom (Fig. 13). In 1401, when sales taxes were still being consolidated, the *sis*as collected in Lisbon accounted for nearly

¹⁴⁵ Additionally, one could claim that a municipality would be willing to sacrifice tax-efficiency when collecting the monies to redeem a subsidy.

¹⁴⁶ According to Raymond Cazelles, the negotiations of taxation in early fourteenth-century France, saw a clear alignment of the 'bourgeoisie' with direct taxation against sales taxes and of knights and the popular representatives with sales taxes. Cazelles, Raymond, 'Les Variations du Prélèvement et de la Répartition selon les Équipes au Pouvoir,' *Genèse de l'État Moderne. Prélèvement et Redistribution*, Genet, Jean-Philippe and Le Menet, Michel, eds., Paris, 1987, p. 205. Henneman Jnr, John Bell, 'France in the Middle Ages', *RFS* pp. 101-122.

¹⁴⁷ AML, Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 4 (9th August 1371); it is not a long-shot to suggest that the preference for direct taxes was a suggestion of the Lisbon proctors. Indeed, as A. de Sousa argued, Lisbon had a leading role in the framing of the petitions and in 1385. Sousa, 'O Discurso Político,' pp. 19-20.

two-thirds (65.9%) of the country's *sisas*, and in 1473, when the disparities of wartime had long ceased, the proportion was still 24.8% of the *sisas* of the whole country.¹⁴⁸ The figures for the *pedidos* are equally telling: the contribution of Lisbon to the subsidy of 1478 was 4,245,886 *r.* that is to 7% of the required sixty million; in 1482, the figure was 2,765,440 *r.*, an even lower 5.5% of the total tax.¹⁴⁹ By contrast, we can understand why more agrarian municipalities like Montemor or Évora went for the *sisas* in 1384. In 1478, the *almoxarifado* of Évora, where Montemor was also included, paid 6% of the total.¹⁵⁰ In terms of kingdom-wide ordinary revenues, which depended on the *sisas*, the *almoxarifado* of Évora contributed with only 4.7%.¹⁵¹ As these figures indicate, the *sisas* of Lisbon secured to this city the unwanted status of fiscal powerhouse under João I.

Thus, the choice of the *pedido* in Coimbra/1385 instead of the *sisas* can be read as a manifestation of the well-known political leadership of Lisbon in the early days of João I.¹⁵² The *pedido* did not enjoy any popularity among the landowners who made up the vast majority of the *Povos* and this made *sisas* the consistent choice of the *Cortes*. Indeed, at kingdom-wide level, the *sisas* offered a condition that made it adequate to these interests: it was universal and knew no privilege. Unlike what happened with the *pedidos* which excepted noble and church property and, as time wore on, even some individuals by special grace of the crown, *sisas* managed to tap the wealth of the privileged and, as such, they would result in the faster collection of the sum wanted.¹⁵³

The internal struggle within the *Povos* allows us to perceive the alleged acquiescence of the *sisas Cortes* to the demands of the monarchy in a totally different way. Indeed, as with coinage, there were no complaints against the collection of the *sisas* by the crown in the reign of João I. Although often referring to the institutional frame and to practicalities of sales taxes' collection, the general chapters of the *Cortes* did not grieve the very existence of the *sisas*. In

¹⁴⁸ 9,479,000 *r.* out of 38,175,500 *r.* RED, doc. 8, p. 83

¹⁴⁹ 1478: PEP, p. 173, nt. 86; 1482: CQM, n. 999.

¹⁵⁰ 1478: PEP, p. 173, nt. 86 (3,598,801 *r.*); 1490: CQM, 515 (2,276,500 *r.*).

¹⁵¹ 1,799,000 *r.* out of 38,175,500 *r.* RED, doc. 8, p. 83.

¹⁵² On the Lisbon's influence in shaping the articles of 1385, see Sousa, 'O Discurso Polituco,' pp 19-20

¹⁵³ Moreover, as the grant of 1387 read: the municipalities would be exempt of military service (or taxes in lieu thereof). 'because of this they [Povos] can be exempt from serving the king at war', *por esto sejam escusados todos os dictos concelhos de servir el rey na guerra.* AML, Livro I de Cortes, doc. 7, fol. 63.

sum, resorting to the texts present in the *Cortes* of 1439, 1459 and 1481-2, Iria Gonçalves, Jorge Faro and Armindo de Sousa fundamentally regarded the *sisas* as an alienation of the municipalities. However, this overlooks the fact that the adoption of the *sisas* by the municipalities contained an element of choice. For the vast majority of the *Povos* what subsequent political actors and chroniclers and historians after them regarded as the permanent alienation of the *sisas* meant, to some extent, a good choice. It crucially meant that the fiscal burden would be met by truly universal taxation and that it would be trade rather than agricultural rent that paid for it. That justifies why only in 1439, the permanence of the *sisas* is finally opposed by the *Povos*.

The level of participation of the *Povos* in royal finances is nowhere clearer than in the way the monies from the subsidies were spent. In 1385, the granting of the *pedido* was very conditional. One of the limitations it imposed was that monies thereof collected would indeed be spent in the war. The *Povos* obtained that the revenue of the *pedido* was to be handled by a treasurer of their own appointment who would organise the military payments.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, the first *sisas*, approved in the *Cortes* of Braga/1387, were to be stored in separate coffers and so were the extended *sisas* of 1389.¹⁵⁵ The aspiration to a war-chest managed independently from the ordinary receipt was common to both forms of subsidies. However, the participation of the municipal representatives in the *sisas* and *pedidos* followed very different routes.

The consignment of the receipt of the subsidies to warfare was not an unrealistic aspiration as it had been the normal practice in the tradition of sales taxes when held within the municipality, even in the *sisas* paid to King Fernando.¹⁵⁶ However, evidence for such guarantees disappeared from the *sisas* regulations of 1394 and 1398. In the absence of relevant sources, these regulations show that less than ten years after the first concession of the *sisas* its administration became integrated in the accounts of the *almoxarifes* and

¹⁵⁴ Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 89.

¹⁵⁵ As it is made clear in AML, Livro I de Cortes, 7, fol. 63 (14th November 1387): *sisas rendem o dicto ano pera dar todo ao dicto pera dar todo ao dicto senhor rey ou a sseu çerto recado aos tempos sobredictos e que sseia todo posto em arcas de duas ou tres chaues em llogares seguros como se hussam nos seus almoxarifados e que estes a que esto cometerem seiam os melhores homes e mais dias e melhores famas que ouuer em cada huum dos dictos conçelhos e que os dictos conçelhos possam arrendar.*

¹⁵⁶ TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fols. 1v-2, 2v, 10, 10v; 1373, Aug. 09, TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 1, fols. 135-135v (original em AML, Livro I de Serviços a El Rei, doc. 4).

accountable to the *Contos*. The negotiation for tax-farming was centralised by the *Vedores da Fazenda* and litigation thereof by the judges of the *Contos*, as had happened with the *sisas* imposed in 1382 by King Fernando.¹⁵⁷ In spite of their tradition, the municipalities had no institutions able to deal with permanent revenues and the ad hoc appointment by all the *Povos* of a kingdom-wide 'treasurer of the *sisas*' would certainly have been a cumbersome alternative to the pre-existent state institutions.¹⁵⁸ The perpetuity of the post-1408 *sisas* which had been formally granted for a specific end (the acquisition of lands to constitute the households of the *infantes*) and were put at the hands of an ad hoc treasurer is the ultimate example of the monarchy's free rein when it came to handle the subsidies received.

Whilst there is no doubt that in constitutional terms the monarchy clearly won over the ambitions of the *Povos* regarding the *sisas*, there remained ample ground for negotiation with individual municipalities. It was not impossible for municipalities to divert part of the income of the *sisas* to offset their own debts. Porto got this privilege in 1460 on account of the city's impeccable credentials of serving the crown with men and monies.¹⁵⁹ These cases notwithstanding, it is clear that the control of the expenditure was not an essential ambition of the *Povos*. The grievances presented to the *Cortes* aimed at the collection of revenues rather than at the receipt. In this field, the *Povos* managed to achieve some guarantees such as the prerogative of the municipalities to confirm the judge of the *sisas* (professional judges, paid with the profits of the *sisas*).¹⁶⁰ In the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1439, the municipalities even obtained from the king that no coercive inspections could be used in the *sisas*.¹⁶¹

Municipal control on the *sisas* was thus minimal. The monarchy achieved what it aspired to: the substitution of the *Direitos Reais* by the *sisas*. Municipalities retained far more autonomy in the *pedidos* than in the *sisas*. In broad terms, as mentioned, a *pedido* could not be lightly demanded of the *Povos* and, unlike the *sisas*, was at times regarded as a last resort. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to

¹⁵⁷ TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fols. 86v-91v (20th September 1383).

¹⁵⁸ The same can be said about the legal jurisdiction. Already in 1339 it is the royal court that judges a plea between the tax-farmer and the municipality (1st September 1339); *Livro I de Místicos*, no. 4, pp. 17-18.

¹⁵⁹ Gonçalves, I., *As Finanças Municipais do Porto na Segunda Metade do Século XV*, Porto, 1987, pp. 49-51.

¹⁶⁰ By special privilege, Lisbon in 1423 was entitled to appoint the scribe of the *sisas*, even if subject to the confirmation of the tax-farmer. AML, Livro dos Pregos, doc. 114, fl. 126v.

¹⁶¹ See the letter of *infante* Pedro to the city of Coimbra on this matter, BACL, Série Azul, Códice 409, pp. 167-8.

regard the constitutional discussion on the *pedidos* in the second half of the fifteenth century as a whole and four distinct phases can be typified, using the explicit motives for taxation as depicted in Fig. 25.

Fig. 25 – Extraordinary Taxation, 1385-1525

| GENERAL TAXES | YEAR | JUSTIFICATION | REQUESTED |
|---------------------------|------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1385 | Defensive War ¹⁶² | 400,000 l. |
| <i>Sisas</i> | 1387 | Defensive War | 'double sisas' |
| <i>Sisas & Pedido</i> | 1389 | Defensive War | 6,000,000 l. |
| <i>Sisas & Pedido</i> | 1390 | Defensive War | ? |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1391 | Defensive War | 3,500,000 l. |
| <i>Sisas</i> | 1394 | ? | ? |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1397 | [Defensive War] | 2 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Sisas</i> | 1398 | Defensive War | 'double sisas' |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1398 | [Defensive War] | 2 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1399 | ? | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1400 | Defensive War | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1401 | [Defensive War] | 2 or 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1404 | Princely Dowry/Household | 1,25 <i>pedidos</i> |
| Loan | 1406 | Acquisition of Silver | 24,000,000 l. |
| <i>Sisas</i> [permanent] | 1408 | Constitution of households | 60,000,000 l. |
| Loan | 1416 | Acquisition of Silver | ? |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1418 | Defensive War (Castile) | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1427 | Princely Dowry/Household | 1,5 <i>pedido</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1429 | Princely Dowry/Household | 1 <i>pedido</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1436 | Offensive War (Africa) | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1441 | Acquisition of Silver | 1 <i>pedido</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1442 | Offensive War (Castile) | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1444 | Offensive War (Castile) | 2 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1445 | Offensive War (Castile) | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1447 | Princely Dowry/Household | 2,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1451 | Princely Dowry/Household | 2 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1455 | Princely Dowry/Household | 1,5 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1456 | Offensive War (Crusade) | 3 <i>pedidos</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1459 | Annuities in arrear | 300,000 <i>dobr.</i> (rejected) |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1460 | Annuities in arrear | 150,000 <i>dobr.</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> (?) | 1465 | Offensive War (Castile) | ? |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1468 | Princely Dowry/Household | 60,000 <i>florins</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1473 | Princely Dowry/Household | 50,000 <i>dobr.</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1475 | Offensive War (Castile) | 5 <i>pedidos</i> * |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1477 | Offensive War (Castile) | 3 <i>pedidos</i> + |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1477 | Offensive War (Castile) | ? (rejected) |
| <i>Pedido & loan</i> | 1478 | Defensive War (Castile) | 60,000,000 <i>r.</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1482 | Payment of War Debts | 50,000,000 <i>r.</i> |
| <i>Pedido & loan</i> | 1490 | Princely Dowry/Household | 100,000 <i>cruz.</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1502 | Defensive War (Africa) | 50,000 <i>cruz.</i> |
| <i>Pedido</i> | 1525 | Princely Dowry/Household | 150,000 <i>cruz.</i> |

Notes: ^ - notional estimate; * - only 3 *pedidos* consented; + - only 2 *pedidos* consented; *cruzado*, a gold coinage, used as money of account valued at 400 *r.*

Sources: Fig. 24 and sources cited there.

¹⁶² Caetano, Marcello, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 111; 'pera manter a guerra', Sousa, As Cortes Medievais, vol. I, p. 301.

The first phase corresponds to the period of effective war against Castile (1385-1401). In this period, the *pedido* acquired its fiscal profile that it would retain for the more than a century. Indeed, in face of the quick and abrupt devaluations ordered by João I, the 400,000 *l.* granted in Coimbra/1385 and probably again in 1389 were of little help. In the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1391, João I demanded a fixed sum (3,500,000 *l.*) which ought to be shared amongst the various *almojarifados* of the realm. The share of its *almojarifado* was then allocated to the municipalities which organised the collection according to the regulations emitted by the crown.¹⁶³ Municipal governments remained essential in this process because they had the instrument for assessment that they used for their own finances and for organising their military host.¹⁶⁴ The efficiency of this design is proven by the fact that *pedidos* became standardised in the next century or so.

The standardising of the *pedido* testifies how limited was the range of negotiations between the monarchy and the *Povos*, a factor which cannot have failed to promote consent. But it points to another powerful reason for the relative ease with which João I resorted to direct taxes. Although it involved a great deal of thrusts well into enemy territory and its outcome had been decided in 1385, this war could aptly be labelled by João I as one involving the 'defence of the realm'.¹⁶⁵ War with the Castilian invader provided King João I with a self-evident 'necessity' for demanding a string of one-year subsidies along with the *sisas*. Subsidies were the *raison-d'être* for nearly all the *Cortes* convened in that period (Fig. 24). The frequency indicates that the *Cortes* were compliant to the royal demands but, on the other side, they discussed, or at least were informed of, the military and diplomatic plans before they committed to pay the *pedido*.¹⁶⁶

After the end of the hostilities and the definitive concession of the *sisas* between 1398 and 1401, *pedidos* became sporadic: four plus two loans in the

¹⁶³ See Henriques, '*Pedido*, Gloss..

¹⁶⁴ According to the instructions of the *pedido* stated that the annual income of individuals (the *renda*, lit. rent) rather than their wealth, was to be the object of tax. The contribution of each individual in 1391 became a unit called the *pedido* and subsequent taxes were described as 'two *pedidos*' or as 'one and a quarter *pedido*.'

¹⁶⁵ The term 'defence of the realm' occurs in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385, see Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 97; while in 1389 the *pedido* was intended 'to sustain the war' ('*para soportar a guerra*') Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 301.

¹⁶⁶ This is clear in the well-documented *Cortes* of Braga/1387, Lisbon/1389, Viseu/1391, Santarém/1396 and Coimbra/1400 and Santarém/1402; cf. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 297-325. It should be noted that there are no signs of direct influence of the *Cortes* on the decision taken by João I.

following three decades (1402-1435). However, despite the rarity of fiscal demands, the *Cortes* kept a relevant political role (see Fig. 24). In this respect, this period mirrored that of the 'old kings'. The difference was that instead of a rich domain, the monarchy could count on the permanent *sisas* (with an increased rate since 1408) and with the debasements. An old customary rule that was applied with the old kings, namely the wedding of *infantes*, provided the case for three of the four *pedidos*. By contrast, the busy military ventures in North Africa did not deserve a single extraordinary tax.

It can be said that the first general tax held to finance royal offensive expeditions, the *pedido* and half of 1436 collected to finance the conquest of Tangiers, opened a new period.¹⁶⁷ This period had two distinctive features: the legitimate reasons for the *pedido* were enlarged in order to include offensive war, against Christians and against Moors and the rules of assessment and collection became standardised after the *pedido* of 1436.

The extension of the reasons acceptable for a *pedido* cannot be dissociated from the fact that, for political reasons, the *Cortes* met very often in this period.¹⁶⁸ Neither the acquisition of silver nor the financing of small scale military interventions in Castilian internal conflicts had before been contemplated with payments. As such, another defining feature of this phase is the intensity of the fiscal burden: in the twenty-three years between 1436 and 1459, there were eight subsidies whose collection lagged on for fifteen years.

However, the empowerment of the *Cortes* is not the only possible explanation for the intensity of taxation. The fast succession of *pedidos* between 1441 and 1445 coincided with the mid-century blip in royal revenues. This is especially clear in the *pedido* of 1441 for which there are four letters of acquittal in four *almojarifados* (Abrantes, Guarda, Ponte de Lima and Torre de Moncorvo). Whilst the original purpose of the *pedido* was the acquisition of silver, in these districts only a quarter of the money found the way to the treasury.¹⁶⁹ Half of the revenue was employed in prerogative royal gifts (*graça*),

¹⁶⁷ The relatively small sum demanded, the traces of internal opposition to the plans and the mention to anti-tax 'murmurs' in the chronicles of Rui de Pina all hint at difficult negotiations. The *Povos* were unambiguously contrary to offensive warfare. BNP, Códice 6969, p. 554-5 (141st article presented at Leiria-Santarém/1433).

¹⁶⁸ The *Cortes* obtained from regent Pedro that they met annually frequently. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 354.

¹⁶⁹

while 20% was diverted to offset standing redistributive payments, some of them in arrears. In Guarda at least 12% of the previous *pedido* (1436) was also channelled to permanent expenditure. The hypothesis that extraordinary taxation was employed to tap the crown's financial crisis has a good argument when one considers that in 1459 Afonso V summoned the *Cortes* to consent in a payment of 300,000 *dobras*, the equivalent to ten (!) *pedidos*, destined to pay arrears of his redistributive payments (*casamentos* and *tenças*). As in the subsidies of 1436, 1441, 1442 and 1444, this was a motive that customary rules did not condone. This time, however, the *Povos* alleged that they were not due to pay this sum.¹⁷⁰

The negotiations that followed the refusal of 1459 started a new period, characterised by a growing tax burden and greater participation of the *Povos* in both the size and the apportioning of the fiscal burden (see Fig. 24 and Fig. 25). In the *Cortes* of Évora/1460, the *Povos* held their ground and offered no more than the same 150,000 *dobras* proposed in Lisbon. Further, the very grant of the subsidy was conditional. Although most conditions were indeed very favourable to the municipal representatives,¹⁷¹ the twelfth is particularly relevant: Afonso V promised never to ask for *pedidos* again, except if he had a 'reason' that could not be met by the ordinary revenues and that the *Povo* was due to pay.¹⁷² This largely unnoticed promise of Afonso V represented a constitutional defining moment because it evoked two criteria for the crown to resort to taxation: the duty of the *Povo* (defined by precedent and custom) and the shape of royal finances. Although there is no indication that this promise

| | Torre de Moncorvo | Abrantes | Ponte d. Lima | Guarda | Ø (%) |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------------|--------|-------|
| purpose of the <i>pedido</i> | 0 | 56 | 56 | 0 | 28 |
| <i>Graça</i> | 74 | 40 | 10 | 67 | 48 |
| Redistributive Payments - <i>tenças</i> , <i>moradias</i> , <i>assentamentos</i> | 24 | 3 | 20,5 | 31 | 20 |
| Africa | 0 | 0 | 12,5 | 0 | 4 |
| other/unknown | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |

¹⁷⁰ See the 3rd article presented at the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1459. TT, *Cortes*, Maço 2, doc. 14, fols. 22-39. The king's version of the discussions held in this assembly is summarised in the prologue to the instrument of the concession of the *pedido* of 1460. BNP, Códice 2639, fols. 91-97.

¹⁷¹ The 10th condition forbade the king to concede *tenças* (annuities) in case the finances did not allow it; the 14th condition forbade the monarchy to manipulate the municipal borders.

¹⁷² '*Item que nos nom lancemos daqui em diante pedido algum a nosso povo miúdo salvo em tal caso que com razom o possamos fazer e o dito Povo o deva pagar*'. BNP, Códice 2639, fol. 95.

would not be called upon in later negotiations, it implied a different stance on royal finances. The previous discourse emphasised the *Povos*' 'service' to the kings in times of need, inspired by the 'loyalty', 'love' or 'goodwill' towards the king.¹⁷³ While this notion of the payment of the *pedido* as an undeniable service to which 'loyalty', 'love' or goodwill' bound the *Povos* would not disappear, after Évora/1460 debates on the legitimacy of extraordinary taxation revolved around the king's 'necessity', not of whether the *Povos* would perform their 'service'.

In stark contrast to the previous phases, after Lisbon/1459 and Évora/1460 a great deal of the *pedidos* involved negotiations on the sums to be paid and on the methods of collection. Even the *pedidos* demanded to pay for the expeditions against the traditional enemy that took place from 1475 onwards, conveniently presented as acts of 'defence of the realm', had to be reduced by municipal opposition. When the threat of a Spanish counter-attack came, the monarchy demanded a huge effort from the *Povos* in the name of the 'defence of the realm'. However, in the *pedido* of the sixty-million of 1478,¹⁷⁴ the *Povos* made a conditional acceptance: they would only pay the *pedido* if the privileged paid together with them, even if with different rates.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, they forced the monarch to suspend all individual privileges of exemption from taxation. The same was attempted in 1481-2. In the *pedido* of 1478 a centralised professional structure headed by a high-receiver (*recedor-mor*) and his scribe made its appearance. The wages of these officers were decided by a meeting of representatives of the *Povos* and were paid by each *almojarifado* in proportion to the sums apportioned.¹⁷⁶ The monarchy retained

¹⁷³ After Fernando I, there are few explicit discourses on the ideological foundations of extraordinary taxation. The two most explicit (by Regent Pedro in 23rd October 1440 and by the *Povos* in the instrument of concession of the *sisas* of 1408) both appealed to the 'goodwill' (*RED*, doc. 6; *BACL*, Série Azul, Códice 409, fol. 148).

¹⁷⁴ Indeed, this sum was that paid by 'the pouco que *pedido* sooe de pagar e a todolos priuillegiados e vasallos'; 10 million had to be paid by the 'grandes e fidalgos', 4,5 millions by the clergy and 4,1 million by the Jews, while Madeira had to pay 1,2 million and the remaining islands 200,000 *r.*. Pereira, *Participação da Madeira*, p. 6. M. H. Cruz Coelho e L. M. Duarte ('A Fiscalidade em Exercício: o *Pedido* dos Sessenta Milhões no Almojarifado de Loulé', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras do Porto. História*, Vol. XIII, Porto, 1996, pp. 209-12) considered that this *pedido* fell short on the purported 60 million as in his letter of acquittal of the master-receiver (*recedor geral*) of the *pedido* was only accounted for 24,595,000 *r.*, less than half of the 60 million and including the monies of the Jews. This opinion ignores the fact that the *recedor* Pedro Estaço is only acquitted of the money he effectively handled, as the local receivers could also be forced by the crown to defray some specific expenses with the monies collected. Indeed, sums of the receipt for some *almojarifados* are known: Coimbra (TT, Chanc. João II, Livro 3, fol. 104) Setúbal (TT, Leitura Nova, Livro 2 de Guadiana, fol. 195v) and Guimarães (TT, LN, Leitura Nova, Livro 3 de Além Douro, fol. 112).

¹⁷⁵ Pereira, *Participação da Madeira*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁶ TT, Chanc. João II, Livro 3, fols. 90 e 104 (letters of acquittal of Diogo-Gonçalves and Vasco Gil).

only the final accountability, which was trusted to the *Cortos* and not to the commission elected by the *Povos*.

Although the *Povos* proved unable to use their subsidies as a war-chest institutionally autonomous to the *Direitos Reais*, the transfer of subsidies to the crown made the *Povos* more aware of the way the crown spent its revenues. Demands for tighter expenditure discipline that were voiced first during the Fernandine *Cortes* were heard again in the reign of João I. There is ample evidence that the elected monarch gave a few steps towards downscaling standing expenditure, after the end of the wars in the Counsel of Coimbra in 1401 (see section 8.1). Yet, João I deemed necessary to merely summon his restricted counsel, rather than call the *Cortes* or promote an *ajuntamento*. The *Cortes* of Leiria/1439, reunited to choose a regent, presented an ambitious limitation of expenditure that was accepted and, possibly, observed (see *infra* subsection 8.3.3).

The sustained growth of the burden of extraordinary taxation in the 1440s and 1450s (Fig. 25) would open the way to greater participation of the *Povos* in the fiscal ruling of the country. In this respect, the *Cortes* of Évora/1460 stood for a major change. The municipal proctors complained that the permanent rents of the monarchy were ill-spent and that the monarchy gave away too many annuities. These critiques were embodied in the conditions of the concession of the subsidy of 1460, in which Afonso V promised, albeit in vague terms, to 'moderate' his redistributive payments. Soon afterwards, a real ambition to design the financial policy by the *Povos* was manifested in the writing up of a separate group of twenty-two chapters called *Da Fazenda* ('On Finance').¹⁷⁷ These constitute a wide program of reform aimed at controlling the crown's expenses item by item. Most of them set a rule for the crown to observe relating a particular type of expenditure: not accepting household members after January (article 69th), return of the subsidies to levels of João I (article 52nd), abolition of annuities conceded by services in Castile, unless they were performed by members of the household (article 55th), etc. This set of chapters ended with a project of an audacious fiscal constitution stating that the all future expenses had to observe the limitations set by the *Povos* and that decisions on

¹⁷⁷ TT, *Cortes*, Maço 3, doc. 5, fols. 14v-25. See abridgments in Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, Vol. II, pp. 459-64.

expenditure taken in *Cortes* could only be suspended by other *Cortes*. However, João II was evasive and eluded most of the proposals.

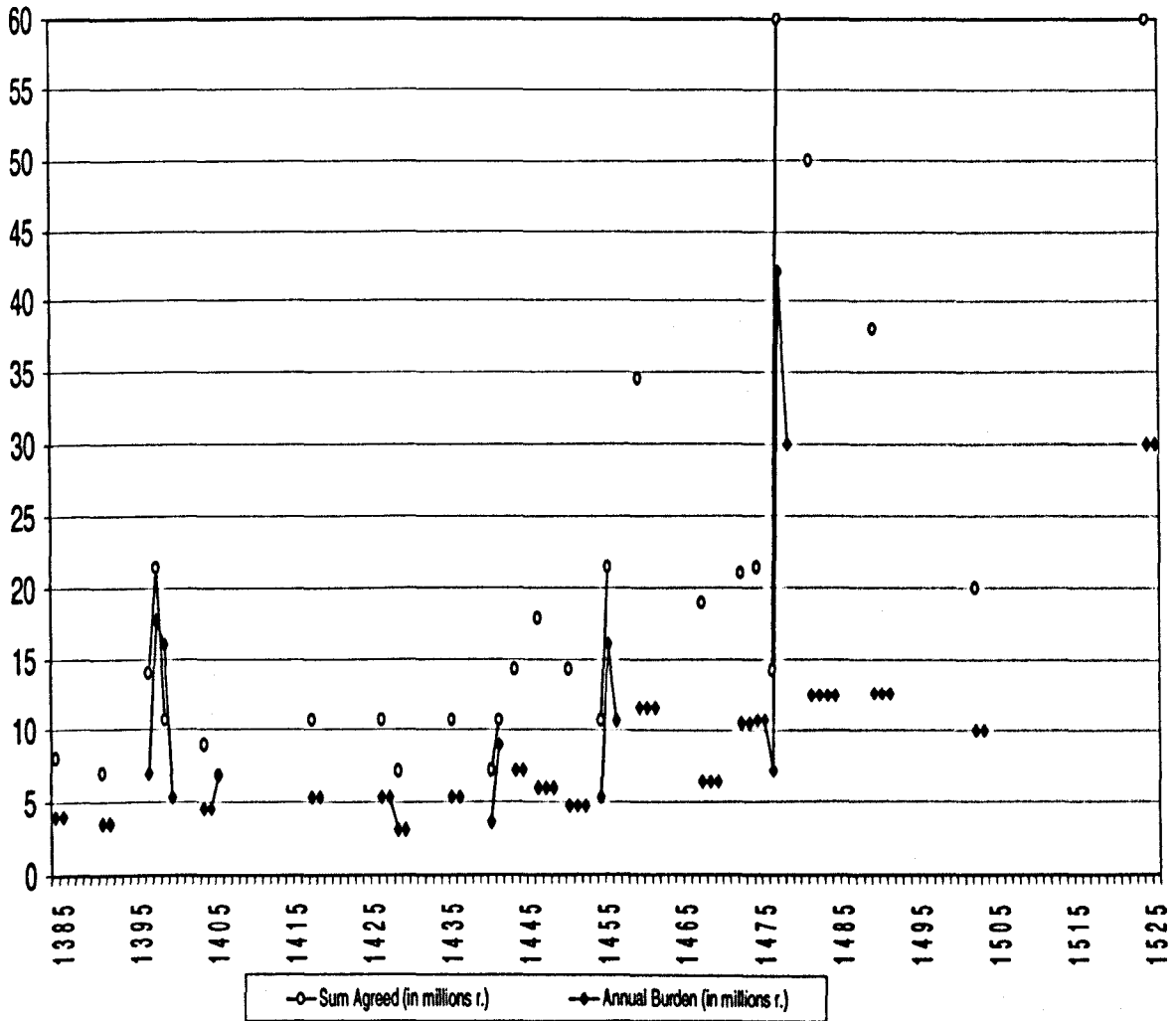
The chapters 'On Finance' would be followed in 1498 by more severe criticism of the expenditure of regular revenues along the same lines.¹⁷⁸ These would prove the apex of the intervention of the *Povos* in the finances. Indeed, their growing influence was halted under João II, Manuel I and João III as these monarchs seldom summoned the *Cortes*. While summoning the first *Cortes* of his reign in 1498 Manuel I declared that, while he needed, he tried to concile with the *Povos* the means to improve his rule, without asking for a subsidy.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, two years later, while preparing an attack on Morocco, Manuel I decided to borrow at interest, rather than venturing in the time-consuming and politically laborious negotiations for a *pedido*. In the words of the chancery registers of the contracts, 'while in need of a great sum of money, which could not be immediately assembled, and unwilling to impose upon his *Povos* neither fatigue nor oppression' King Manuel borrowed from his closer vassals.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ *Cort. Manuel I*, vol. I, pp. 64-5.

¹⁷⁹ *Cort. Manuel I*, vol. I, p. 301.

¹⁸⁰ E. g. TT, Chanc. Manuel I, Livro 13, fols. 10, 48v, 55v-56v.

Fig. 26 – Notional Burden of Extraordinary Taxes, 1385-1495
(in million r.)



Sources: Fig. 25

After having been challenged by the authoritarian rule of King Fernando, the fiscal constitution of the old kings was to be overturned in the long war that marked the reign of João I. Under João I, the principles of royal taxation became so contrasted with those of two generations earlier that not even an author as erudite as Fernão Lopes could grasp the limitations on the royal

prerogatives of the 'old kings'. The oblivion of the old fiscal constitution was seemingly total. The finances of the 'old kings' were certainly recalled in the discourses brought to the *Cortes*, yet that was but an evocation of a mythical, perfect past, not a memory of a constitutional experience that once bound the monarchy. The death of the old fiscal constitution is not to be interpreted as a failure of the *Povos*. As the monetary context of the fifteenth century was totally different from that of the old kings, the interests of the *Povos* shifted and became closer to the monarchy.

Even if limitations on coinage that had been so important in the thirteenth century were ignored, there was still a principle that embodied a fiscal constitution: the consent to kingdom-wide direct taxation. This principle, unknown in the time of the old kings stood throughout this period. However, the great difference between the 'old' and 'new' fiscal constitution lies in the institution that watched its observance. While in the fourteenth century, the crown required the institutional apparatus owned by the municipalities to operate within their spaces, in the post-war the monarchy did not seek the agreement of the *concelhos*. The constant summoning of the *Cortes* and imposition of direct taxes had resulted in the invention of the realm as fiscal entity. This enabled the *Cortes* to negotiate with the monarchy and to use its faculty to consent to intervene in royal finances, even if tentatively. As elsewhere,¹⁸¹ the late fifteenth century was a period of fiscal innovation based upon ethical principles. In Portugal this period saw an increasing intervention of the *Povos* in the shaping of the royal finances, namely by defining some principles of expenditure. The times of fiscal buoyancy, however, ended up with these attempts.

By the late fifteenth-century, the death of bullion and the decision of João II and Manuel I of avoiding general taxes opened the way for an entirely different setting. Enjoying a buoyant fiscal situation, these monarchs tried to do without direct taxation and *Cortes* seldom met in their reigns. In forty years, no more than three subsidies were collected (Fig. 24). This resulted in the decrease of the popular intervention in the royal finances. For this reason the legal compilation of King Manuel, the *Ordenações Manuelinas*, claimed that

¹⁸¹ Isenmann, 'The Holy Roma Empire,' pp. 263-71; Ladero Quesada, 'Castile,' pp. 190-194; Schofield, Roger, *Taxation Under the Early Tudors, 1485-1547*, Malden, 2004.

pedidos in the case of war and of royal and princely wedding were *Direitos Reais*.¹⁸²

¹⁸² *Ordenações Manuelinas*, Book II, title 15 § 3-4.

Chapter 7 - War and Royal Finances: a long-term perspective

Chapters 5 and 6 have shown the role of End-of-Century Wars in creating fiscal and fiscal-constitutional settings that were totally different from those ruling the time of the old kings. The present chapter aims to show that, fifteenth-century Portugal was also entirely different from the previous period in the sense that war, and war-related taxation, became far commoner than it had been under the 'old kings.'¹ Yet, the role of war is not that of a *primum mobile*. As argued for the period of the 'old kings,' state finances had a decisive influence on how, and on if, wars were fought. Section 7.1 will show how the End-of-Century Wars transformed the relationship between war and royal finances. Section 7.2 will show how far expansionist war was regarded as the king's rather than the kingdom's project. Finally, section 7.3 will point to the relationship between royal finances and military expansionism.

Section 7.1 - The Sinews of War: Debasement and Grants

The End-of-Century Wars terminated the long century of relative peace of the 'old kings'.² Their sheer duration alone - these conflicts took place in 1369-70, 1372-3, 1381-82 and 1383-1411 - made them highly significant affairs; but these clashes were not simply lengthier than those undertaken by the 'old kings'; they were starkly different and these differences stand for wide long-term consequences. The scarcity of surviving quantitative evidence should not prevent an analysis, albeit brief, of these conflicts on a fiscal perspective.

The wars were fought with different strategic goals in sight and with wholly different tactics. As discussed, the bases of the grand strategy prior to

¹ The exposition of the military and political events and the wider context of the late fourteenth-century would be out of place in this dissertation. The period has recently inspired some important works in Portuguese military history: Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*; Monteiro, *Aljubarrota. A Batalha Real*, Lisbon, 2003; Monteiro, João Gouveia, 'As campanhas que Fizeram História', in Barata, Manuel Themudo and Teixeira, Nuno Severiano, eds., *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, vol. I, Lisbon, 2003, pp. 245-87; Martins, Miguel Gomes, *Lisboa e a Guerra.1367-1411*, Lisbon, 2001. In English, there are the two extremely accomplished works by Sir P. E. Russell, *The English Intervention and Prince Henry*. Chronological information is based in these works and those cited for Appendix 1.

² 'End-of-Century Wars': this phrase that can be used as shorthand for two related conflicts, Fernandine and the Independence or Interregnum Wars.

the Fernandine Wars have already been identified: limited warfare, opportunistic alliance with Castile and avoidance of extra-Peninsular commitments. Apart from the design of the border and some questions of relative hierarchy between the crowns, in the wars fought by Afonso III, King Dinis or Afonso IV, no structural antagonism between Portugal and Castile was at stake. By contrast, in the late fourteenth century wars were related to European conflicts. It is important to reiterate what many historians have concluded: the course of the Fernandine Wars was largely dictated by the main Anglo-French conflict. War and peace were decided according to the current state of the Portuguese and English alliance.³ These conflicts were innovative inasmuch as, unlike previous cases, they were entangled with wider continental struggles.⁴ Fernando's father, Pedro I, avoided taking sides in the ongoing Anglo-French confrontation and successfully synchronised his political and military choices with the Castilian options. Avoiding taking sides in the major European conflict became difficult when a bitter dynastic struggle broke up in Castile damaging this country's remarkable diplomatic consistency.⁵

Together with higher geopolitical objectives, the influence of Duguesclin and his Compagnies in Castile and, to a lesser extent, of the Earl of Cambridge in Portugal led the old rivals to leave their old ways.⁶ Fernando I tried to lure the English might in support of its bid to be made king of Castile, while João I, after striving to obtain some military and diplomatic support, assisted John of Gaunt's

³ Without the agreement of mutual help from England, the young Fernando would not break the favourable peace treaty of Alcoutim and start his second war, the most disastrous of the three. Similarly, the third war was a joint Anglo-Portuguese invasion to install John of Gaunt in the throne of Castile, by force of Fernando's tempting proposal in 1381. Russell, *The English Intervention*, p. 296-344.

⁴ The two contenders for the throne of Castile were aligned with contrary diplomatic options: Pedro the Cruel was firmly allied to England, whereas his bastard brother Enrique of Trastamara depended on French, and to a lesser extent Aragonese, support. The eventual victory of the Trastamara turned Castile into a determinedly pro-French power and evaded for good the alliance with the Plantagenets, far too connected with the reign of Pedro the Cruel. This diplomatic domino affected the English crown. For the Plantagenets an entirely pro-French Peninsula would be a crucial strategic liability, given the sensitive position of Aquitaine and, furthermore, by the threat that the three Peninsular galley fleets combined would pose to the insular kingdom. As sensibly more powerful Aragon had too much to lose in a struggle against France, Portugal became the only potential ally to Edward III and Richard II. As soon as Lancaster's non-attendance became clear, the negotiations between the Portuguese monarch and Castile's Juan I were precipitated. See Monteiro, 'As Campanhas que Fizeram a História,' p. 260. The mechanisms of European balance of power did not operate in isolation. During the reign of Fernando I, there was also internal pressure for war by the nobility which had already been felt by Pedro I. Nonetheless, without the elusive spectre of English collaboration, the pro-war faction in Portugal could hardly have persuaded the king into aggression against Castile, which was solidly allied to France (see section 3.3).

⁵ Afonso IV the grandfather of ill-fated King Fernando could claim the feat of assisting with his fleet the French crown, while keeping good relations with England. This diplomatic orientation would break when the civil war of Castile opposed two parties with wholly different views on external policy.

⁶ On the direct military influences of the English, see Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 87-88.

ambitions in Castile. In the second and third Fernandine Wars, the kings of Castile fought not to absorb Portugal but in order to force this kingdom to join the fold of the Franco-Castilian alliance and recognise the papacy of Avignon. These high-brow objectives called for incisive full-scale invasions in order to seize control of the country or at least of its external policy rather than the old 'dodging wars'.⁷

In the grand strategy of the old kings, the densely fortified border had a key strategic role (see *supra* section 3.1). The dominance of fortification in the art of war meant that swift, broad strategic movements were unwieldy, except at sea. The rugged borderlands were the ideal ground for the 'dodging wars'. The grand, pan-European objectives that involved the End-of-Century Wars changed the tactical landscape of the conflicts as they demanded more incisive attacks on the enemy land and for conquest rather than attrition.

Under the 'old kings', that is to say from Afonso III to Pedro I, structures, both physical and institutional, were the real sinews of war. Naturally, financial strength was far from irrelevant. The gold and silver amassed in the royal treasuries assured that the money-intensive galley fleet could be sustained during long periods and finance offensive expeditions demanded by diplomatic commitments, like those by Pedro I. The treasury even allowed Fernando I, like Edward III of England to use Aragon in an attempt to fight a war-by-proxy against Castile.⁸ Nonetheless, within the broad strategic concept of the 'old kings', money could hardly deserve to be called the sinews of warfare, as it would be in centuries to come. Ultimately, the capacity to lead the enemy into a stalemate did not depend on it. In case of aggression, municipalities were bound to serve their lord arms in hand and the border had the adequate institutional and physical structures to be defensible. The *contia* system assured that could the monarchy could summon without further investment a reasonable number of equipped knights distributed throughout the realm the unlikely event of a battle.⁹

⁷ In this context of war as continuation of diplomatic pressure, Lisbon, the political centre of the kingdom, became the essential strategic target. It is symptomatic that Lisbon itself lacked proper fortifications, as the Second Fernandine War would show. Martins, *Lisboa e a Guerra* pp. 67-8.

⁸ Russell, *The English Intervention*, pp. 154-65.

⁹ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 23.

King Fernando's vain attempts to seize the throne of Castile challenged the military framework built by the old kings. Probably aware that the occupation of Castile would be far more money-intensive than the previous conflicts, Fernando I and his advisors ignored fiscal-constitutional tenets and issued a heavily depleted coinage during the first conflict. Widespread opposition barred the way to Fernando I who was forced to backtrack closer to the standard of the old kings. For his second and third wars Fernando sought subsidies in the form of *sisas* which should have allowed for a rough 50% increase in royal revenues (see *supra* section 5.1). In theory at least, the 400,000 *l.* provided by the sales taxes would suffice to pay the *contias* for the '3,000 or 4,000 knights' which despondent Fernando I expected to field in a looming battle against his Castilian counterpart in 1372.¹⁰ Indeed, Fernando I would have them in 1381 for the battle of the Caia (see *infra* Fig. 29). The pursuit of the decisive battle was also a novelty brought by the English and French to the Fernandine Wars and would have been an unfamiliar scenario for the cautious 'old kings. A battle required more knights, better gear and its strategic benefits were doubtful in the context of thirteenth-century and fourteenth-century 'dodging wars.' The 3,000 or 4,000 knights to which Fernando I aspired would have been a luxury for the 'old kings.'

The changes wrought in the Fernandine Wars continued throughout the Independence War, albeit with a crucial difference: while King Fernando ultimately failed to uphold this monetary policy (see *supra* section 2.2), João I benefited from the support of the Povos in his debasements. The elected king was free from the severe constitutional constraints that dictated the monetary policy of his predecessors, including Fernando I, and could debase the currency more or less unhampered by constitutional opposition (see *supra* section 6.1). Indeed, monetary manipulations would prove crucial in the war.

The *sisas* also appeared with the wars. In their mid-fifteenth-century interventions in the *Cortes*, the *Povos* claimed that the *sisas* had been the backbone to the victory of King João. This claim encapsulated a specific constitutional view: the *sisas* were granted to the crown as a form of subsidising the defence of the realm and, as such, they ought to be abandoned by the

¹⁰ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter LXXII, pp. 251-5.

crown as peace had been obtained. However, this view, which became acquired wisdom amongst historians, does not hold when confronted with the primary sources. Paradoxically, the decisive victories of the war –notably, the resistance of Lisbon in 1383-4 and the battle of Aljubarrota (1385)—¹¹ were financed through more or less improvised devices; not by fiscal expediency. The die-hard defence of 1383-5 against a militarily stronger Castilian army called for radical means: extortion of subsidies, confiscation of goods, the melting of the churches' silverware, Jewish, ecclesiastical, municipal or traders' 'spontaneous' grants and even hoaxing London merchants into providing loans.¹² Of the particularly notorious list of expedients resorted to by the crown, debasement was the most important.¹³

Two casual references in Fernão Lopes's chronicle of João I suggest that at least some campaigns were subsidised by ad hoc debasements.¹⁴ This hypothesis can be tested by comparing the dates of the issue of debased coinages with those of the military offensive operations.¹⁵ In this respect, the recent works on the period's military history, the oft-quoted synthesis by M. Gomes Marques on Portuguese coinages and the already-quoted works on direct taxation provide solid scholarly foundations for this exercise.

¹¹ Lisbon's resistance to a 4 months siege (May-September of 1384) and the defeat of the Juan I in Aljubarrota (14 August 1385) practically ended with Castilian chances of victory in the conflict. Immediately afterwards, all the castles controlled by partisans of Castile in the centre of the country and around Lisbon fell or capitulated, whilst a first Portuguese thrust into enemy territory took place in October. As military historian Gouveia Monteiro argues, the annihilation of the Franco-Castilian army at Aljubarrota all but terminated Castilian chances of victory in the conflict (Monteiro, *Aljubarrota. A Batalha Real*, p. 118-9). To use an outdated but eloquent expression, Aljubarrota was indeed a 'decisive battle' as henceforward the kingdom of Castile and Leon would prove unable to launch any significant offensive.

¹² Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 162-70. Russell, *The English Intervention*, pp. 369-73.

¹³ In the initial stage João I considered the negative repercussions of the debasements and he is said to have said in 1384 while the first debased coinage was minted, 'it is better for the country to suffer than to disappear'. Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 1, chapter XLIX, p. 101.

¹⁴ 'estas mudanças lhe fez fazer as neçessidades das guerras, que muitas vezes com elRei de Castile ouve' (Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 1, chapter XLIX, p. 101); 'daquelas moedas aviaõ de fazer outra nã tam boa, de guisa que por sua multiplicaçã ouvese ahy avomdo pera soldo das gemtes e das neçesarias despesas' (Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapter III, p. 11).

¹⁵ I have merely included offensive operations. By 'offensive' I do not include solely those aimed at invading enemy land but also those organised to either fight the invaders or to recover lost lands within the kingdom. In other words, those that implied some deal of central planning, rather than reactions to enemy operations or expeditions organised autonomously by border municipalities.

Fig. 27– The Financing of the Independence War, 1383-1401

| Date | Offensive Operations and Truces | Intervention in Coinage | Consent to Subsidies |
|------|---|---|---|
| 1384 | <u>Apr.</u> – battle of Atoleiros <u>May-Sep.</u> – defence of Lisbon <u>Oct.-Feb.</u> – siege of Torres | <u>Jan.-Mar.</u> – issue of Real de 10 Soldos A <u>?</u> – debasement | |
| 1385 | <u>Apr.-Jun.</u> – campaign in Minho <u>Aug.</u> – battle of Aljubarrota <u>Sep.-Oct.</u> – campaign in Castile <u>Dec.-Apr.</u> – siege of Chaves | <u>Jan (?)</u> – debasement <u>Apr.</u> – issue of Real B <u>?</u> – issue of Real C <u>Oct. (?)</u> – issue of Real E | <u>Apr.</u> – Pedido |
| 1386 | <u>May-Jun.</u> – siege of Almeida and Coria | <u>Jan (?)</u> – issue of Real F | <u>Nov.</u> – 1-year Sisas |
| 1387 | <u>Mar.-Jun.</u> – campaign in León with John of Gaunt | <u>Jan.</u> – issue of Real G | <u>May</u> – 1-year Sisas |
| 1388 | <u>Jan.-Mar.</u> – siege of Melgaço <u>Sep.-Nov.</u> – siege of Campo Maior | | |
| 1389 | <u>Aug.-Oct.</u> – siege of Tuy <u>Nov.</u> – Truce | | <u>Mar.</u> – 1-year Sisas |
| 1390 | Truce | | <u>Fev.</u> – 1-year Sisas |
| 1391 | Truce | | <u>Dez.</u> – Pedido |
| 1392 | Truce | | |
| 1393 | Truce | <u>Jan.</u> – issue of Real H | |
| 1394 | Truce | | <u>Dez.</u> – Pedido |
| 1395 | Truce | | |
| 1396 | <u>May</u> – siege of Badajoz | <u>Jan (?)</u> – issue of Real I | |
| 1397 | <u>Dec.</u> – campaign in Caceres | <u>Jan (?)</u> – issue of Real J | <u>Oct.</u> – Pedido |
| 1398 | <u>May-Jul.</u> – sieges of Salvaterra and Tuy and campaign in the South | <u>Jan (?)</u> – issue of Real of 3,5 libras | <u>Jan.</u> – Pedido <u>Jan.</u> – Sisas <u>Oct.</u> – Pedido |
| 1399 | | | <u>Jan.</u> – Pedido |
| 1400 | <u>May.-Jun.</u> – siege of Alcantara | | <u>Jun.</u> – Pedido (?) |
| 1401 | | | <u>Jan.</u> – Pedido and Sisas |

Note: The undated debasement of *Real G* (between Jan. 1387 and Dec. 1391) was not included.

Sources: Fig. 24; Monteiro, 'As Campanhas que Fizeram', pp. 264-282; *HMMP*, pp. 106-112.

Fig. 27 shows that, albeit precise chronology on the coinage emissions is lacking as well as the exact period of collection of the *pedidos*, coincidence between debasements and military operations is marginally more frequent than that between these and subsidies. This observation hints at a peculiar mechanism of war finance. The insinuation by Fernão Lopes that military operations were funded by debased bullion minted ad hoc makes perfect sense when one considers how frequently new issues took place before military expeditions, as the years 1385, 1385, 1387 and 1396-8 hint. The relationship between subsidies and military expeditions seems less direct. Some subsidies are unrelated to the campaigns and when they anticipated actual operations it is

doubtful that the monies collected were available to the paymasters of the campaign. Very likely, not a penny of the innovative *pedido* approved in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 which took place in April was at the disposal of João I in the decisive battle of Aljubarrota, three months later.¹⁶

While, as Gouveia Monteiro put it, soldiers required cash,¹⁷ the assessment and collection of a *pedido*, let alone when held for the first time, were lengthy affairs. The *sisas* were only marginally better, as typically they were paid in three instalments, rather than two. In the contemporary mechanism of war finance, direct taxation appears to have had two roles: a) to provide a guarantee for delayed payments¹⁸ or, more likely, ad hoc loans contracted to pay wages¹⁹ and b) to bring metal to the royal mint. In the first case, we could liken the grant of a *pedido* as the opening of a credit account in the name of the king destined at paying deferred payments. However, given the urgent need for soldiers' wages, it is more logical to think that subsidies were held to feed the furnaces of the royal mint.²⁰ Indeed, the progressively thinner bullion coined by João I required appreciable quantities of silver and copper which could only be obtained through taxation.

All in all, the argument of the *Povos* that João I sustained the wars with the *sisas* is misleading. The differing roles of direct taxes and debasement stand for a subtle difference in relation to other contemporary settings where wars were fought by diverting a growing proportion of the country's wealth to military purposes. In the present case, instead of increasing the revenue, 'real', metallic costs were reduced. Ingenious as this method was for the monarch, it could have negative effects on many subjects, not least on some members of the nobility whose rents abruptly decayed with inflation.²¹

¹⁶ According to Fernão Lopes, the 400,000 *l.* obtained in the *pedido* of 1385 were destined to be 'multiplied' into *l.* of weaker league (Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapter III, p. 11).

¹⁷ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 163. According to the same author João I introduced the habit of paying in advance to the municipal crossbowmen units (Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 60).

¹⁸ In the instrument of grant of the *sisas* of 1387, the *Povos* clearly affirm that the product of the *sisas* was destined to 'pay what [the king] owed to his men' ('pagar aquello que deuya a ssuas gentes') AML, Livro I de Cortes, doc. 7.

¹⁹ See several examples of loans for wages in this period, Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, pp. 167-8.

²⁰ This goal is not explicit in any of the *pedidos* collected during the war. However, this goal is explicit in peacetime loans of João I. That of 1406 was held to 'to melt the coins of *real de 3,5 libras* and to mint from it the *real cruzados* (*pera se desfazer a moeda de tres libras e mea, e se tornar em cruzados de trinta e cinco soldos*). RED, doc. 6, p. 50. It can be presumed that that of 1417 was also used to obtain the silver for minting the new *real de trinta e cinco soldos*. PEP, pp. 156-7

²¹ See OA, Book II, title 59 §7. In 1398, three leading nobles, João Rodrigues Pimentel, Gil Vasques da Cunha and João Fernandes Pacheco, deserted João I to join Enrique III of Castile. This desertion, which brought along a few

The abrupt debasements started by Fernando I and continued by King João responded to new military circumstances. As Gouveia Monteiro has argued, the presence of state-of-the-art English and French hosts with better gear and more fluid organisation was instrumental in shaping a new approach to war.²² It was possibly under the influence of English 'indentures' that Fernando I from 1372 onwards contracted most of his nobles to provide a number of fully-armoured knights for which one of them a sum (*contia*) of 100 *l.* was assigned in the old *Direitos Reais*. These agreements became known as *contias*. The Fernandine *contias* meant a radical shift from older practices: henceforward, *contias* would be paid in the form of tenure of the lands, mainly municipalities.²³

Although little is known about these older *contias* or *maravedis*, the Povos in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1371 provide a crucial reference when claiming that the kings of old used to pay their privileges with monies from the treasuries instead of giving away municipal rents.²⁴ This is confirmed by a complaint presented in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1398 by the nobles who claimed that 'it never occurred in the times of the other kings that the lands granted to them (...) were in price of the *contias*.'²⁵ A detailed study of the unpublished Fernandine letters of *contia* is obviously beyond the scope of the present dissertation. However, in the forty contracts recorded in the chancery books 2 and 3 of Fernando I, referring to the period between November 1382 and September 1383,²⁶ we confirm that in only one case the *contia* was to be paid

key castles and a few hundreds of vassals, has been explained by the 'ingratitude' of João I towards these men and even to personal motives of some of them (Sousa, Bernardo Vasconcelos e, *Os Pimentéis. Percursos de uma Linhagem Medieval Portuguesa. Séculos XIII-XIV*, Lisbon, 2000, pp. 294-302). Nonetheless, it would be tempting to associate this collective shift of loyalty to the issue of yet another debased coin, the *Real de 3,5 libras* that took place in that year (*HMMP*, p. 112) against which the nobles protested in *Cortes* (OA, Book II, title 59 §7).

²² Monteiro, João Gouveia, *Armeiros e Armazéns nos Finais da Idade Média*, Viseu, 2001, pp. 13-5.

²³ This term was used at least since the days of King Dinis to designate the standing annuities received by some members of the nobility great and small (also called *maravedis*). Working within a synchronic perspective ('the ends of the Middle Ages'), neither João Gouveia Monteiro nor Rita Costa Gomes questioned whether there were institutional differences between the well-documented Fernandine and the little-known older *contias* or *maravedis*. Yet, as it will be argued,

²⁴ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 131 (15th article of the *Cortes* of Leiria/1372). This grievance is repeated in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1389. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p. 231.

²⁵ Holding lands as *contia* 'o que nunca foi em tempo dos outros Reyx, se nom das Terras, de que lha faziaõ merce, aviam-nas isentas, e nom em preço das conthias.' OA, Book II, title 59 §22.

²⁶ TT, Chanc. D. Fernando I, Livro 2 (from fol. 95 onwards) and Livro 3 (integral).

by assigning monies to a local officer.²⁷ All the remaining *contias* were paid by transferring the administration of municipalities to the vassals.²⁸

The concession of revenues without the intermediation of the royal administration is an essential detail. Indeed, as complains in *Cortes* declare and as we can confirm by other means, the concession of a municipality to a noble opened the door for more pressure on the local resources. There are multiple instances of this. In Braganza, held by João Afonso Pimentel from the days of Fernando I to 1402, the 2,700 *l.* paid since 1253 by the villages of the municipality were multiplied and, furthermore, the tenant collected extraordinary tributes.²⁹ The tenure of some small municipalities from Beira granted by João I to the Coutinho family resulted in the trespassing of their old fiscal privileges by the greedy tenants.³⁰ An undated law of João I also indicates that the tenants and prelates collected subsidies and general taxes in the lands granted to them.³¹

By giving municipal administration away to the nobles, Fernando apparently solved two problems simultaneously: the *contia* would be met, or even added up, by the local revenues and nobles would be placed in the frontier.³² Nonetheless, by doing so, Fernando I shattered the system built in the reign of King Dinis.³³ As the rents and powers in specific territories were given to leading vassals as payment of their *contias*, tenure overcame custody again. Royal administration no longer screened the municipal taxpayers from the nobility. The concession of municipalities in order to pay for the *contias* was in stark opposition to previous practices, as the *Povos* reminded the King.³⁴ No informed speculation can produce any sort of numerical evidence, but chancery

²⁷ The *contia* of Vasco Lourenço de Lira was payable in the warehouse of the *Almoxarifado* of Porto. TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 3, fol. 55v.

²⁸ Not all lands granted as *contias* were municipalities. There are cases of individual villages and large estates given as *contias*. TT, Chanc. D. Fernando I, Livro 2 (from fol. 95 onwards) and Livro 3 (integral).

²⁹ See the oppression of the men of Bragança caused by the tenure of João Afonso Pimentel in Sousa, *Os Pimentéis*, pp. 296-8.

³⁰ Fernando I had already issued laws preventing the abuses of the nobles (See Law of 1375, OA, Book II, title 63 §2-14). In 1389, the *Povos* asked the monarch to forbid the tenants to collect *pedidos* in the lands granted by the crown and to forbid their prises (5th and 28th article of Lisboa/1389; BACL, Série Azul, Códice 410, fols. 78-80). See also the pleas on 'innovation of custom' between the municipalities of Tavares (14 December 1426) and Semancelhe (26 June 1430). TT, Gaveta VII, maço 7, doc. 7 and Gonçalo Vasques Coutinho. TT, Gaveta XIV, maço 3, doc. 13.

³¹ PEP, p. 27, OA, Book V, title 95 § 1-3.

³² Tavares, 'A Nobreza no Reinado de Fernando I,' p. 65.

³³ For a case of transition from royal custody to noble tenure in 1385-6, see Henriques, *O Rei e a Terra*, pp. 153-63.

³⁴ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 125.

registers of King Dinis, Afonso IV and Pedro I virtually ignore grants of municipalities. According to the municipal representatives in the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1371, grants to the nobility ought to be paid in money by the fiscal administration, as it had been done under the old kings, and not by giving land away for his vassals.³⁵

There is another difference between the old and the new *contias*. From the brief description provided by Fernão Lopes,³⁶ it becomes clear that the military nature of the old *contia* was less pronounced. According to the chronicler, the value of the *contia* was defined by birth and the sons of vassals were entitled to these payments from their cradle, irrespective of their age. At least until Pedro I, the *contia* remained the preserve of nobles.³⁷ By contrast, the Fernandine *contia* established a contractual relationship, as imminent, effective military service was exchanged for a given sum, regardless of the nobility of the recipient. Moreover, while under the Fernandine system, the vassal had to bear the cost of the equipment, in the old *contia*, the horse and armour were provided by the king and had to revert to the crown by the death of the vassal. These features show that the rationale of the old *contia* was to provide the means for the military capacity of the nobles. By contrast, hard-pressed Fernando I aspired at reinforcing his own military capacity by externalising the costs of equipment. In short, the redistributive nature of the *contia* was attenuated and the emphasis shifted to military efficiency.

The Fernandine *contias* and their military context implied a profound change within the nobility. Historians of the nobility, like Mattoso and Vasconcelos e Sousa, highlighted the 'professionalization' and 'militarisation' of the Portuguese nobles in the reign of Fernando I.³⁸ The Fernandine program is particularly clear in one chapter of an ordinance issued in 1374. Considering that 'the honour of nobility was given in exchange for the responsibility of defending one's land of birth', the king determined that the nobles who did not receive *contias* from the king or from a vassal would lose their privileges and

³⁵ See on this the 43rd article of the *Povos* presented at Lisbon/1371. *Cort. Fernando*, vol. I, p. 35.

³⁶ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter XI, pp. 49-51; see also comments by J. Gouveia Monteiro (*A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 35) and Rita Costa Gomes (*The Making of a Court Society*, p. 223, note 55).

³⁷ Lopes, *Cron. Pedro I*, chapter I, p. 8.

³⁸ For a concrete case in João Afonso Pimentel, see Sousa, *Os Pimentéis*, pp. 285-302.

had the same obligations as the municipal men.³⁹ Besides being an attempt to curb the numbers of the privileged within municipal lands, this order can be seen an attempt to mould all nobles into fighters. Moreover, Fernão Lopes is very clear in how Fernando I and his wife attracted the 'best' of the municipal men to become either their direct vassals or to enter the service of their direct vassals.⁴⁰ In other words, Fernando I sought to merge the notions of 'knight', 'vassal' and 'noble'/'*fidalgo*': all knights had to be vassals to the king and all that served the king as vassals were *ipso facto* noble.

The dismantling of the 'old king's' redistributive system brought by the Fernandine Wars continued during the wars sustained by João I. In the first, uncertain years of his rule, when few nobles were on this side, João I abolished the *contias*.⁴¹ During the decisive years, noble military service became purely stipendiary.⁴² After a brief interval, in which diminished *contias* were paid,⁴³ the reign of João I saw the consolidation of the stipendiary relationship between the king and his fighters, notably his knights.⁴⁴ In 1398, answering to the complaint that the *contias* were small and that they did not respect the nobility's internal hierarchies, like the old kings had done, João I answered that he paid his *contias* according to the number of men-at-arms and not according to the rank.⁴⁵ The *Povos*' adverts in the *Cortes* of 1408 and 1410 show that the crown no longer paid the *contias* by then and in 1427 it is said those payments had disappeared 'long since'.⁴⁶ Unlike the 'old kings' who kept paying the *contias* during peacetime, João could not bear the costs of paying them.⁴⁷

³⁹ OA, Book IV, title 26 §8. The nobles are referred to as '*fidalgos naturaees*.'

⁴⁰ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, chapter LXV, pp. 228-9.

⁴¹ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, vol. I, chapter CXXVIII, p. 295.

⁴² This is an understandable decision, given that debasement provided means to pay for wages and that a war-ravaged and divided country could hardly have produced the necessary revenues for the *contias*. It should however be noted that João I continued to grant lands and rents to the nobles; however, this patronage aimed at political cooperation and had no direct relationship with military service.

⁴³ The interval is between 1387 and, at least, 1402. In 1387, when the military initiative was firmly in the hand of the Portuguese and when more nobles had joined the ranks, João I renewed the *contias* and the system was still working in 1398 (as revealed in the grievances presented by the nobles in the *Cortes* of 1398, OA, Book II, title 59 §24). The 1401 decision of the monarchy to store 4,060 individual armours for its 'vassals' can be interpreted as a continuation of the *contia* system (Lopes, *Cron. João I*, II, chapter CC). They can be deemed 'diminished' because while Pedro I and Fernando I paid between 100-150 *l.*, 1188-1782 Ag g in metal terms, per knight, João I after 1387 paid 400 *l.* (max. 305 g Ag) with about ¼ of the purchasing power.

⁴⁴ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 43.

⁴⁵ OA, Book II, title 59 §24.

⁴⁶ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, pp. 261, 265, 281. Also, *Chanc. Duarte I*, vol. III, doc. 491, p. 351.

⁴⁷ It is indeed striking that the sole estimate for the *contias*, dating from 1402, has it that these were equivalent to 9.9% of the total revenue. Considering that in 1402, there were 4,060 knights due to serve the king and that the

The claims of historians of nobility and of warfare about the consolidation of the stipendiary relationship in Portugal, along with the general trend in Europe, have not been yet quantified. In contemporary Aragon, as studied by Jorge Saiz Serrano, the military service was increasingly well-paid and offered a real opportunity to partake in the crown's growing fiscal capacity.⁴⁸ While evidence for wages of Portuguese soldiers are sparse and unsystematic, it is still possible to group some disparate cases of the flat wages paid to 'mounted and well-equipped' men-at-arms from 1369 to 1514 (Fig. 28).

Fig. 28 – Men-at-Arms Wages, 1369-1514

| Year | Context | Monthly Wages | g Ag (approx.) | Purchasing Power (Wheat Units) |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1369 | Royal Expedition, Castile | 45 l. | 390 | 90 |
| 1386 | Royal Expedition, Castile | 300 l. | 382 | 41 |
| 1415 | Royal Expedition, North Africa | 700 l. | 15 | 2 |
| 1437 | Royal Expedition, North Africa | 100 r. | 26 | 11 |
| 1438 | Garrison, Ceuta, North Africa | 83 r. | 22 | 8 |
| 1472 | Garrison, Tangiers, North Africa | 100 r. | 12 | 5 |
| 1474 | Defence of the Border, Castile | 210 r. | 25 | 11 |
| 1506 | Garrison, North Africa | 200 r. | 20 | 5 |
| 1511 | Garrison, Safim, North Africa | 185 r. | 18 | 6 |
| 1511 | Garrison, Ceuta, North Africa | 350 r. | 34 | 12 |
| 1514 | Garrison, Indian Ocean | 100 r. | 10 | 3 |

Notes: Soldiers stationed in North and East Africa garrisons had free rations; in order to ease the distortion caused by 'good' and 'bad' agricultural years, the purchasing power relates to the average of the previous five years' prices, as in Fig. 24.

Sources: For wages: 1369 - Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter XXXVI, p. 119; 1386 - Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapter LXV, p. 168; 1415 - *MH*, vol. II, doc. 57, p. 136; 1438 - Duarte, *Livros dos Conselhos*, doc. 42, pp. 169-70; 1472 - *DP*, vol. III, doc. 82, p. 110; 1474 - Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos*, doc. 3, p. 51; 1506 - *Relazione*, Prologue; Cosme, João, *A Guarnição de Safim em 1511*, Lisboa, 1994, p. 138. 1511 (Ceuta) and 1514 (India) - Santos, João Marinho dos, *A Guerra e as Guerras na Expansão Portuguesa*, Lisboa, 1998, p. 277; for silver weight: *HMMP* and Dias, João Alves, *A Moeda*, Marques, A. H. de O., ed., *Portugal do Renascimento à Crise Dinástica*, Lisbon, 1998, pp. 254-76; purchasing power: calculated from the wheat prices in Marques, *Introdução à História da Agricultura*, pp. 214-23.

value of the *contia* four years earlier was 2,000 l., the result would be 8,120,000 l., a tenth of the crown's revenues by them Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, Chapter CC. 10% was roughly the average yearly expenditure with North Africa (see *infra* section 8.3.1)

⁴⁸ Saiz, *Guerra y Nobleza*, pp. 646-8.

The data are far from serial and values differ according to circumstances (Indian Ocean garrisons had a decent possibility of prizes; those in the desolate outposts of North Africa did not). Yet, when read diachronically, the values of Fig. 28 make manifest that the value of military wages in the fifteenth century strongly decayed. The lavish wages paid by a still wealthy Fernando I in his first war, presumably reflecting the custom of the 'old kings,' make for a perfect contrast with the meagre wages of the North African garrisons. Giving these figures, it is hard to conceive the military nobility as benefiting from stipends and, consequently, as a vested interested pushing the monarchy for military ventures.

The institution of stipendiary service and the militarisation of the nobility were accompanied by wide changes of the municipalities in their military dimension. As argued, under the old kings, war was a potential burden for the towns of the realm, either in the form of summoning of their municipal militia or in the form of extraordinary 'services' in lieu of direct military participation. In the municipal tradition subsidies, notably the *sisas*, were in themselves a 'service' to the king and, as such, they could be understood as payments in lieu of military service (see *supra* section 5.1). Fernandine Wars disrupted this alternative by imposing these two burdens simultaneously on the *Povos*. When discussing for the first time the concession of the *sisas* to the king in the *Cortes* of Leiria of 1372 the *Povos* claimed that the payment of the *sisas* made little sense as they sustained the war effort by fighting and, through debasements and purveyances, by paying.⁴⁹ Under João I this burden did not disappear, only became constitutionally legitimate for in the very Act of Election written in the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 the *Povos* agreed to uphold the regal status of João I with blood and monies (see *supra* section 6.1). Indeed, at least in the well-known cases of Lisbon and Porto, municipal service made a significant military contribution in the decisive years of 1383-7.⁵⁰

After the decisive early fighting, military and financial services became again mutually exclusive. By granting the *sisas* to the monarchy in 1387, the *Povos* obtained a great reduction of their military obligations. Indeed, the

⁴⁹ *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 126.

⁵⁰ *Cf.* The case of Lisbon in Martins, *Lisboa e a Guerra*, pp. 52-4.

instrument that granted the *sisas* in 1387 explicitly exempted the military contribution of the municipality, unless a full-scale invasion materialised.⁵¹ This can be read as a response to the complaint voiced by the *Povos* in the *Cortes* of Elvas/1372 that the *Povos* both fought for and paid for the defence of the realm. The division between fighting nobles and tax-paying municipalities represented a clear break from the military past of the Portuguese towns and cities and from their self-concept of collective vassals to the king. This separation derived clearly from the Fernandine attempt to sharply distinguish his vassal-knights from the rest. However, the 1387 grant of the *sisas* did not abolish the *quantia* and the Castilian threat was not yet totally extinguished. Indeed, as it will be explained, the end of municipal collective service did not result in the simple exclusion of the municipal men from warfare. The relationship is singularly more complex.

The military concerns that led the crown to develop armed service among the nobles led to similar attempts within the municipalities. As it will be remembered, municipal membership implied the participation in the war with onerous equipment according to the wealth, as set in the *quantia* system (see *supra* section 3.3). Thanks to the research of Miguel Gomes Martins it is possible to obtain a notional evolution of the *quantia* that defined the liability to horse ownership in Lisbon until 1418 (Fig. 29).

Fig. 29 – Minimal *Quantia* to Own a Mount applied in Lisbon, 1317-1418

| | Nominal | G of Ag | Purchasing Power (Wheat Units) |
|------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| 1317 | 1,000 <i>l.</i> | 11,080 | 4,000 |
| 1367 | 900 <i>l.</i> | 9,972 | 1,800 |
| 1390 | 10,000 <i>l.</i> | 7,640 | 2,857 |
| 1396 | 10,000 <i>l.</i> | 2,070 | 1,428 |
| 1397 | 10,000 <i>l.</i> | 1,620 | |
| 1415 | 100,000 <i>l.</i> | 2,200 | 317 |
| 1418 | 32 marks of Ag | 7,344 | 1,600 |

⁵¹ AML, Livro I de Cortes, no. 7, fol. 63. It should be noted that exception was made for specialist units, as bowmen and galley mariners, and unequipped infantry. As such, the exemption served the interests of the municipal elites.

Notes: notes at Fig. 28 apply; the *quantia* in 1415 is not specific for Lisbon as it was applied kingdom-wide.

Source: nominal values - Martins, *Lisboa e a Guerra*, p. 23 and, for 1415, *MH*, vol. II, doc. 57, p. 136; metallic equivalences - *HMMP*; purchasing power calculated from the wheat prices in Marques, *Introdução à História da Agricultura*, pp. 214-23.

The evolution of the *quantias*, although fragmentary, is eloquent about the difficulties caused by the state of war combined with debasement and inflation. As is clear, the men forced to own horse became considerably poorer in both metallic and purchasing terms than they had been in the early decades of the fourteenth-century. Liability to free military service became more widespread. This enlargement had a direct military rationale which was served in two ways: by boosting the numbers of municipal cavalry and by inducing men to join the ranks of the nobility. Indeed, the enlargement of mounted military service added up to a tendency that had started in the early days of the Fernandine Wars: the exodus of men from the onerous municipal condition to the ranks of the nobles hosts as waged fighters or even as vassals.⁵² This is clearly stated in the grievances presented at the *Cortes* of Coimbra/1385 and continued throughout the wars. The tendency was already felt in the second Fernandine Wars, as revealed in a 1373 ordinance analysed by J. Gouveia Monteiro.⁵³ It was still a reality in 1398.⁵⁴ The propensity of the municipal knights to join noble service was economically rational: as they were forced to keep horses and weapons, joining a noble military retinue or serving in the wars represented an opportunity to profit from these unwanted possessions.

The converging changes in the military profile of the aristocracy and of the municipal oligarchies led to the progressive identification between fighters, vassals of the king and nobles. While legal and administrative vocabulary is not entirely coincident, with the words 'vassal', 'knight' and 'noble' (*fidalgo*) keeping their distinctive undertones,⁵⁵ fifteenth-century Portugal saw the consolidation of

⁵² In the 1385 *Cortes* of Coimbra, one article complained against the exemption of municipal dues by those who joined the noble retinues (*acostados*). In the reign of João I these complaints became regular in the *Cortes* whose deputies called for the control of the number of vassals. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p. 225. For the continuation of the exodus, see Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 57. As mentioned, Fernando I himself took some high-profile members of the municipalities and made them his vassals. Lopes, *Cron. Fernando*, chapter XXXIX, pp. 228-9.

⁵³ Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 35. According to Gouveia Monteiro, The semi-autonomous companies formed as a consequence of the prolonged state of war drawn their men both from municipalities and from vassals.

⁵⁴ OA, Book II, title 59 §21 and §26.

⁵⁵ Pereira, João Cordeiro, 'A Estrutura Social e o seu Devir', in Marques, A. H. de Oliveira Marques, ed., *Portugal do Renascimento à Crise Dinástica* Lisbon, 1998, pp. 290-301.

an aristocratic military class very different from the old *contia*-earning nobles.⁵⁶ Chronicler Zurara famously portrayed the young men who felt disheartened by the peace treaty of 1411 and wondered how they could earn their means and honour.⁵⁷ All in all, the different factors referred to above contributed towards the post-war swelling of the number of vassals, that is to say those who served the king with horse and armours (Fig. 30).

Fig. 30 – ‘Vassals’ Serving the King, 1372-1483

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Battle of Chão de Couce (1372) | <3,000 |
| Battle of Caia (1381) | c. 3,000 |
| Battle of Aljubarrota (1385) | 2,000-2,500 |
| Muster in Valariça (1386) | 4,500 |
| Muster in Évora (1396) | 4,000 |
| Muster in Ponte de Lima (1398) | 4,000 |
| Siege of Valencia (1400) | 4,000 |
| Ordinance of 1401 | 4,400 |
| Before Ceuta (c. 1414) | 4,685 |
| Siege of Ceuta (1415) | 5,385* |
| Siege of Tangiers (1437) | 3,500 ^a |
| Expedition in Castile (1445) | 2,000 |
| Battle of Alfarrobeira (1449) | 4,000 |
| Expedition in North Africa (1463-4) | 2,000 |
| First Attack on Castile (1475) | 6,000 |
| Muster of Pedra Boa (1476) | 5,600 |
| Battle of Toro (1476) | 3,500 |
| Ordinance of 1483 | 2,000 |
| Siege of Azemour (1513) | > 5,000 |

Notes: bold – ordinances, thus only counting nobles; * - including 700 newly-raised vassals to the category;^a - only a part of the 3,500 summoned for the campaign in Tangiers actually embarked.

Sources: 1372 – Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapters LXXII; 1381 - *Cron. João I*, part 1, chapter LXX; 1385 - Monteiro, *Aljubarrota*, p. 98; 1386-1402 – *Cron. João I*, part 2, chapters CLX, CLXVII, CLXXXIII, CCIII; 1414 and 1415 – MH, vol. II, doc. 57, p. 135; 1436 – MH, vol. V, doc. 104, p. 208; 1437 – MH, vol. VI, doc. 27; 1445 - RED, doc.6, p. 68; 1449 - 1449 – Monteiro, 'Organização e Formação Militares,' p. 207; 1463-4 – Rui de Pina, *Crónica de Dom Afonso V*, chapter CXLVII, p. 21; 1476 – Góis, Daimão de, *Chronica do Príncipe Dom Ioam*, Graça Almeida Rodrigues (ed.) Lisbon, 1977, Chapter L, p. 117. Duarte, , *Nova História Militar*, pp. 375-390; 1475 – BA – 22 – X - 51, fols. 119-119v; 1483 - PEP, doc. XXXIV; 1513

⁵⁶ 'Vassal' denoted the receiving of *contia*. In 1439, the privileges of reform are given to a non-noble and it is explicitly said that he would still be ranked as a 'vassal whom we give *contias*.' even if *contias* were non longer given. *Marrocos*, vol. I, doc. LVI, p. 86.

⁵⁷ Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 40.

Fig. 30 shows to what extent, Fernandine efforts to boost the number of knights would set a trend. According to Fernão Lopes, in 1372 Fernando I complained that he was not able to field the '3,000 or 4,000 knights his honour required.'⁵⁸ In 1386, by contrast, João I, after his initial victories, mustered 4,500 cavalry, without paying *contias*. Three decades later, the monarchy was able to embark around 5,000 across the Strait of Gibraltar, along more than the double of foot soldiers. By the early sixteenth century, such grand expeditions were still possible. The growth of vassals should be ascribed to the wars. Indeed, the lowering of the *quantias* made military capacity more common across society. Moreover, North African campaigns and, most of all, the continuous war sustained by its garrisons led to more frequent knighthoods (and privileges thereof) by means of military prowess. For such reason, João II voiced a concern that would never cross the mind of the 'old kings' when he claimed in 1482 that 'most people in this realm are knights, a circumstance which was both disrespectful for that order [of chivalry] and detrimental to our service.'⁵⁹

However, unlike Fernando presumably intended these forces were not self-sufficient. Like the 'old kings', these men had part of their equipment subsidised by the monarchy. As Gouveia Monteiro documented, after the conquest of Ceuta, the Portuguese monarchy extensively bought weaponry, including fire weapons, from Flanders.⁶⁰ During the fifteenth century, both Duarte I (in 1436) and João II (1483) attempted to renew the *contias* system and provide plate armour to all noble knights.⁶¹

Recently, Sir Peter Russell wondered on how a country with short manpower and resources like Portugal could sustain an aggressive, money-intensive imperial expansion from 1415 onwards.⁶² Assuming that the first premises are correct, part of the answer lies in the combination of cheap price

⁵⁸ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, chapter LXXII.

⁵⁹ Monteiro, *Armeiros e Armazéns*.

⁶⁰ 'A mor parte da gente destes reinos sam caualeiros o que alem de ser menospreço da dita ordem, he cousa de grande deseruico nosso.' Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos*, p. 170 (draft of a letter to the captains in North Africa, dated 1482).

⁶¹ There were paid from 1387 until at least 1401. Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part I, Chapter CXXVIII, p. 285, part II, chapter CCI, pp. 245-7; OA, Book II, title 59 §24,

⁶² Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 30.

and abundance of military labour framed by a tight cohesion between the monarchy and his knights. Expensive wages and exclusive *quantias* meant that war under the old kings was more capital-intensive. By contrast, cheap wages and inclusive *quantias* made war far more affordable to the monarchy. To add up, absence of *contias* made permanent costs even lighter. This did not deter the military because they regarded service as a means of social advancement. This combination would be a sufficient cause for more frequent warfare; a trigger-happy monarchy would provide the necessary cause.

Section 7.2 - 'Smoke in the Air'

'It is rather small profit to hoard in our treasuries one or two hundred millions [l.], such is the wealth of this land, as these monies have a sort of gunpowder in them so that with the slightest hint of war or festivities or the such they smoke into the air, leaving nothing but their dirty bags.'⁶³ Thus did *infante* João dismiss the financial objections raised against further crusading warfare in Morocco in an epistolary advice to his royal brother Duarte I in 1432 or 1433.⁶⁴ Money was not the problem. Not that João was eager to pursue the conquest: his advice, elegantly balancing the theological, legal, strategic and financial issues surrounding the project and without a clear, decided verdict, is all but an exhortation to war. Simply, to the thoughtful *infante*, heavy expenditure should not be regarded as a major problem; whatever the decision, monies were destined to 'smoke in the air.'

Infante João's stance hints at a total inversion of the approach to finance displayed by the pre-Fernandine kings whose dynastical treasury was transmitted and accrued in each royal succession. In his will of 1322, King Dinis bequeathed to his successor the treasury he accumulated for 'the defence against the enemies of the faith.'⁶⁵ The accumulation of these treasuries suggests that fourteenth-century Portuguese kings regarded military monetary resources as difficult to renew. Considering the high wages and the cost of a

⁶³ 'He assaz pequeno proveito ter em nosos thesouros çento ou duzentos contos que he a riqueza desta terra, porque polo azogue que esta moeda tem com hum pouco de fogo d'emborilho de guerra ou de festas ou outras cousas semelhaeis asy se uay em fumo que al dela non fica senon os sacos çujos.' See Duarte, King of Portugall, 'Resposta (...) polo Jfante Dom Yohão', *Livro dos Conselhos de el-rei D. Duarte (Livro da Cartuxa)*, ed. João Alves Dias, Lisbon, 1982, p. 47. See Comments in English by P. E. Russell in *Prince Henry*, p.139.

⁶⁴ On the context and the underlying debates, see Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 137-140.

⁶⁵ *Provas*, vol. I, part 2, doc. 11, p. 130.

fleet of galleys paired to Castile it appears natural that they thought so. The speed by which Fernando I, as Lopes intently highlighted, dissipated the treasury patiently hoarded by his predecessors in his first two wars with Castile testifies this.⁶⁶ By contrast with the old king, as far as we can gauge from their wills, neither João I nor his successors strove to constitute a treasury; rather the opposite: most of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century royal wills were concerned on how outstanding debts were to be paid.⁶⁷ In the death of João I in 1433, there were still allusions to the monies he owed from the Ceuta expedition, eighteenth years before. Afonso V, for instance, left about two-thirds of the annual revenue, 50,000,000 *r.*, of debts at his death in 1481.⁶⁸ In his will of 1495, João II still had to put aside 4,000,000 *r.* per annum to pay for his father's debts contracted in the invasion of Castile.⁶⁹

The end of hoarding is a defining feature of the 'new kings.' 'Silver famine' and the monetary situation were perhaps strong factors behind this. The debasements wrought by João I cannot have failed to alter the monarchy's attitude towards hoarding. Not only were the 'old kings' bound to the fiscal constitution but also they actively favoured the minting of solid gold and silver coinages destined for hoarding. With thin silver content and fickle purchasing power, corrupted fifteenth-century bullion was unfit for that purpose. This strength of the 'new kings', free-hand in coinage manipulations, was also a weakness, as it made unwise to store up monetary reserves. It cannot fail to have given 'new kings' a sense that monetary resources were easily renewable, as the light-hearted comment of the *infante* João hints at. Full authority in the constitutional acceptance of coinage manipulation (see section 6.1) made the decision to declare war easier in two ways: first, because it supplied the monarch with ready funds with the political negotiation and the morosity of the *pedidos*; second, because it did not gravely affect the *sisas* and, thus, ordinary royal income.

Deciding war and peace remained a firm prerogative of the monarchs, even if complaints against it can be found in the articles of the *Povos* from the time of Fernando I to João II. Participation of the *Cortes* in questions of war and

⁶⁶ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Prologue, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Azevedo, *Épocas*, p. 39; *Marrocos*, I, doc. XXIII.

⁶⁸ Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos*, p. 266.

⁶⁹ *Provas*, vol. II, doc. 28, p. 211.

peace was only occasional. The *Povos* managed in some periods to keep their representatives in the royal counsel (after 1385 and after 1438). Yet, it is harder to find among fifteenth-century monarchs, the rational choices of the old kings concerning external policy. Even a monarch whose personal convictions opposed war in Africa, Duarte I, embarked in his brother gung-ho plans of invasion of North Africa. Two decades later, his son, Afonso V asked to the *Cortes* money to fight in the Mediterranean in a crusade that was eventually called off. Still, Afonso V used the resulting *pedido* to obtain a new base in North Africa. But the most paradigmatic example of fickle decision-making is the attack on Tangiers and Asilah in 1471. The king's initial objective was Tangiers, possible on advice of his brother. The royal counsel opposed but Afonso V persisted. The *Povos* called for Asilah instead. In the words of Góis, Afonso V 'willingly accepted this because his purpose was to go to war anyway.'⁷⁰ Eventually, he captured both with his 20,000-strong army. This erratic decision-making emphasises the fact that, unlike the precedent period, a great deal of Portuguese fifteenth-century military ventures appear totally disconnected from any consistent strategic rationale.

Extraordinary expenditure is the main theme of a surviving memorandum entitled as 'Expenses Made by the King from the Conquest of Ceuta [1415] to the Present Day [1473].'⁷¹ The memorandum contains the items of extraordinary expenses expressed in *dobras*, a gold currency which worked as unit of account, separated by reigns and divided in two categories: mere 'expenses' (*despezas*) and 'embassies', with the former comprising various items that we could group into military expeditions, household endowments, armadas and dowries.⁷² In view of a few other sources, the figures present in

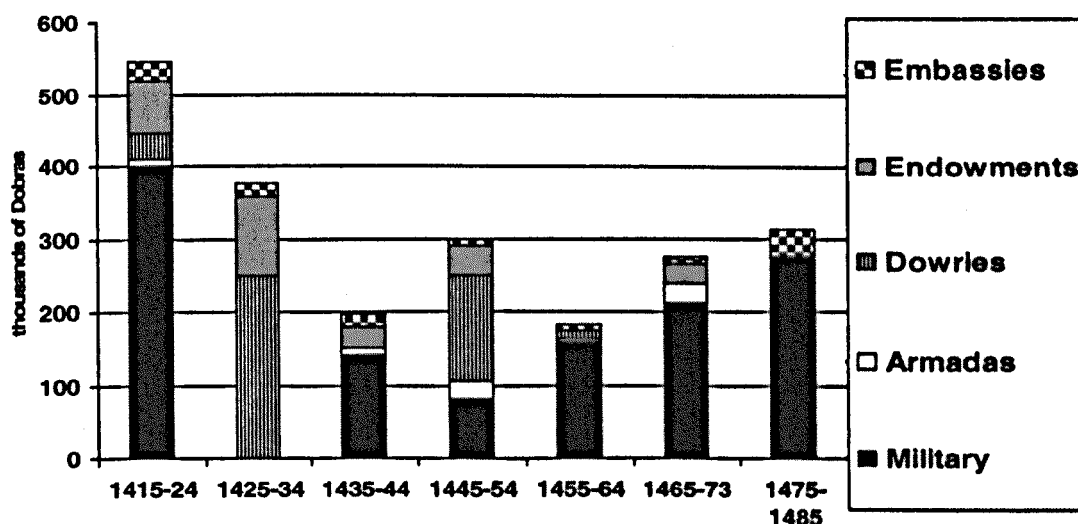
⁷⁰ Góis, *Chronica do Príncipe*, chapter xviii, pp. 57-6. See also, the case of Al-Ksar. Góis, *Chronica do Príncipe*, chapter x, pp. 31-2.

⁷¹ RED, doc.6, pp.66-82. This title, if it is indeed a title, falls well short of the actual content, as the memorandum is actually part of a miscellany comprising many other financial accounts. Besides the announced list of expenses, the document comprises also a summary of revenues for the year 1473, a map of the set-up expenditure for the same years, a list of the 'gracious' annuities conceded from 1460 onwards, a list of the annuities granted for services, an itemised list of permanent expenses and, finally, a list of 'other' ordinary expenses of the kingdom.

⁷² Its organisation is, however, far from perfect: not all these entries are easily recognisable and some minor expenses with embassies have inconsistent figures and units of account; among the list of expenses, there is also a mention to what was technically one item of revenue (the general subsidy of 1460.) RED, p. 117. From the wording of this miscellany, however, it is clear that it was not sent to the ruling monarch in 1473, as Afonso V is always referred to in the third person. As the year compilation ends in 1473, it is tempting to relate it to the *Cortes* of 1472-3 (Coimbra/Évora) where excessive financial demands, uncontrolled expenditure and the maintenance of North African strongholds were a major theme for the proctors of the *Povos*. Indeed, the breakdown of the different types of

the memorandum appear broadly reliable.⁷³ Moreover, the statement can be complemented by the estimates of the Prior of the Hospitallers *Dom Vasco de Ataíde* for the war with Castile from 1474 to 1478 and other similar payments.⁷⁴ As the only legitimate son of João II, prince Afonso, had not yet married and thus had its own household, the figure of the seventh decade should be read with the caveat that there is no information available on armadas and on the hypothetical household endowment for the heir of the throne.

Fig. 31- Extraordinary Expenditure, 1415-84



Sources: *RED*, doc. 8 pp. 66-82; Fig. 32

Fig. 31 shows that after emerging victorious from the independence war, the conquest of Ceuta set a pattern of constant extraordinary expenses, even if

annuities in parts four, five and seven of the document directly answers the abolition of the 'gracious' and the annuities demanded by the ninth article or *capítulo geral*. Equally, the breakdown of the permanent expenditure - comprising the wages of officers of such dubious utility as the catchers of vulture's feathers - seem to substantiate the Cortes' complaints against excessive expenditure. In the words of the Povos' representatives: the king should give men to the offices, rather than offices to men. Sousa, *Cortes Medievais*, I, p. 387.

⁷³ Eight items may be 'controlled' by the later and much incomplete memorandum of the Prior of the Hospitallers *Dom Vasco de Ataíde* (*Provas*, vol. II, part 1, p. 21) and the difference of values is never very wide (between 6.25% and 17%) and the 1473 text presents normally lower figures. The quittance of the dowry of Princess Isabel (*LM-1*, doc. 15, pp. 69-71) gives the value of 154,000 *coronae auri* for the dowry alone (excluding celebrations and the voyage) instead of the 250,000 *dobras* given by the memorandum. The memorandum estimates the cost of the *Asilah* expedition in 34,000 *dobras*, slightly less than the 39,000 *dobras* that sixteenth-century chronicler João de Barros claimed to have seen in the *Contos* books. See Barros, João de, *Décadas da Ásia*, ed. Thomas Earle, Lisbon, 1998. The values shown in the list of expenditure items for the reign of King Duarte are also very similar (*MH*, vol. VI, doc. 90, pp. 253-4). All these differences can also be ascribed to the oscillations of the conversion of *r.* into *dobras*. There is a less reassuring account in the surviving letter of acquittal of the armada sent under Fernando de Castro against the Genoese in 1441 which estimates the cost of alimentation and wages at 710,000 *r.* or 5,916 *dobras* (TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 2, fol. 102) while the memorandum reckons the total cost of the expedition in 9,000 *dobras*. This difference could be ascribed to investment in shipbuilding and other materials.

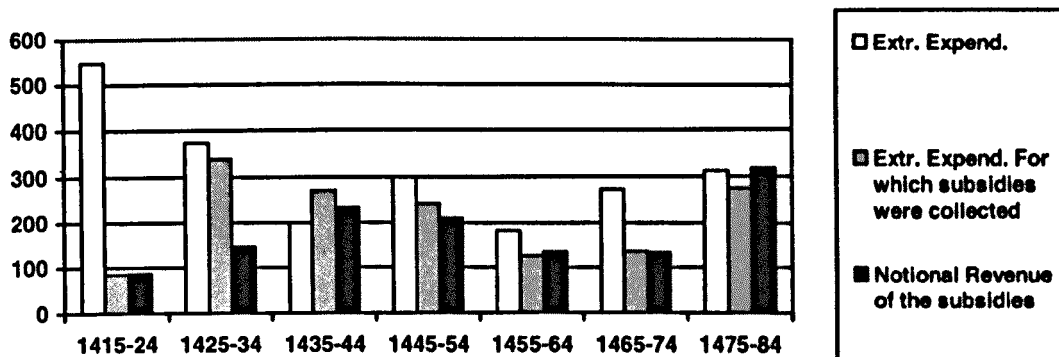
⁷⁴ Published in *Provas*, vol. II, part 1, doc. 8, pp. 21-28.

there is a sensible diminution of extraordinary expenditure after the first two decades which are alone in exceeding the average expenditure per decade (364,000 *dobras*). Together with the data provided by *Dom Vasco*, the memorandum confirms the importance of military expenditure which accounts for 58% of the total extraordinary expenditure, or to 61.5% if the, essentially military, armadas are included. Furthermore, these figures show that dowries and other endowments to the princely households slowly lost their importance in relation to war and naval expeditions. The proportion of military expenditure and armadas grew at expenses of other items, such as endowments and dowries. In the last decades considered (from 1465 to 1484) military expenses alone represented 83% of the total, while war-driven expenses were around 45% in the first two.

The impact of this expenditure can only be understood if these figures are somehow compared with the existing notions of receipt. In very broad terms, the 1415-44 trend of decreasing expenditure can be related with the dip in royal revenues that has been observed (see Fig. 14), while the subsequent gradual growth of the expenditure roughly parallels that of the ordinary revenue from the middle of the century onwards (see Fig. 16, 17, 18). The main reason behind this was Portuguese involvement in North Africa which alone accounts for 793,000 *dobras*, that is to say more than a third of the total extraordinary expenditure. The burden supposed by the monies spent in North Africa is particularly impressive: the cost of Ceuta, 280,000 *dobras*, exceeded the annual revenue of 204,000 *dobras* for 1401; the 57,000 *dobras* paid in the 'Tangiers Disaster', exceeded the annual revenue of 1432, a mere 47,000 *dobras*. The expedition of Asilah and Tangiers in 1471 costed around 104,000 or 112,000 *dobras*, while the kingdom's revenues were about 180,00 *dobras* in 1473 (see 'sources' on Fig. 14), it is clear that these expeditions supposed immense resources that the ordinary receipt, even if unencumbered, could not absorb.

It appears as if the key decisions, both military and political, were taken in consideration of the shape of the finances. It would appear that rather than 'causes' for moving the crown into demands, these are pretexts for accessing the kingdom's wealth. The obvious solution was to obtain extraordinary revenues in the form of subsidies paid by the *Povos*. But did it work?

Fig. 32 – Extraordinary Expenditure and Extraordinary Revenue, 1415-84



Source: Fig. 25; Fig. 26; Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos*, p. 266.

The comparison of receipt and expenditure makes it clear that, after the decade of 1415-24, resort to subsidies to offset the expenses became the norm. Moreover, Fig. 32 shows that, after the second decade, the receipt of the *pedidos* appears designed in order to match extraordinary expenses.⁷⁵ If we consider the case of the campaign of Ceuta, whose wages were paid with depleted coinage,⁷⁶ and the changes in monetary policy (see *supra* section 6.1) it is clear that until the mid-1430s the monarchy resorted to debasement in order to offset extraordinary charges. The proceeds of the subsidies were, at least in theory, sufficient to allow the Portuguese crown to pursue its goals, provided that extraordinary expenditures uncovered by taxation were kept within reasonable limits.⁷⁷ While armadas and embassies did not give place to extraordinary taxation, the endowment of the princely households, the dowries sent to Portuguese princesses and all Portuguese military interventions in Castile were subsidised by the *Povos*. However, the sixth decade appears to be very different in this respect with its extraordinary expenditure untapped by

⁷⁵ It cannot escape mention the fact that the broad coincidence between the expenses for which taxes were collected and the notional revenue of the *pedidos* hints at the consistency of these data.

⁷⁶ Other expenses were made with more or less arbitrary expedients. Cargo ships, mostly foreign, were obtained through a prise of salt. Moreover, as P. E. Russell remarks, the monarchy became strongly indebted because of this campaign. Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 44.

⁷⁷ The evolution of embassies can be interpreted as particularly revealing of a progressive restriction of conspicuous expenditure. Each of the four embassies between 1415 and 1424 cost 7,000 *dobras*, a sum sevenfold the average for the entire period. In the times of João I (died 1433) embassies are few but sumptuous, whereas in the reign of Afonso V (1438-81) they are frequent but sober. The same is true about the endowments and other transfers in favour of the *infantes*. Whatever the cause (diminishing returns or rationalisation of costs) the kings manage to organise less costly embassies and expeditions. Even the heir to the throne prince João (future João II) had to content himself with a household endowment of 25,000 *dobras* (1472) equal to what the fourth male son of João I had received back in 1424.

subsidies. The reason can be found in the conquest of Asilah and Tangiers in 1471 which, like with Ceuta, was not subsidised by *pedidos*. This case and that of Ceuta bring out a crucial problem: the financing of North African imperial expansionism.

Fig. 33 – North Africa Extraordinary Expenditure and Extraordinary Revenue, 1415-84 (in *dobras*)

| Expedition | Extr. Expend. | Notional Subsidy | Subsidy as % of Total Expend. |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1415 – Capture of Ceuta | 280,000 | None | 0 |
| 1418 – Succour to Ceuta | 85,000 | 89,375* | 105 |
| 1437 – ‘Tangiers Disaster’ | 57,000 | 87,500 ^q | 153 |
| 1458 – Capture of Al-Ksar | 104,000 | 93,695 [^] | 90 |
| 1458 – Fortification of Al-Ksar | 20,000 | None | 0 |
| 1463 – Expedition to Ceuta | 35,000 | None | 0 |
| 1471 – Capture of Asilah | 112,000 | None | 0 |
| 1471-4 – Succours to Ceuta | 100,000 | None | 0 |
| Totals: | 793,000 | 270,570 | 34% |

Notes: * = 1.5 *pedidos* (10,500,000 *r.*) with the *dobra* at 120 *r.*. It can be assumed that the money from the *pedido* of 1418 was applied in the succour to Ceuta once the original motive for the subsidy – the threat of a Castilian attack – proved to be unfounded (Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 340). Indeed, the estimated value of the reinforcement sent to Ceuta (85,000 *dobras*) was almost exactly the same as the notional value of one and half *pedidos* (89,375); ^q = 1.5 *pedidos* (13,125,000 *r.* with the *dobra* at 150 *r.*) (OA, Book IV, title 2 § 13). [^] = 3 *pedidos* (21,550,000 *r.* with the *dobra* at 230 *r.*) (PEP, doc. 23); these *pedidos* were initially agreed in the Cortes of Lisbon/1456 and were destined to a projected papal crusade against the Turks in the Mediterranean; as the expedition failed to materialise for external reasons, the money was diverted to an expedition in North Africa (Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 377).

Sources: Fig. 31; Fig. 14.

Fig. 32 shows that extraordinary taxation had a limited role in North African expansion, the crown’s most intensive and successful military endeavour. The yield of the *pedidos* covered less than one-third of the total costs. This pattern was not changed significantly under kings João II and Manuel I whose Moroccan expeditions of 1489, 1501, 1506, 1507, 1508, 1513, 1514 and 1515, some of which involving more than 20,000 men, were not financed by any *pedido* or subsidy.⁷⁸

In Portuguese history, a single subsidy was knowingly conceded to fund a North African expedition, that of 1437, and even the legitimacy of this procedure

⁷⁸ On these dates, Costa, João Paulo Oliveira e, *D. Manuel I*, Lisbon, 2005, pp. 277-299.

did raise many doubts.⁷⁹ The expedition to relieve Ceuta from the siege of 1418 and the conquest of Al-Ksar were financed by subsidies approved in the *Cortes* for other, albeit not entirely different, purposes.⁸⁰ The lack of extraordinary direct taxation in North Africa reflects the general stance of the *Povos* towards external offensive warfare. Indeed, while the municipal elites in the thirteenth and fourteenth century regarded their negotiated contributions to royal campaigns as an aid to the lord, the *Povos* as a whole questioned the justification for the campaigns. There were legal and religious objections to the legitimacy and the justness of the war.⁸¹ Contemporary political writing regarded wars of conquest as objectives contrary to regal duty.⁸² For the *Povos*, the wars in Africa followed goals and aims that were alien to the interests of the kingdom.⁸³

The *Cortes'* reluctance to finance other conflicts than those taking place in the borders of the realm meant that the monarchy had to resort to ordinary revenues to fund campaigning in North Africa, lest it would continue with the dubious expedients as those found by João I in 1415 (massive debasements) or Afonso V in 1458 (diverting subsidies paid for different reasons). From the late 1460s, the monarchy proved able to build and manage an empire without resorting often to extraordinary revenues, namely constitutionally expensive and administratively cumbersome *pedidos* which practically disappeared in the 1480s (see Fig. 24). Although no letters of acquittal of the treasurers of expeditions survive,⁸⁴ it is clear that late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century conquests in North Africa were financed by the buoyant ordinary revenues (see *supra* chapter 5).

The transformations wrought by the late-fourteenth-century war finances placed new instruments in the hands of the monarchy. The inflation-immune

⁷⁹ Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 135-61. King Duarte is said to have said that the *pedido* 'came from my will rather than from necessity'. Pina, Rui de, *Crónica do Rei D. Duarte*, ed. António Borges Coelho, Lisbon 1985, chapter XIII, p. 91.

⁸⁰ The subsidy of 1456, which financed the expedition of Al-Ksar was intended to pay for a naval campaign in the Mediterranean against the Turk in succour of the Pope. *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 377-380.

⁸¹ Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 153-4, 161-4.

⁸² See the already-quoted memorandum of *infante* João in 1432 and the letter of the Kingdom's Constable Dom Pedro in Fonseca, Luis Adão da, 'Uma Carta do Condestável Dom Pedro sobre a Política Marroquina de D. Afonso V', *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História*, vol. I, Porto, 1970, pp. 83-96.

⁸³ BNP, Códice 6969, p. 554-5 (141st article presented at Leiria-Santarém/1433).

⁸⁴ There are two letters of acquittal to Rui Pires who was commissioned to buy wheat and other materials in Spain when Manuel was planning an expedition to Africa in 1501. However, most of the money he received on the two occasions was from Fernando Afonso, the central officer charged with assembling the monies for this campaign (called both *tesoureiro* and *recebedor*; treasurer or receiver). TT, Chanc. Manuel, Livro 22, fol. 57v.

sisas and the end of the stringent fiscal constitution of the 'kings of old' emancipated the crown's external policy from the interests of the kingdom and allowed it to follow its own interests, however fickle they could be. Expansionist campaigns in North Africa clearly show that the external policy, unlike that of the old kings, was designed with little consideration for the revenues. The very building of the empire has a very close relationship to the changes that followed the Fernadine Wars.

Section 7.3 - The Empire of the *Sisas*

When, in 1498, asked by the *Cortes* to give away the *sisas*, unlike all his predecessors, who lectured the *Povos* on their legal and political legitimacy, King Manuel adroitly remarked that the proceeds of the *sisas* did not languish in the royal treasuries, rather they went 'back to where they came from.'⁸⁵ Unlike *infante* João, King Manuel understood that money did not smoke in the air; it ended up in the hands of his subjects, most of all of the 'nobles, knights and squires' who contributed to the current imperial ventures.⁸⁶ Without the *sisas*, he argued, the realm would be defenceless. Also, how many privileges, grants, dowries, gifts would not be given had the monarchy abdicated of the *sisas*? If the crown abandoned the *sisas*, King Manuel's answer continued, the *Povos* would want it back.

In this answer, it is clear that the king, or at least his representatives, regarded the profits of taxation most of all as a form of redistribution. The role of this section is to point to a peculiar relationship between royal redistribution and military empire-building. While quantitative analysis of expenditure will be left for the next chapter, this section will aim at understanding the influences of the End-of-Century Wars in the construction of the empire. Considering the state of the empire by the temporal limits of the dissertation, the 1520s, attention will be limited to North Africa and, to a lesser extent, to the Indian Ocean, as the American territories were still unimportant whilst the realm, along with the Atlantic Islands, involved a reduced military activity.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Cort. Manuel I*, vol. I, pp. 254-255.

⁸⁶ 'Fidalgos, cavaleiros and escudeiros.' *Cort. Manuel I*, vol. I, pp. 254.

⁸⁷ Diffie, Bailey and Winius, George, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580*, Minneapolis, 1977, pp. 74-112. Boxer, Charles Ralph, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, London, 1969, pp. 27-33.

There can be no doubt that the war, offensive, defensive or predatory, in North Africa was very important for the Portuguese monarchy. All Portuguese fifteenth-century kings crossed the Mediterranean to fight in North Africa at least once in their lifetime. For the last hundred years or so, countless historians have discussed plausible 'reasons' and 'causes' to explain what appeared to be inexplicable: the Portuguese attack on Ceuta and the subsequent expansion in North Africa.⁸⁸ Indeed, it is particularly surprising that a country devastated by decades of wars was to embark on a perfectly unnecessary expedition, barely two years after a hard-won peace.⁸⁹

Although it was captured, sacked and occupied with minimal losses within a single August day of 1415, Ceuta involved an impressive operation by contemporary standards. The 19,300 men recorded in the muster exceeded the 12,300 indentured for the Harfleur-Agincourt campaign in the very same year.⁹⁰ Accordingly, as we have seen, costs soared.

When, in the early 1430s, the possibility of a second campaign in Africa was debated by the advisors of João I and Duarte I, the defence of a distant and isolated city possession of Ceuta was regarded as an economic absurdity or, as *infante* Pedro said, 'an indiscretion.'⁹¹

Indications that Ceuta, and the whole North African affair, did not benefit the crown in financial are both frequent and credible. In the exceptionally well-documented debate about further conquest in Morocco all the consulted courtiers tacitly agree that Ceuta was a burden.⁹² *Infante* Pedro, the future regent, claimed that Ceuta was 'a good drain of men, weapons and monies.'⁹³ In his chronicle of the deeds of *Dom* Pedro de Meneses, the first captain of Ceuta (1415-37), Zurara could confidently claim that three thousand men were

⁸⁸ See, in English, the brief accounts of this debate in Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 135-60 and Diffie and Winius, *Foundations*, pp. 62-3.

⁸⁹ It is that from 1413 an amphibious military operation against a secret enemy was under way. See, in English, Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 29-58.

⁹⁰ Indentured soldiers totalled 12,311 but soldiers fielded by the captains fell significantly short of those agreed. Curry, Anne, *Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations*, Woodbridge, 2000, pp. 422-3. Of the many figures provided by fifteenth-century authors, the lowest reckoning of ships is the one by Castilian chronicler Santamaria, who counted 190 vessels. Duarte, 'África', p. 406.

⁹¹ *MH*, vol. II, doc. 143, p. 329.

⁹² See the analysis of the memoranda sent by key figures of the crown by Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 136-48.

⁹³ 'Sumydoiro de gente de uossa terra e d'armas e dinheiro' *MH*, vol. II, doc. 143. On this letter, in English, see Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 68.

stationed in Ceuta 'continuously fighting against the infidels by land and sea.'⁹⁴ In 1471, the total figure was closer to 5,000 which supposed considerable costs.⁹⁵ When mentioning the African strongholds in the context of his description of Portuguese kingdom and its revenues, the ever-perceptive Venetian spy Cá da Masser highlighted the burdens these territories imposed on the monarchy. In his words, 'of which lands he [the king of Portugal] has neither any profit nor any revenue but continuous expenditure to defend them against the Moors'.⁹⁶

With the North African conquests, the crown had to face permanent military expenditure, something few other fifteenth-century European monarchies knew. That is why chronicler Zurara could claim, perhaps rightly, that 'no other king in Christendom has continuously nearly three thousand men of war fighting by sea or by land or both'.⁹⁷ Despite the organisation it stimulated, Ceuta and the remaining conquests in North Africa were a heavy financial burden for the crown. Large garrisons in the payroll and constant support from the mainland meant direct military expenditure. The financial strains of the monarchy made things even more costly.

Military wages were not the sole ordinary costs of North African fortresses. Their defence involved the shipping across the strait of tons of wheat, wine and a vast array of manufactured goods ranging from crossbow bolts to bottles. The function of acquiring, concentrating and sending these materials was borne by the *Casa de Ceuta*, or Ceuta Agency from whose treasurers a pair of letters of quittance survive to show that this institution spent annually in the region of 750,000 *r.* in the 1450s, a sizeable proportion of the notional total income of 5,700,000 *r.*⁹⁸ In 1424, wheat supply alone was estimated at 1,680,000 *r.*⁹⁹ The total cost of Ceuta was probably higher, as King Duarte wrote to the Portuguese abbot of Santa Maria of Florence claiming

⁹⁴ Quoted in Duarte, 'África', *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, vol. I, p. 440. The figure is perfectly acceptable considering the first news about a 2,000-strong garrison of Ceuta. see in English, Russell, *Henry the Navigator*, p. 57.

⁹⁵ Duarte, 'África', p. 440.

⁹⁶ *Relazione*, prologue: 'delle qual terre non há profitto né intrada alcuna, ma spesa continua per guardarle da Mori.'

⁹⁷ Quoted in Duarte, 'África', p. 440.

⁹⁸ The figure for expenditure includes the value of wheat and wine and current prices. Both letters are published in *Marrocos*, I, pp. 168-172. Estimates of total revenue are in Fig. 18.

⁹⁹ Chanc. João II, Livro 25, fol. 101. This sum could acquire, at low price (14 *r.*) 120,000 *alqueires* of wheat. Considering the monthly allowance of 4 *alqueires* in 1472 for Tangiers (*DP*, vol. III, doc. 82) this would supply a garrison of 2,500 for the entire year.

that the crown's ordinary expenditure for Ceuta amounted to 28,500 ducats (4,560,000 *r.*) whilst the city did not contribute with a single *real* to the royal finances.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that the conservation and defence of Ceuta against a permanently hostile enemy had no possible economic rationale. While the theses suggested by other authors – geopolitical demands, chivalric mentality, noble demographic excess, or crusading piety – are all very relevant, it is clear that military-redistributive pressures played a part in the political decision.

Political literature, including the chronicles of Fernão Lopes, often expressed the notion that the monarchy was bound to bestow material honours on those who served it.¹⁰¹ Knights were expected to advance their condition by serving in the war. The crown was bound to offer opportunities for this advancement. This relationship is central to the origins of the Portuguese empire.

This counter-intuitive reasoning is often found among fifteenth-century Portuguese texts. According to chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara, João I defended the possession of Ceuta in these terms: 'you [the *infantes* and advisors] know that when I am asked permission to let [noblemen] to depart to France or to England to fight arms in hand, I am obliged to equip them and subsidise them for this venture; it happens that I would spend less if I send them to Ceuta where they would be of greater service to me.'¹⁰² This curious comment is consistent with the emergence of an under-paid military class detected in the End-of-Century-Wars. Indeed, the chronicles of Rui de Pina and Gomes Eanes de Zurara do refer to high-rank nobles willing to seek fortune abroad being diverted to Ceuta.¹⁰³ Already in 1393, hearing news of a long-term truce with Castile, Constable *Dom* Nuno Álvares Pereira arranged his men in

¹⁰⁰ *MH*, vol. VI, doc. 10. The exchange conversion of 1 *ducat* = 400 *l.* suggested by Russell (*Prince Henry*, pp. 379-80, nt.8, based on *Marrocos*, I, p. 475) is not acceptable, as he is using an exchange rate of 1416, when the metallic content of the *l.* amounted to 0.022 g Ag, whereas the *l.* of the 1430s had only 0.007 g Ag.

¹⁰¹ Lopes, *Cron. Fernando I*, Chapter XXVII, pp. 93-5; Lopes, *Cron. João I*, Part 2, Chapter LI, p. 138, Chapter CLI, p. 332. Pedro, *Livro da Vertuosa Benfeytoria*, Book II, Chapter IX, pp. 78-9.

MH, vol. VI, doc. 10. The exchange conversion of 1 *ducat* = 400 *l.* suggested by Russell (*Prince Henry*, pp. 379-80, nt.8, based on *Marrocos*, I, p. 475) is not acceptable, as he is using an exchange rate of 1416, when the metallic content of the *l.* amounted to 0.022 g Ag, whereas the *l.* of the 1430s had only 0.007 g Ag.

¹⁰² France and England are explicitated as the destinations of the Portuguese. Zurara, *Crónica da Tomada de Ceuta*, chapter XCVII., p. 278. Other examples of this reasoning can be found in Cruz, Abel dos Santos, *A Nobreza Portuguesa em Marrocos no Século XV (1415-1464)* Porto, 1995, p. 246.

¹⁰³ References collected by Cruz, *A Nobreza e Marrocos*, pp. 246-7.

order to leave the kingdom and 'look for a living.'¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the objection against offensive wars fired by the *Povos* in the *Cortes* of 1433 stated that 'in case some lords seek that which we do not envisage [war, presumably in Morocco] it would be better that they looked for it in other kingdoms and lands, as it used to happen.'¹⁰⁵

As we have seen, in the early sixteenth century, noble military service in North Africa required no wages, unlike the permanent garrison. Thus, this circumstance only mitigated the immediate burden that the fortresses of Africa represented; indeed the monarchy was bound to give grants and rewards to the warriors. The burden was felt not only directly through high standing charges, but also indirectly, providing the chivalric ground for rent-seeking nobility.

While it was economically disastrous to the crown, Ceuta could be lucrative to the noblemen who volunteered to serve there. Noblemen who went to Africa could earn their living as privateers and use the ravaging of the Moroccan hinterlands as a way of seeking individual fame and profit.¹⁰⁶ As an excellent base for privateer activity, early fifteenth-century Ceuta could be of some profit to enterprising noblemen and sea traders.¹⁰⁷ It also provided an opportunity for social ascent for the high echelons of municipality elites.¹⁰⁸ But not only that: the African campaigns of João I, Afonso V and later Manuel I resulted in the creation of *ex novo* titles, which had been very rare until then.¹⁰⁹ As Luís Filipe Oliveira and Miguel Jasmins Rodrigues state 'most titles granted by Afonso V followed the tenure of military posts in the African conquests.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, part 2, Chapter CLIII, p. 335.

¹⁰⁵ 141st article. BNP, Códice 6969, p. 555. Abridged in Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. II, p. 316. The sieving of the late fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century Burgundian accounts by Jacques Paviot has provided ample empirical confirmation for this claim. Paviot, Jacques, *Portugal et Bourgogne au XVe siècle*, Paris, 1995, pp. 86-130. Similarly, there were Portuguese in the garrisons of English Normandy. Curry, Anne, 'The Nationality of Men-at-Arms serving in English Armies in Normandy and the 'pays de conquête', 1415-1450: a Preliminary Survey', *Reading Medieval Studies*, n. 18, 1992, pp. 130-166. Aragon seems to have been another frequent destination for Portuguese men-at-arms during the first half of the fifteenth-century. Saiz Serrano, Jorge, *Guerra y Nobleza en la Corona de Aragón. La Caballería de los Ejércitos del Rey (siglos XIV-XV)* Valencia, 2003, pp. 387, 477, note 109.

¹⁰⁶ See biographies in *A Alta Nobreza e a Fundação do Estado da Índia*, Costa, João Paulo Oliveira e and Rodrigues, Victor Luís, eds., Lisbon, 2004.

¹⁰⁷ See the comments of Sir Peter Russell on Pedro de Meneses, Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 73. On the opposition of Lisbon, Porto and Algarve against the abandon of Ceuta, see Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁸ See the list of men knighted after deeds in Morocco by Abel Cruz. Cruz, *A Nobreza Portuguesa*, pp. 246-9.

¹⁰⁹ Of the eleven counts and marquises mentioned by Lunardo Da Cá Masser, at least five (Marquis of Vila Real, counts of Borba, Tarouca, Tentúgal and Alcoutim) had won their fortune and title serving in North Africa. see studies on these men in the work by Costa and Rodrigues, eds., *A Alta Nobreza*.

¹¹⁰ Oliveira, Luís Filipe, 'Um Processo de Reestruturação do Domínio Senhorial da Nobreza: A Titulação na Segunda Dinastia', *Revista de História Económica e Social*, n. 22, 1988, pp. 77-85. p. 83.

Deeds and prowess in North Africa would also move the less warlike King Manuel to create five new titles of counts (Tentúgal, Portimão, Penela, Borba and Tarouca).¹¹¹

In 1506, the Venetian spy Lunardo Cá da Masser observes that the noblemen fought for free in North Africa in the hope of a lifelong grant from the king.¹¹² According to him, the costly African strongholds were sustained by 600 knights who 'served the king for love and for free' (*el forzo de loro gratis et amore*) for two or three years winning nothing but the product of their marauding. By doing this, the knights hoped to gain some grants and privileges from the monarch, apart from the profit of their predatory fighting. This was taken to the extreme when powerful men like the dukes of Viseu or the duke of Bragança, employed their vast resources in expeditions against Larache (1463), Anafé (1472) and Azemmour (1513).

The opening of the maritime route to India in 1498 created a very different military setting. Whereas in North Africa the king's funds were used in the service of chivalry, crusades and restlessness of the military nobility, in India the policy was the polar opposite: war was in the service of financial interests. Military expenses in India could, at least occasionally, be regarded as an investment. The instructions given to the first Viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, revolved around economically rational principle: to occupy the strategic positions that controlled trade routes.¹¹³ This was the opinion of an Englishman traveller criticising the options of Emperor Charles V: 'It [the navigation and trade of spicery] may bee without doubt of great profit, if, as the king of Portugal doth, he would become a merchant, and provide shippes and their lading, and trade thither alone, and defend the trade of these Islands for himselfe' (1527).¹¹⁴

The diversion of the spice trade from the Moors was an explicit and conscious aspect of King Manuel I's grand strategy. By closing the Red Sea, the Portuguese hoped to strangle the key revenue of the Egyptian Mamluk finances and prevent the reinforcement of Muslim states in India. Ultimately, the ambitions of Manuel I were the recovery of Jerusalem (from the Red Sea) and

¹¹¹ Oliveira, 'Um Processo de Reestruturação,' pp. 77-85.

¹¹² *Relazione*, Prologue: *Li quali vanno a servir a Sua Altezza, el forzo de loro gratis et amore; staranno de li anni dó, over tre, e dapoi tornano alla corte di Sua Altezza, sperando conseguir qualche onor et mercè dal Re.*

¹¹³ Diffie and Winius, *Foundations*, pp. 227-230.

¹¹⁴ Robert Thorne quoted in Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, vol. I, p. 57.

the annihilation of the Muslim military power through the conquest of Mecca, the fall of Jerusalem and the conquest of Egypt. The destruction of the Muslim presence in the East was the cornerstone of the Emmanueline imperial project. The strategy was fourfold: blockade of the Muslim spice trade, attack against Mamluk Egypt from the Red Sea, crusade in the Holy Land and conquest of Morocco.¹¹⁵

What made this bold, extravagant project look practicable was that it allied the interests of the military nobles with the lofty imperial conceptions of King Manuel's close circle.¹¹⁶ Indeed, the Portuguese achieved the control of the former trade routes thanks to their naval supremacy after the battle of Diu (1509). After securing naval power, a few key ports and cities were taken by force and occupied in the 1510s. However, unlike the North African strongholds, Portuguese military outposts and fleets in the Indian Ocean had good chances of being self-subsidising. This was the plan designed and partly implemented by viceroy Albuquerque (1510-1518). In 1512, the wages, annuities and military expenses of the Portuguese garrisons in India were sustained by privateer activity and there was no need of important cash injections from the metropolis.¹¹⁷ As Albuquerque was told by his antecedent in the dignity, 'all the honour of the conquerors lies in profit; if expenses overlap the receipt, all feats of arms are in vain'.¹¹⁸ In spite of the revenues produced by the customs in the Indies, the provision of wages by the Crown was slow and cumbersome. There was nothing like a general paymaster at each fortress, like in North Africa.¹¹⁹

To some extent, this strategy was conducted with the same noblemen that had acquired a name in the African Coast. Recently, Vasco Resende brought some empirical confirmation of the assumption by Diffie and Winius that the Moroccan Wars had been a 'school of cutthroats' whose lessons would be put into practice in the East.¹²⁰ Indeed, throughout the period, foreign observers,

¹¹⁵ Thomaz, 'L'Idée Impériale,' pp. 41-44.

¹¹⁶ Thomaz, 'L'Idée Impériale,' pp. 41-44.

¹¹⁷ Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, vol. III, p. 12.

¹¹⁸ Undated letter of Dom Francisco de Almeida to Afonso de Albuquerque: 'A onrra dos conquistadores toda esta no proveito; porque se a despeza passa pella receita, toda a obra fica vaan,' quoted in Santos, João Marinho dos, *Sobre a guerra e as guerras na expansão portuguesa: século XVI*. "Revista de História Económica e Social", Lisbon, 26, Maio-Agosto 1989, p. 74.

¹¹⁹ Santos, João Marinho dos, *A Guerra e as Guerras na Expansão Portuguesa. Séculos XV e XVI*, Lisboa, 1998, pp. 274-8.

¹²⁰ Resende, Vasco, *A Sociedade de Expansão no Reinado de D. Manuel I*, Lagos, 2007, pp. 12, 189-244.

like the Count of Foix,¹²¹ Antoine De La Salle,¹²² Gilles Bouvier¹²³ or Luciano Cá Da Masser,¹²⁴ alluded to the prowess of the Portuguese noblemen. However, their Portuguese contemporaries as the Constable *Dom Pedro* and even King Duarte feared most of all the indiscipline of their countrymen.¹²⁵ Rash, young aspirers to royal favour did even created tactical problems when they sought individual prowess, instead of following the instructions. This was common to both India and North Africa. Reporting on the assault on Adem in 1513, viceroy Albuquerque reported to the king that he had lost many of his scarce men when the excessive number of knights 'eager to serve the king' had caused the assault stairs to crumble.¹²⁶ As Resende noted, obedience to chivalric codes took the form of disobedience to hierarchy and military rationality and efficiency.¹²⁷

Historians of the expansion, notably Vasco Resende and J. P. Oliveira e Costa, noted that the intention of the first generation of eastern empire-builders was to earn a good claim to royal patronage rather than to plunge themselves into the riches of the Indies. India, like Morocco beforehand, was the shortest route to royal rents. To quote the former: 'the chance of royal patronage was indeed the main motivation for the migration to the North African strongholds and, from the 1510s onwards, to the East'.¹²⁸

The End-of-Century-Wars followed by the Moroccan ventures disrupted the 'old kings' tight combination between redistribution and military service. In the first half of the fifteenth century, military service would only be paid through wages for effective service which turned noblemen and aspirants to nobility into the most likely interested in offensive expeditions. War became a route towards rent-seeking, instead of being the counterpart for permanent patronage and

¹²¹ Froissart noted down the impression of the Count of Foix, a survivor of Aljubarrota: '*Les Portingalois sont dure gens*'. Quoted in Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 518.

¹²² Russell, *Prince Henry*, p. 49.

¹²³ The author of the *Livre de la description des Pays of 1447*: '*Et ont le gens de ce royaume [Portugal] ont une cité nommée Suste [Ceuta] és país des Sarrazins delà la mer; laquelle est au royaume de Veze delà la mer Miterrenne. Le roy de Portingal la fait sogneusement garder ds gens de son royaume, et font guerre toujours aux Sarrasins. Les nobles de ce royaume sont vaillants hommes en guerre,*' quoted in Godinho, Vitorino Magalhães, 'Portugal no Começo do Século XVI: Instituições e Economia', *Revista de História Económica e Social*, n. 4, Julho-Dezembro 1979, p. 86.

¹²⁴ '*Valentissimi Cavalieri*.' *Relazione*, Prologue.

¹²⁵ Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 140, 171. Fonseca, 'Uma Carta do Condestável', p. 95.

¹²⁶ Resende, *A Sociedade de Expansão*, p. 23.

¹²⁷ Resende, *A Sociedade de Expansão*, p. 38

¹²⁸ Resende, *A Sociedade de Expansão*, p. 183.

privilege of the established families. This was recognised by the monarchy who had to consider the aspirations to improve condition by the royal service. It is probably impossible to demonstrate that these men had indeed a say in decision-making. However, the present argument is not that the military nobility as a permanent, uniform vested interest or a *deus ex machina* that was the 'reason' or 'cause' behind concrete political decisions. This would be a futile oversimplification. The argument is that there would be few occasions for redistribution of the royal revenues, which the wars had expanded, without war. Ultimately, the new relationship between patronage and war would not have existed without the Fernandine Wars and the Wars of Independence. The fiscal buoyancy brought by the *sisas* provided a sufficient cause for the rent-seeking drive of the militarised nobility. As shown, though measurable evidence is lacking, there is something to be said for the argument the imperial naval and military effort was revenue-driven.

The empire represented a total inversion of the relationship between war and redistribution in relation to the time of the 'old kings': whilst the *contia* assured the nobility rents prior to, or even regardless of, any military activity, throughout the fifteenth century military service was a condition for redistribution. The fiscal buoyancy of the monarchy turned war into a shortcut for rewards and privileges. Hence, while in 1372 Fernando complained that he lacked the knights that 'his honour required', one hundred years later, João II lamented how the excessive number of knights was very detrimental to our service.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Chaves, *Livro de Apontamentos*, p. 170.

Chapter 8 - A Redistributive Monarchy?

Historians working on Portugal regarded the introduction of permanent taxation in the form of *sisas* as the *Povos'* and the crown's direct response to the Castilian military threat. It cannot be denied that war provided an adequate, perhaps the only, constitutional setting for the adoption of extraordinary taxation. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to ask why a monarchy that could master its extraordinary military expenditure by means of debasement (see *supra* section 6.1) or through its prerogative definition of the military wages and *contias* (see *supra* section 7.1) strove to keep the *sisas* after the war. In this chapter it will be argued that the permanence of the sales taxes was motivated by the an entirely different conception of royal finances in relation to that of the old kings. As explored in section 7.2, for João I and his followers, the riches collected by the crown were to be redistributed rather than hoarded. Unlike what Iria Gonçalves or A. H. Oliveira Marques have assumed, the permanence of the *sisas* was not a consequence of the monarchy's revenue-maximising drive. Instead, as it will be argued, the permanence of the *sisas* can be regarded as a determined step towards a redistributive monarchy. This argument rests on the analyses of both qualitative and quantitative sources. First, there will be an analysis of the political discussion that went on about the monarchy's right to collect *sisas* (section 8.1). Then, the general accounts of expenditure from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards will be overviewed (section 8.2). The exploration of other quantitative sources will test these conclusions (section 8.3).

Section 8.1 - The Conservation of the State

As already mentioned, *sisas* were the subject of an intermittent debate in the *Cortes* from their inception by Fernando I and João I (in 1372 and 1387, respectively) until the day when their administration was devolved to the municipalities and they became a wholly different type of tax (1538).¹ A few

¹ Cruz, *Os Vedores da Fazenda*, pp. 242-4.

well-documented instances indicate that throughout this confrontation the *Povos* resorted to the *cessante causa, cessat effectus* argument. They considered that since sales taxes had been granted to pay for the defence of the realm against Castile, their continued collection by the monarchy was illegitimate. *Sisas* had been collected because of the war but the monarchy chose to perpetuate them. This narrative, labelled the 'popular history of the *sisas*' by Armindo Sousa, was advanced in the later *Cortes* of 1439, 1459, 1481-2, 1498 and 1535 and was addressed in the writings of Fernão Lopes in the 1430s.² In her influential dictionary entry on the *sisas*,³ Iria Gonçalves reproduced its essential lines and the relevant authors regarded the *sisas* as a subsidy granted to pay for the war that would be later alienated by the monarchy. For all the sympathy it aroused in twentieth-century historians, this version of fiscal history is inconsistent with the surviving documentation.

The written debate between the crown and the *Povos* arising from the *Cortes* of Évora-Viana/1481-2⁴ seems particularly enlightening in this respect. In their 123th general chapter, the *Povos* once again urged the king to release the permanent *sisas* with the familiar *cessante causa, cessat effectus* argument. King João II did not simply give one of those considerate, evasive but ultimately negative replies that his father and grandfather had given. Instead, he required the *Povos* to produce documentary evidence of their assertion that the *sisas* were to be collected only during while the wars lasted. The *Povos* accepted the challenge and presented five instruments granting the *sisas*, which João II sent to his legal experts in order to be analysed.⁵ It is worth quoting in full the king's conclusion after listening to their advice:

'it was clearly found out that the *Povos* had granted the general *sisas* to João I not only once but often; and they did so not only for the burdens of

² Barros, *História da Administração Pública*, vol. IX, pp. 509-28. For the *Cortes* of 1498, Góis, Damião de, *Cronica do Felicissimo Rei D. Manuel*, J. M. Teixeira de Carvalho and David Lopes (ed.) part I, 2nd ed., Coimbra, 1926, chapter XXVI, pp. 49-53. For the *Cortes* of 1438, Cruz, *A Governação de D. João III*, doc. XXIX, pp. 242-4.

³ Gonçalves, 'Sisas', pp. 1-2.

⁴ TT, *Cortes*, Maço 3, doc. 5.

⁵ While noteworthy, resorting to independent legal advice was not exceptional for the conscientious fifteenth-century Portuguese monarchs. Important decisions on North Africa were taken after the discussion of legal advices produced by foreign experts commissioned by the monarchs. Russell, *Prince Henry*, pp. 162-3. On the subject of finances, King Duarte also commissioned his chancellor, Vasco Fernandes, to produce a report on the legitimate revenues that a king could resort to. Fernandes' report, which was based on Roman Law sources and ignored Portuguese contemporary doctrine and practice, was included in the great compilation of the *Ordenações Afonsinas* in the 1440s (OA, Book II, title 24).

war but also to keep and uphold the *estado* of the king and that of the queen and of his sons and to give them land to constitute their households and to pay the judges and justices and many other people, and this was done both during and after the war. It is thus manifest that the necessity of war was not the single cause for João I collecting the *sisas*; rather, the upholding of his *estado* was the other main cause for doing so.⁶

Given that since Fernão Lopes the *sisas* has been regarded by the historiography primarily as a war subsidy, the last sentence is particularly unsettling. And yet these terms are perfectly in tune with previous discourse on the *sisas*. When, in 1442, the crown was dealing with the slump of the revenue of the *sisas* (see *supra* 5.2), regent Pedro wrote to the municipality of Coimbra that these taxes were essential for the 'upkeep our [royal] *estado*.'⁷ When the *Povos* protested against the collection of *sisas* in 1459 and 1497, Afonso V and Manuel I resorted to the same argument that the collection of the *sisas* was not in the interest of the kings but of those who benefited from the kings' payments.⁸

For this reason, it is vital to analyse the texts of the instruments that granted the *sisas*. Of the five grants alleged by the *Povos* in 1481-2, those that have survived confirm the opinion of the legal experts: wars were not the single rationale for João I's collection of the *sisas*. Both the original grant of 1387 and the increase of the *sisas* of 1408 mention the conservation of the '*estado* of the king' on par with the 'defence of the realm' as the destination of the sales taxes.⁹ In sum, the legal experts' claim that the concession of sales taxes was not destined to fight the war fits available documentary evidence. This moment in the fiscal-constitutional debates on the origins of the *sisas* indicates that

⁶ '*Achou que os povos destes reinos per muitas e desvairadas vezes e modos outorgarom e outorgavam ao dito rei D. Joham seu bisavo sisas gerais e esto nom somente pera os emcarregos da guerra mas ainda durando ella e depois de cesada avemdo já hi paz pera manter e soporar seu stado e da R^a sua molher e dos ifantes seus filhos e pera aos dictos ifantes dar casa e lhes comprar casas terras e pera prover aos desembargadores e oficiais da justiça e outras muitas pessoas donde magnifestamente se mostra que a necessidade da guerra nom foi a só causa de el rey Dom Joham aver as sisas mais nom menos principal causa era por poder soste seus estado.*' TT, Cortes, Maço 3, doc. 5 (123rd article).

⁷ '*manter nosso stado nem gouernança dos ifantes meos jirmaãos e tyos nem donde se façam as despesas que sam necessarias pera gouernança e defensom de nossos regnos.*' BACL, Série Azul, Códice 409, pp. 160-2.

⁸ TT, Cortes, Maço 2, doc. 14, fol. 23; Góis, *Cronica do Felicissimo Rei D. Manuel*, Part 1, chapter XXVI, p. 51.

⁹ Although the grant of 1408 was destined to the acquisition of lands to uphold the *estado* of the *infantes*, there is also mention to the rationale of the *sisas*: '*as rendas que ora el Rei tem pera manter o seu estado e defensom do regno.*' RED, doc. 6, pp. 49-50. The two other documents mentioned by João II, published in the Cortes of Coimbra/1387 and Coimbra/1390, have not been identified. Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 303 and 432-5.

whilst war had constituted the appropriate constitutional setting for granting the *sisas*, it cannot be said that the *sisas* were destined for the war. Instead, since 1387, not to say since the election of João I, taxes were also demanded for a distinctively non-military purpose: the maintenance of the king's *estado* or *honra e estado*.

Like state, its modern English equivalent, the term *estado* and its variants, which can be found since the late thirteenth century,¹⁰ combined two distinct but concurring ideas: the status of king and the befitting conditions of that dignity, namely his entourage and his subordinated institutions.¹¹ The answer of João II in 1482 goes already a long way to explain what the *estado* was. Similarly, the 'state of the king' was defined in the 1387 instrument granting the *sisas* to fund the war and 'the sustenance of the queen and that of his household and his officers and other necessary expenses.'¹² On one way, *estado* conveyed the idea that the king's status would be enhanced by the number of dependants; on the other hand, those dependants maintained this social status by the proximity to the king. This idea was clearly articulated by a beneficiary of royal favour, *infante* Pedro, the second son of João I, in his political and moral treatise. While discussing the maxim 'know thyself', he gave the example of kings: 'if you hold royal power, while observing your own nobility, grant privileges like your *estado* demands.'¹³

The *sisas* granted in 1387 directly responded to the recovery of the *contias*, after being ignored by João I in his early years as regent and king and

¹⁰ 'Sua honra e estado', letter of King Dinis quoted in Pina, *Chronica do ... Principe Dom Dinis*, chapter VI, p. 46.

¹¹ The election of João I was described as the moment when he 'assumed the state of king': 'nas Cortes que fez em Coimbra quando tomou estado de rei' (TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 86; Cruz, António, 'Do Auxílio Prestado a Lisboa no Cerco de 1384', *Duas Cidades ao Serviço de Portugal*, Porto, 1947, pp. 51-71). However, the term *estado* or even *estado e honra* is not reserved to the monarch. In a 1368 sentence about a land held by a royal vassal, it is mentioned that the land was important to upkeep his state and honour: *manter seu estado e honra*. Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 1, fol. 27v. The men serving a vassal were also deemed part of his *estado*. Lopes, *Cron. João I*, chapter CXXVIII, p. 285.

¹² *mantimento e sustimento da sua guerra que auyam com aquel que se diz rey de Castella assy pera gentes de armas como pera frotas e mantimentos seus e da raynha e das ssuas cassas e ofiçiaaes e pera outras despesas neçesaryas*. AML, Livro I de Cortes, doc. 7, fol. 63.

¹³ The full passage: '*Respondeo y dollow aquella breve sentença que todos avemos mester, convem a saber: "Conhece ty meesmo". Desta conclusom prougue tanto a muytos que logo foy scripta en a porta do templo e avuda geralmente por compridoyra en todallas obras que os homeens fezessem. Porem conheça cada huum quem he e de que geeraçom. E, sse for posto em senhorio real, sguardando sua nobreza faça benefeytorias quejandas seu stado requere.*' Pedro, *Infante de Portugal, Livro da Vertuosa Benefeytoria*, ed. A. Almeida Calado, Coimbra, 1994, Book II, Chapter XIII, p. 90.

to the creation of Queen Phillipa's household.¹⁴ Indeed, in financial terms, the king's *estado* implied first and foremost the organisation of the household (*casa*), which included central officers of the higher courts (like the *Relação*)¹⁵ as well as an abundant affinity. Because they bound high-ranking men to the king, redistributive payments like the *contias*, the annuities and the 'gracious' gifts can be seen as part of the *estado*.

Even if in the wake of the constitutional ideas of fourteenth-century Portugal the *Povos* conceded and perceived them essentially as a war subsidy, a closer look at the circumstances of the establishment of the permanent *sisas* makes clear that, for the monarchy, the *sisas* were regarded as a permanent solution for its ordinary expenses.¹⁶ The royal need for a permanent tax to add up to the *Direitos Reais* transpired in the 1385 'Act of Election' where the *Povos*, prelates and noblemen assured the monarch of their commitment to 'sustain the charges of expenses and services that were required to keep the royal *estado* and honour and to pursue the war.'¹⁷ More importantly, the notion that the upholding of the *estado* depended on the revenues paid by the subjects was already visible in the Fernandine period. Indeed, as an ordinance dated 1377 claimed, the *Direitos Reais* existed to provide for the maintenance of the royal *estado*.¹⁸ Ten years later, with rampaging debasement and inflation, the *sisas* would have appeared as the solution for upholding the *estado* of the monarch and not merely to meet the demands of war. Indeed, it was only after João I obtained kingdom-wide *sisas* in 1387 that he organised his household¹⁹ and resumed the regular payment of *contias* and other payments.²⁰ Similarly, the king's downsizing of his household in 1401 while 'guarding his honour and

¹⁴ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 298.

¹⁵ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 295-8, 432-4.

¹⁶ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, p. 295 and 432.

¹⁷ *Offerecendo nos Sobredictos plalados Caualeiros fidalgos e procuradores dos Conçelhos peno poder que donos pera ello tragiamos em nosso nome e eem sseu de nome donos / a o ajudar com nossos corpos e beens e a ssosteer os encarregos das desspesas e sseruiços que lhe eram compridoiras pera manter o estado e honra de Rey / E pera outrossi leuar sua guerra em deante.* Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 98.

¹⁸ 'Nossos direitos que sempre ouuemos pera mantimento do nosso stado'. TT, Chanc. Fernando I, Livro 2, fol. 14.

¹⁹ 'Tomar nossa casa, segundo a nosso estado cumpre.' Lopes, *Cron. João I*, chapters II, XCV, XCIX, C; Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 295-8, 432-4.

²⁰ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, vol. II, Chapter CXXVIII, p. 285.

state' was a direct consequence of the two-thirds reduction of the rate of the *sisas* in that year.²¹

The emergence of the kingdom-wide *sisas* as the form of upholding of the *estado* in 1387 did not derive from the military circumstances. Unlike the *sisas* of 1387, the *pedido* of 1385 was due to be spent entirely on the war, as the conditions set by the *Povos* show.²² As Fig. 27 has revealed, although the purported aim of extraordinary taxes was to pay for the war effort, debasement appears the decisive resource.

The ten-year truce between Portugal and Castile signed in 1401 was a decisive moment for subsequent Portuguese fiscal experience. In the ensuing 'counsel of Coimbra' João I took the advice of his counsellors and lowered the rate of the *sisas* from 10% rate to 6.(6)%.²³ A thorough structuring of the expenditure ensued, as João I prepared himself to organise his expenses in accordance to the available revenues, just like the 'kings of old'. According to the description of this counsel left by Fernão Lopes, the royal household was also severely downsized, as it had been demanded by the *Povos* since 1372.²⁴ The number of vassals receiving *contia* was set at 4,060. Also in clear continuity with past practice, João I sought to reserve 10,000 *dobras* (4,400,000 *l.* of 1401) for the treasury which would take some 5% of the revenue.²⁵ The drastic attempt to curb permanent charges in response to a cut of 33% shows that the *sisas* had been essentially diverted to keep the king's *estado*. Judging from the decisions taken in Coimbra, peace hardly appeared as a relief to the king's finances. War, at least, provided the constitutional background for demanding taxation.

The counsel of Coimbra was a determined effort to bring back the monarchy to the fiscal status of the 'old kings'. However, the wide changes wrought by war (see *supra* chapters 6 and 7) would soon be reflected in the finances of the monarchy. Indeed, we are not entirely ignorant of what happened to the reforms made in Coimbra thanks to the survival of an account

²¹ The only source for the financial reorganisation of the realm after the truce of 1401 is Lopes, *Cron. João I*, II, chapters CC-CCI. See Jorge Faro's critical notes on Fernão Lopes narrative in *RED*, doc. 3.

²² Caetano, 'As Cortes de 1385,' p. 107.

²³ Can this be interpreted that only a third of the *sisas* was spent on warfare?

²⁴ 8th Article of the *Cortes* of Lisbon/1371. *Cort. Fernando I*, vol. I, p. 19.

²⁵ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, II, chapters CC-CCI. This was less, both in percent and in absolute terms, than the 15,000 *d.* left by the old kings (which would fall between 6% and 10% of the revenue, depending on the value of the *dobra*).

of the pensions paid to the royal household members (*Caderno dos Moradores da Casa Real*) dated 1405.²⁶ Besides revealing current composition of the royal household,²⁷ this document has the virtue of contrasting it with what had been decided in the counsel of Coimbra, about three years earlier. The content of this list can be systematised, along with other available, if very incomplete, figures for two later periods, the last of which is the reform designed in the *Cortes* of Coimbra-Évora/1472-3.²⁸

Fig. 34 – The Growth the Royal Household, 1402-73

| | 1402 | | 1405 | | 1462 | | 1473 | |
|--------------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|-------------|
| | n. | cost in r. | n. | cost in r. | n. | cost in r. | n. | cost in r. |
| Counsellors | 4 | [34,285] | 4 | 34,285 | 14 | 876,912 | 50 | [953,600] |
| Knights | 0 | 0 | 20 | 59,725 | 168 | 2,594,225 | | |
| Squires | 80 | [29,531] | 103 | 38,022 | 101 | 1,097,832 | 129 | [1,402,101] |
| Chaplains | 15 | [8,485] | 20 | 11,314 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Grooms | 12 | ? | 0 | ? | ? | ? | 24 | ? |
| Hunters | 57 | ? | 77 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |

Notes: for calculating the costs of 1402 and 1473 it was assumed that in these years the pensions paid in 1405 and 1463 respectively were those applied.

Sources: *RED*, doc. 3 (for 1402), doc. 5 (for 1402 and 1405-6), doc. 22 (for 1462) and n. 23 (for 1473).

Despite the lacunae, Fig. 34 makes clear that soon after the severe limitations imposed by the counsel in Coimbra, the numbers of the members of the royal household swelled. The financial weight of the categories that can be compared (Counsellors, Knights, Squires and Chaplains) doubled in three years (from 1402 to 1405). As far as the scarcity of data allows any understanding, the intense redistributive pressure between 1402 and 1405 was not an isolated case. The considerable burden attained in 1462 shows that the growth of the royal household was a long-term process. The austere restrictions of 1473, made in the context of constitutional confrontation with the *Povos*, show how limited was the scope for reform and how the expansion of the dependants of the crown appears ineluctable.

Constant enlargement was not the sole pressure building upon the household: in the end of the 1405-6 list of the king's and queen's affinities, there

²⁶ *RED*, doc. 5, pp. 48-50.

²⁷ Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society*, pp. 242-3, 245.

²⁸ Sousa, *As Cortes Medievais*, vol. I, pp. 395-6.

is a small list of the officers and nobles serving the *infantes*.²⁹ These had not been part of the set-up royal household agreed in Coimbra; yet, as the list shows, they were being paid along with the king's men. The presence of redundant household members shows that the set-up of 1402 did not accommodate the redistributive responsibilities for the monarchy. The problem persisted: by 1435 the households serving *infantes* Pedro and Fernando had each 372, that is to say 97 more than what was agreed with the monarchy. Within the household, 147 had a knightly status.³⁰ This situation can be read in the commentaries of contemporary F. Lopes who clearly that while it was agreed that, like the 'old kings', João I had to hoard say 5% of the total income, 'all he spent and he did not have enough to uphold his condition (*estado*).'³¹

The grant of 1408 by the *Povos* makes explicit that the *sisas* aimed at organising the households of the three princes so that these befitted their 'honour and *estados*.'³² Once more, we find the conservation of the *estado* implies the funding of an entourage. By granting the *sisas* to pay for the households of the *infantes*, the *Cortes* of Braga/1408 continued what the Counsel of Coimbra had tried to halt: the enlargement of the redistributive responsibilities of the monarch. Unable to keep up with the *contias*,³³ in the *Cortes* of Braga/1408 João I resorted to the *sisas* to finance the lion's share of his three elder sons' households or *casas*.³⁴ These large entourages were markedly military: in a total of 886 individuals identified by João Silva de Sousa as members of the household of Henry the Navigator, half (54%) of its members had a knightly status.³⁵ In the reign of Duarte (1433-8), of the 746 members of the *infantes* Pedro and Fernando, more than a third (286) were military.³⁶ Resorting to concrete cases, Rita Costa Gomes argued that the princely households allowed the monarchy to take up the noble families which fought with João I for an entire generation.³⁷ These new households funded by the

²⁹ RED, doc. 5, pp. 44-45.

³⁰ Duarte I, *Livro dos Conselhos*, pp. 179-180.

³¹ Lopes, *Cron. João I*, II, chapter CCIII.

³² RED, doc. 6, pp. 49.

³³ See *supra* p. 244.

³⁴ MH, vol. I, doc. 134, pp. 316-319.

³⁵ That is to say, all the '*fidalgos*', '*cavaleiros*,' and '*escudeiros*.' Sousa, *A Casa Senhorial*, p. 302. It should be noted that the total figure given by João Silva de Sousa is not based on a list of members in a given period but on individuals found in different documents between 1401 and 1460.

³⁶ I include the *cavaleiros* and *escudeiros*. Duarte I, *Livro dos Conselhos*, pp. 179-180.

³⁷ Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society*, pp. 285-6

crown provided the swollen ranks of vassals with the rents that contingencies of war and peace could not.³⁸

The overview of the political context of the introduction of the *sisas* showed that from the moment of what would prove to be their definitive introduction in 1387 the monarchy did not perceive the *sisas* simply as a war subsidy. While the defensive war against Castile provided the appropriate constitutional setting to extract the *sisas*, their primordial goal was to allow for the crown to maintain its court and institutions and to exert its patronage. Moreover, the adoption of the *sisas* by the crown was not a determined aim of the crown, which seems to have envisaged a return to the status quo of the old kings, including hoarding. The household accounts show that João I was pressed to backtrack the 'conservative' decisions taken in the Counsel of Coimbra. As Portuguese monarchs would claim from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, the ultimate beneficiaries of the *sisas* were the subjects, not the crown.

Section 8.2 - General Accounts

Heuristic contingency makes the hypothesis built in the last section particularly hard to verify. There has been no scholarly attempt to understand the whole of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century expenditure of the Portuguese crown. Again, there are important lacunae. Yet historians can count on four general accounts, of which three have been published and analysed by Jorge Faro and João Cordeiro Pereira and a fourth that had not been identified.³⁹ As these accounts can only be interpreted after the mechanics of

³⁸ In English, Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society*, pp. 280-286. Sousa, João Silva de, *A Casa Senhorial do Infante D. Henrique*, Lisboa, 1991, pp. 191-4; Sousa, 'Dos Rendimentos Fundiários da Casa do Infante D. Henrique,' *Do Infante a Tordesilhas*, Cascais, 1995, pp. 73-6, 79-83; Sousa, João Silva de, 'Casas Senhoriais no Portugal Quatrocentista,' *Do Infante a Tordesilhas*, Cascais, 1995, pp. 55-64. Fontes, João Luís, *Percursos e Memória: Do Infante D. Fernando ao Infante Santo*, Cascais, 2000, p. 26-45, 207-54. Besides curbing the number of vassals, the monarchy fought the internal hierarchies of the nobility. João I attempted to fight the war-triggered reconfiguration of the nobility by forbidding any lord other than the king having vassals. Monteiro, *A Guerra em Portugal*, p. 45..

³⁹ RED, doc. 6, pp. 82-6, doc. 25, pp. 225-9; Pereira, João Cordeiro, 'A receita do Estado Português no Ano de 1526. Um Orçamento Desconhecido', in *Estudos de História de Portugal. Homenagem a A.H. de Oliveira Marques*, vol. II, Lisbon, 1983, pp. 13-55; Pereira, João Cordeiro, 'O Orçamento do Estado Português no Ano de 1527', *Nova História. Século XVI*, pp. 27-65. The *Livro de Sumário* of 1511 can be found at NA, 352. The document is in very poor condition, with considerable sections only readable with UV light and ink has disappeared from a few folios in the beginning and end.

expenditure are adequately understood, a brief glance at how expenses were known, decided and operated is indispensable.⁴⁰

As far as surviving sources go, from the first half of the fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries budgetary technique remained essentially the same, rooted as it was in older traditions.⁴¹ The importance awarded to the prediction of expenditure is perhaps the most interesting feature of Portuguese budgetary methods and accounts. The linking of revenues and expenses was based in two complementary documents compiled in the office of the two *Vedores da Fazenda* throughout the first months of the year: the 'summary' and the 'register' books. The 'summary' gathered the *almoxarifados*' estimated revenues for the incoming year by means of calculations or in knowledge of the tax-farming auctions led by the regional accountants in the end of the year.⁴² This document was drawn according to the fiscal organisation of the realm which followed in a customised order (*almoxarifados* first, then Lisbon revenues and, at last, overseas territories). The priority items of permanent expenditure, the king's household, the queen's household, the treasury, the North Africa fortresses⁴³ and regular subsidies to the nobles (*assentamentos*),⁴⁴ were duly assigned to the *almoxarifados* and other sources of revenue, particularly to the most valuable and/or geographically convenient. In the first phase of compilation of the summary, only these payments and the 'ordinary expenses' of the *almoxarifado* (minute expenses with stationery and the considerable wages of the *almoxarifado* personnel, as well as the wages of local judges and other officers) were offset against the predicted revenues.

While the 'summary' was being drafted by the team of the first *Vedor*, the personnel of the other *Vedor* was busy compiling the 'register' (the '*Livro de*

⁴⁰ Except if stated otherwise, the following account is based upon the regulations of the *Fazenda* issued in 1516 and upon its commentaries by João Cordeiro Pereira in 'O Orçamento do Estado Português no Ano de 1527', pp. 30-34.

⁴¹ Pereira, 'O Orçamento do Estado', p. 33, nt. 35.

⁴² The word for estimate (verb *orçar*, noun *orçamento* is currently the Port. equivalent to state budget). It consisted in the average of the previous five years. This was carefully done, so that the income of a particular district could provide the means to pay for the assigned expenses.

In other occasions, the predicted income was based in the tax-farms auctioned in the last months of the previous years. Auctions took place before the regional auditors, the *Contadores das comarcas* or centrally, before the *Vedores*.

⁴³ Since the 1430s at least, the permanent expenditure of the North African fortresses were also paid by *assentamento*.

⁴⁴ In the 'general account' of 1511 there are *assentamentos* for the treasury, for the courtier's pensions (*moradias*), for the courts (the *Relação* and the *Desembargo do Paço*), the coastal flotilla and the great dynastic monastery of Batalha.

Registo’ also called ‘*Livro da Fazenda*’) in order to be ready in the first months of the year, though delays were frequent.⁴⁵ In essence, this document listed annuities and other standing payments (organised by entities, offices and individuals) due in a particular year.⁴⁶ These expenses differed from those assigned in the ‘summary’ because they required the (normally) private recipient of the payment to produce before the *Vedor da Fazenda*’s office a token (the *padrão* letter) of his right to receive it.⁴⁷ Though the ‘register’ started as an amended copy of last year’s equivalent, it implied the confirmation of every token presented before the *Vedor* and a verdict on its validity. In more troubled times, as in the 1470s, it would also imply the prioritising of some annuities at the expense of others on legal grounds.⁴⁸

After its completion, the ‘register’ was sent to the team working the ‘summary’ so that expenses could be assigned to sources of revenue. Thus, in each entry of the summary, expenditure was inserted, following a set order, as shown on Fig. 35, based on the only summary so far identified, that of 1511. When the summary was completed, specific ‘assignment booklets’ (*cadernos de assentamentos*) were sent to each *almoxarife* so that he knew whom and how much to pay.⁴⁹ This was not, however, the single function of the ‘summary’. As can be seen in the document of 1511, the compilers of the summary, after deducing the volume of both standing and exceptional expenses for each source of revenue, calculated the remainder and inserted it in the ‘summary’. This remnant was not to be used by the *almoxarife* but by an especially appointed

⁴⁵ In theory, it had to be ready by the end of the first quarter of the year, as this was the date that the first instalments of the annuities were due. Nonetheless, the fact that annuities granted in June were to be paid still ‘from January of the present year’ show that annuities granted in June could still enter next year’s ‘register’, meaning that its compilation lagged well into the year. v.g. TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 8, fol. 135 (1464), Livro 11, fol. 79v (1480), Livro 26, fol. 72 (1451).

⁴⁶ Only the register for 1523 was identified so far. *AHP*, vol. II, pp. 221-7.

⁴⁷ See the privilege of transferring the monies paid to the count D. Pedro de Meneses as annuity to *assentamento* ‘because of the services to the realm’ in 1480 (TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 32, fol. 152).

⁴⁸ See the advice of the Count of Penela, *Vedor da Fazenda* to Afonso V, on which annuities ought to be paid and those that could be done without it in 1477. *RED*, 25. If laments from the *Vedores da Fazenda* of João III (1521-55) are to be believed, this was the most tiresome task of these officers. It should be noticed that the training of the *Vedores* was eminently legal. The *Vedor* Count of Castanheira, *Vedor* in 1553, claimed that this office was far more difficult than being judge of the higher courts, ‘because in all decisions he [the *Vedor*] has to justify with his reason instead of excuse himself with Bartolus or Baldo.’ Cruz, *A Governação de D. João III*, p. 57.

⁴⁹ As J. Cordeiro Pereira noticed, if all the c. 150 ‘assignment booklets’ issued annually had survived, their data would allow to estimate the total budget with some precision. Needless to say, they have not. Only 212 survived for the period of 1499-1542. Pereira, ‘O Orçamento do Estado’, p. 32; *AHP*, vol. II, p. 21-26, vol. VI, pp. 233-40, 443-4, vol. VII, pp. 220-6, 291-2, 376, 478-80, vol. VIII, pp. 70-75, vol. X, p. 60-208.

'receiver' or 'treasurer'⁵⁰ who collected the remnants and some contingent revenues throughout the year. This individual brought together the revenues that were the king's net or operational revenue.

Fig. 35 – The *Almoxarifado* of Coimbra in the 'Summary' Book of 1511 (in r.)

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Total receipt | 2388650 |
| Ordinary expenses | 44600 |
| Annuities and compensations for annuities | 1417500 |
| Extraordinary/irregular | 347000 |
| Subsidies to nobles | 200000 |
| Remainder | 379550 |
| Debts and wedding subsidies | 334810 |
| To be collected by the king's treasurer | 44740 |

Source: TT, NA, doc. 352, fol. 33.

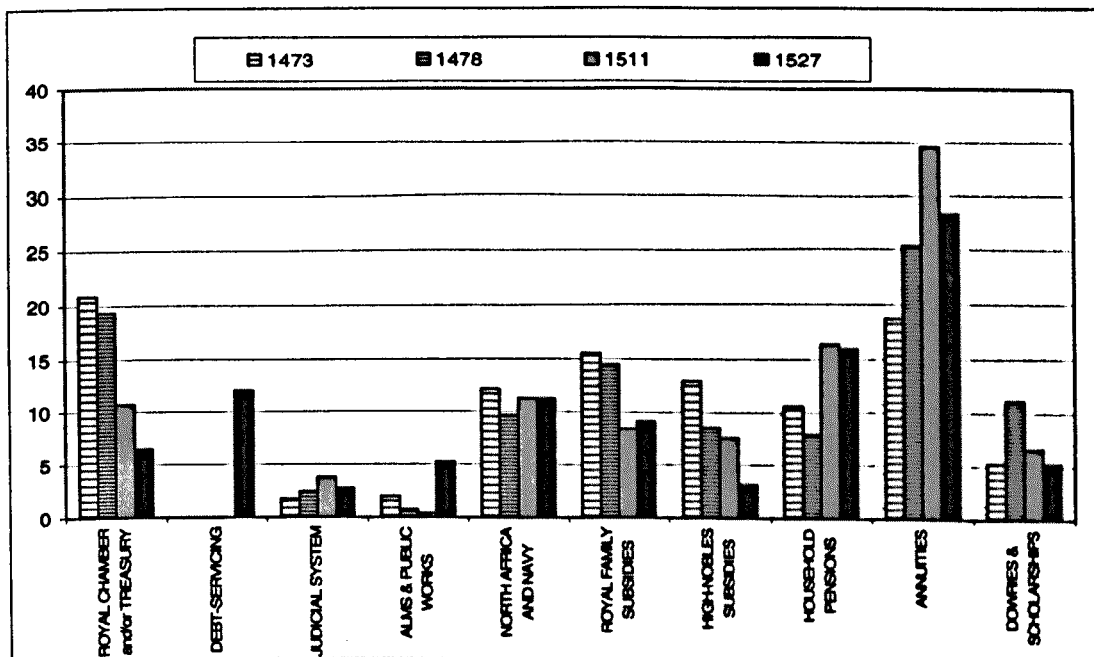
The work of the office of the *Fazenda* provided the monarchy with an adequate notion of the state of its finances each year. Estimates of income, at least those based in tax-farming, were reliable. However, historians must bear in mind that the content of these three concurring sources, the 'summary', the 'register' and the 'assignment booklets', reflects only what contemporary jargon called the 'organised expenditure' (*despesa ordenada*). In one way or another, all surviving budgetary documentation is related to the 'summary' books whose purpose was to organise predictable expenditure. With the sources available to us, the ultimate ends of the important proportion of the receipt taken by the treasurer remain largely opaque. As such, in the general accounts of 1473, 1477 and 1527 the king's operational revenue does not appear, though in the first two it might be hidden in the vast sums assigned to the royal chamber.

In other words, rather than factual budgets, the general accounts reflect the administrative options for that year. Yet, their composition and their organisation also hint at the fact that financial planning was made in attention of the expenditure. The 'summary books' testify to an attempt to accommodate the interests of the monarchy with those of the payees. The fact that the monarch's

⁵⁰ These are synonyms. In the two letters of acquittal passed to Rui Pires he is both called 'treasurer' and 'receiver' of the same function. TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 29, fol. 207v.

operational revenue was largely contingent, while the key redistributive instances were assigned suggests that the finances were managed and designed not simply to concentrate economic power in the hands of the sovereign, but also to distribute it. While today the *Vedores da Fazenda* together with the whole institutional apparatus of the royal finances are regarded as agents to the crown, this was not how they perceived themselves. The *Vedores*, accountants, scribes and judges of the *sisas* swore that they would both defend the 'service of the king' and the 'good of the parts.'⁵¹ The legal training of the *Vedores* made them judges: more than simple arithmetic, their role was to evaluate the legitimacy of private claims to the revenues of taxation. While the available summaries of expenditure compiled for 1477 and 1527 provide an invaluable quantitative perspective of the monarchy's financial situation, their design and their organisation also provide a political insight: royal finance was not purely at the service of the crown. Ultimately, careful coordination of expenditure with the revenues limited royal prerogative.⁵²

Fig. 36 – The 'Set Expenditure' in 1473, 1478, 1511 and 1527 (in %)



⁵¹ On the regulation of the office of *Vedor da Fazenda* of 1516, see Cruz, *A Governação de D. João III*, pp. 55-74 and see also an example from the *Contos* book of João I: TT, Chanc. João I, Livro 5, fol. 77. From 1442, there the oath of the *Vedor* and the accountant. TT Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 23, fol. 38.

⁵² The contrast with contemporary French budgetary documentation is clear. According to Alain Guéry, French monarchs between 1492 and 1665 set the expenditure without worrying too much with its practicability. Guéry, 'Les Finances de la Monarchie', n. 33, 1978, pp. 223-8.

Sources: 1473 – RED, doc. 5; 1477- RED, doc. 25; 1511 – TT, NA 352; 1527 – Pereira, 'O Orçamento de Estado,' pp. 61-5.

While interpreting Portuguese expenditure in this period, it is important to remind that these numbers are set against a backdrop of fiscal buoyancy. The volume of total expenditure grew nearly four times between these two dates. As such, most, if not all items of expenditure became more costly in nominal terms.

Yet, Fig. 36 shows that, despite of the accelerated growth of the receipt, the distribution pattern of standing expenditure remained broadly stable throughout these five decades. Visibly, expenditure on the judicial system apparatus remained relatively unimportant,⁵³ as did alms⁵⁴ and public works. Military expenditure, in the shape of the North African fortresses, the coastal fleet and the Indian Armada (appearing only in 1527, totalling 3.3%), remained very stable throughout the period, taking around a tenth of the set expenses (between 9.7 and 12.2%).

Redistributive payments - the subsidies to the *estados* of royal family members and of great nobles, annuities, household pensions and the scholarships and dowries – covered two-thirds of the set expenditure (respectively, 63%, 68%, 74% and 62%). As a whole, redistributive payments grew in line with the increase in the king's finances. Changes within the redistributive items are certainly worth mentioning. The share of the finances covered by subsidies to great nobles and to members of the royal family declined. This is perhaps the most important change in the structure of the expenditure from 1473 to 1527 lies in the decrease of the share of monies assigned to the royal family and to the great nobles. This did not entail any sign of hostility towards the nobility, as the assignments grew in nominal terms.⁵⁵ However, the growth of the subsidies to the royal family members and high

⁵³ Annuities also benefited 'employed' individuals and there are cases of annuities payable to officials while holding this office.' Nonetheless, these grants were considered annuities, as they stemmed from the monarch's *mercé* (recognition of merit) and were not integral to the office, as wage (*mantimento e vestir*) were. The Royal Chamber paid directly some offices, the *Fazenda* and the *Contos*, for instance, while the chancery was financially self-sufficient. The costs of a functioning fiscal administration (*almoxarifes* and his personnel) were regarded as 'ordinary costs' and do not appear in the accounts of 'set expenditure.'

⁵⁴ Alms resembled annuities but, given that they were perpetual and conceded to institutions, rather than to individuals, they ought to be distinguished. Though most of the alms benefited monasteries, the largest were destined to hospitals and to other charitable institutions.

⁵⁵ Pereira, 'A Estrutura Social,' pp. 298-315; Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society*, p. 246.

nobility was marginal in nominal terms and, consequently, their overall importance did decrease.

The granting of dowries and scholarships, which were destined to the former members of the royal household, also stagnated. However, the crucial redistributive payments, pensions and annuities, did grow at an alarming rate for the crown. Only in 1527 are there signs of a diminishing share of the total expenditure; but still the annual burden of the annuities grew in absolute terms from 32.1 million *r.* to 42.75 million *r.* in those 16 years. Nonetheless, throughout the entire period, annuities would be the single most important items of expenditure (between 18% and 34%). In fact, annuities were only the most eminent of other items of expenditure whose goal was redistributive. The predominance of redistributive expenditure, and most of all the growth of the share of the annuities up to 1511, is even more noticeable because of the booming of royal finances. While inflation is partly to blame for the growth in this period, fiscal buoyancy (a growth of 6.8% per annum between 1473 and 1527) was more than simply a function of the inflation.⁵⁶

From 1473 to 1527 revenues grew by 370%, yet the monarchy's effective hold on the collected money did not improve decidedly. The formidable increase of the revenue did not alter the conditions prevailing in 1473 and the different items of expenditure grew more or less proportionally. This indicates suggests that the monarchy did not capitalise on the growth of the income and that the political equilibriums and the interests that dominated the king's finances in 1473 were very much similar to those fifty-four years later. Indeed, the most striking result lies in the percentage of revenues reserved by the king to the treasury and/or royal chamber. These sums which were the crown's net, 'expendable' money, sharply decreased from 21% to 6.5%. This figure implied the continuation of the similar nominal values in broad terms (7.5 million *r.*) and in that his great-grandson, João III (8.9 million *r.*). At least in part, this was a consequence of the money diverted to debt-serving, as the original purpose for these debts had been the funding of an expedition in North Africa.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Between 1473 and 1527 the annual rate of inflation, as measured in wine and wheat prices, the only commodities for which there is available data, was grew between 0.3 (wheat) and 1.8% (wine). Viana, 'Alguns Preços de Vinho'; Viana, 'Alguns preços de cereais'. See also section 5.3 *supra*.

⁵⁷ TT, Chanc. Manuel I, Livro 13, fols. 9v, 10, 48v, 49, 55v-56v. (all dated between February and December 1500).

At first sight, it appears intriguing that contemporary empire-building was not reflected in the accounts of set expenditure of 1511 and 1527. After all, in this period Portugal acquired the status of a major power and had to keep permanent fleets in two oceans in order to conquer and defend possessions in four continents. Even assuming that the monies entered in the accounts, as assignments to the 'royal chamber' or to the treasury or to arrears and debt-servicing, were integrally applied in the imperial ventures, how it is possible that the gigantic empire-building effort of the Portuguese crown only involved about 30% of the state's predictable expenditure?

There are many answers to this problem. To some extent, fiscal buoyancy justifies the apparently modest place of the empire in the country's finances. Indeed, such was the growth of the revenues that the 29.7% destined to the North African fortresses, navy, coastal defence and 'operational' money in 1527 equal the whole of the 'set expenditure' in 1477 and correspond to 125% of that in 1473. However, this is not quite the answer. The revenues inserted in the only surviving summary book of 1511 provide a different view on the position of the empire in Portuguese finances. Where, at the end of the 'summary' of 1511, the provision of the expenditure items are defined, it is perceptible that the *assentamentos* of the queen and some high nobles and other minor payments are met with overseas revenues, including Indian spice and West African gold.⁵⁸ There is also a note indicating that in the next fiscal year part of the annuities would be paid from the incoming shipment of Indian pepper.⁵⁹ Thus, in this period, the fiscal role of the empire is to provide for yet more revenue to meet the demands of the kingdom's elites. This stands for an obvious difference between Portugal and its rival empire which relied on the mobilization of the internal resources to meet its growing costs.⁶⁰ On the contrary, Oriental and African revenues were mobilized to sustain the king's obligations towards his entourage.

In addition, as the reader of section 3.3 will recall, there are other, less circumstantial reasons for the apparent absence of the empire from these accounts. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century the empire in the Eastern

⁵⁸ TT, NA 352, fls. 176, 177, 179, 180, 181.

⁵⁹ TT, NA 352, fol. 173.

⁶⁰ Muto, Giovanni, 'The Spanish System: Centre and Periphery', *ESSF*, pp. 233-6 and 254-9.

Indies and the armadas were largely self-sustaining and did not require significant diversion of resources.⁶¹ Notwithstanding this self-sufficiency, the growth of annuities cannot be dissociated from imperial expansion. As argued before, redistributive payments of annuities were to a large extent a delayed reward for the military, empire-building service. As such, the growing cost of the annuities is a subtle fiscal reflection of Portuguese imperial ventures. In sum, to answer this question it would be important to look closer at the more detailed accounts of expenditure (see section 8.3).

The analysis of the 'set expenditure' backs the claim that Portuguese finances were at the service of a redistributive monarchy. What other label can there be for a monarchy that directly handed in to particular individuals 2 in each 3 *r.* spent? What designation for a monarchy which planned an ambitious strategy of Oceanic dominance committing less than a fifth of its resources?

This view can be tested against yet other sources. While general accounts allow for a comprehension of the expenditure as a whole, letters of acquittal supply a temporally wider perspective, even if less systematic. Indeed, as previously discussed, the four available general accounts deal only with set, rather than effective, expenditure. By contrast, letters of acquittal of officers spending the king's money present effective expenditure.

Section 8.3 – Meaningful Fragments

Although letters of acquittal of officers and paymasters are in short supply even in the relatively well-documented reign of Manuel I,⁶² there is enough information to look closely at two key items of expenditure: North African possessions and the household pensions. In addition, resorting to a

⁶¹ See *supra* p. 271, note 117

⁶² The audit of these officers was based in the books of receipt and expenditure (*livro de receita e despesa*) kept by the scribes of the *almoxarifados*. The fact that the words receipt and expenditure are so close to their modern equivalents (both in English and in Portuguese) should not turn the historian's head away from their precise technical terms. Indeed, the accounting had not a kingdom-wide rationale: receipt implied money received in the officer's account, not in the king's general account. Thus, a sum collected by an *almoxarife*, then delivered to the king's treasury and paid to a *almoxarife* of a North African outpost would have appear three times as a receipt in the four letters of acquittal issued to these four accountable officers. Similarly, this imaginary sum would also appear three times as *despesa* or expenditure, since all the four officers disbursed it. Typically, these letters show only the total cash-flow ('*dinheiros que recebeu e despendeu*').

different type of sources, it will be possible to trace how annuities emerged to become the most important items of expenditure for the Portuguese crown.

Subsection 8.3.1 – North Africa and Military Expenditure

Permanent military expenditure covered two areas: the *contias* and the defence of North African possessions. However, these two expenses did not coincide in time. The timing of the disappearance of the *contia* system, between 1402 and 1408, roughly coincides with the beginning of Portuguese expansion in North Africa and with an age where military service became essentially stipendiary, as mentioned earlier. It has been argued that the monies spent in Ceuta replaced the notional 10% paid in *contias* to the nobles (see *supra* section 7.1). At an early stage, the permanent financing of the defence of Ceuta appears merely to have diverted the monies formerly paid on *contias*. However, being isolated in a hostile continent, deprived of its previous commercial routes, Ceuta became a notorious 'drain of arms and monies', as *infante* Pedro dramatically wrote from Flanders to his father in 1426. 'Wise men' from Flanders and England, Pedro continued, 'who had praised the storming of the city, now condemned the insistence on keeping it as sheer folly.'⁶³ A 1432 letter of soon-to-be King Duarte to his agent in Italy reveals that the yearly assignment for Ceuta was 28,500 ducats, which correspond to c. 4,560,000 *r.*⁶⁴ This is vital information because by 1473, the year for which the next estimate of cost is available,⁶⁵ a sum of 4,380,000 *r.* was assigned to defend the 'cities of Africa.' As such, there is some indication that the nominal cost of North Africa was not significantly altered from 1432 to 1473. This is even more surprising as from 1471 onwards, Portuguese North Africa comprised four rather than one stronghold (Ceuta plus Al-Kasr, Asilah and Tangiers). In view of these figures, it is wise for historians not to regard contemporary claims that North African expansion was a drain of resources as reflections of the effective financial imbalance. This suggestion can be tested by the systematization of the letters

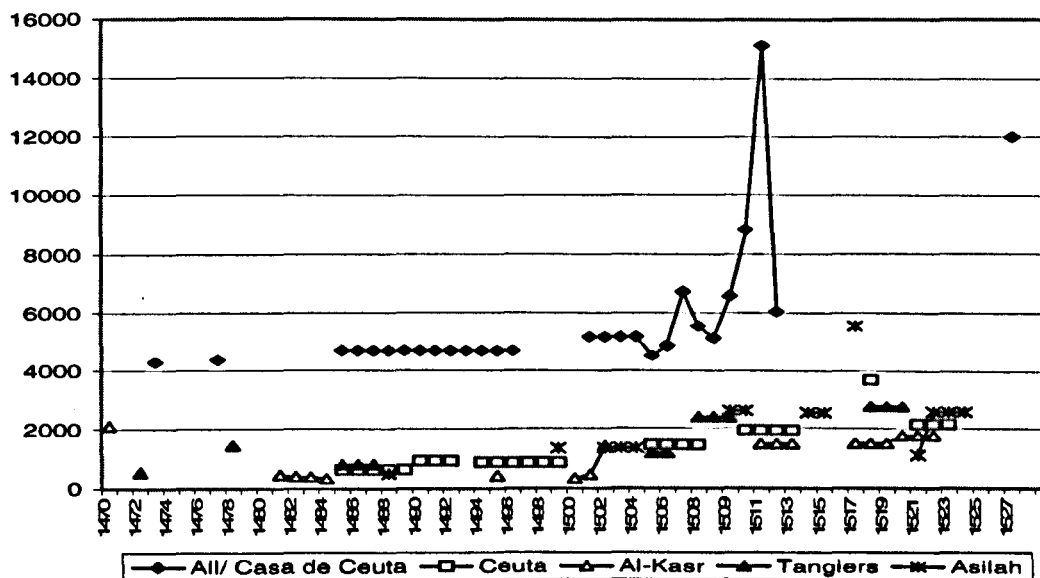
⁶³ Duarte, *Livro dos Conselhos d'(...)*, ed. Dias, J. J. Alves, Lisbon, 1982, doc. 4, p. 37.

⁶⁴ *MH*, VI, doc. 10, p.17-22.

⁶⁵ There are three letters of acquittal to the treasurer of the *Casa de Ceuta* for the years 1437-41, but it is very unlikely that their extremely modest values reflect the whole expenditure made in North Africa. *Marrocos*, I, XCVI (one of the extra documents added in the end of the vol.) CXXXI and CXXXII.

of acquittal which reflect the effective expenditure on the African strongholds after 1470.

Fig. 37 – Expenditure in North Africa Possessions, 1470-1527 (in thousand r.)



Sources : Ceuta - *CQM* 182, 359, 547, 599, 600, 601, 667, 690; Al-Kasr - *CQM*, 169, 327, Coelho, J. Manuel Laranjo, *Documentos da Chancelaria de D. João II Respeitantes a Marrocos*, Lisboa, 1923, doc. CLXXXVIII, pp. 197-8; Asilah - *CQM*, 82, 117, 287, 337, 432, 708; TT, *Leitura Nova*, Livro Ilhas, fol. 107v; Tangiers - *CQM* 559, 577, 666, *DP*, vol. III, doc. 82; All North Africa/Casa de Ceuta - *CQM*, 301, 302, 537, 523, 709.

The figures of effective expenditure provided by the letters of acquittal are coherent in showing that, rather than an ever-expanding drain of resources, North African possessions were a late-comer to the benefits of fiscal buoyancy. Apart from some exceptional years - Asilah in 1471 (the first year of Portuguese rule) and 1499 and Tangiers in 1478 - the expenditure in most of the African cities experienced a very modest growth, or even stagnation, between the 1470s and c. 1500. The average nominal spending in the decade 1486-96, 4,687,387 r., did not differ significantly from the 4,560,000 r. at which Duarte I estimated the cost of North Africa in 1432. Considering the effects of inflation and the end-of-century growth of the revenue, it is clear that the defence of the African strongholds was an increasingly lighter burden. It is only after the turn of the century that Asilah, Al-Kasr and Ceuta finally hit unprecedented levels of expenditure, as a reflection of the intense military activity in the second decade

of the sixteenth century.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, expenditure grew at a relatively slow pace and only by the end of the first quarter of the century did North African possessions recover the share of c. 10% of the kingdom's expenses that they once held.

Subsection 8.3.2 – Household Pensions

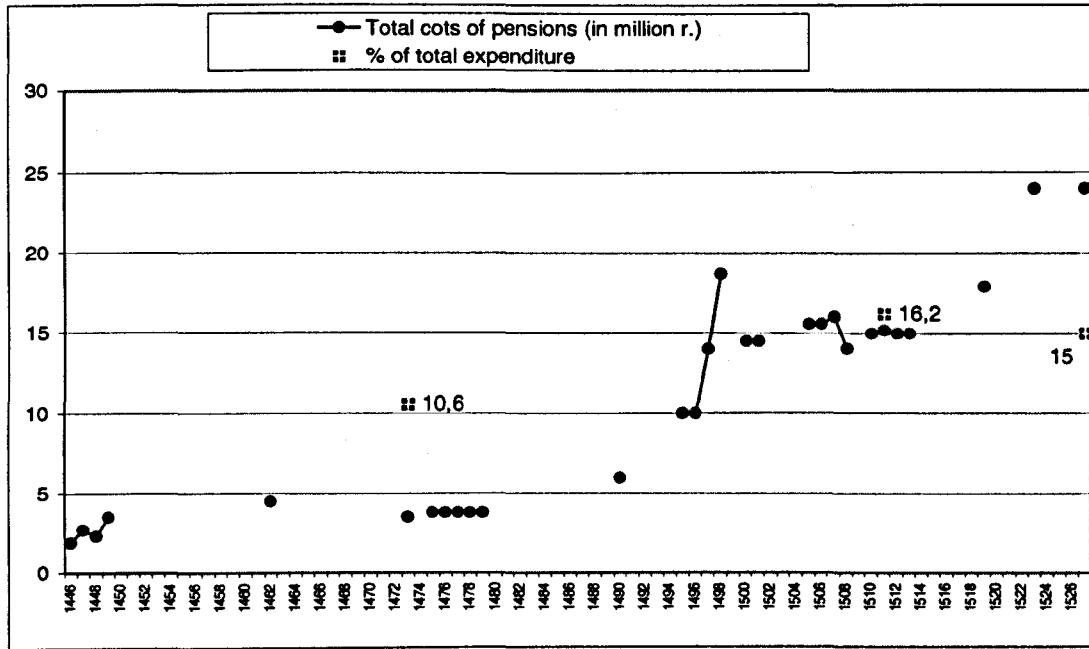
The pension (Port. *moradia*) was an allowance for those who effectively shared life in court, ranging from the most important nobles to the offspring of domestic officers and servants.⁶⁷ The practice of providing regular pensions to the of the members of royal household, as distinct from the remunerations paid to offices, was well in place from the late fourteenth century. Its varying value was expressed in both money and kind. In the former case, the allowance could be bread, barley, wine or cloth. Whatever the value (expressed monthly) the payment was made directly by the king's officials instead of assigned to any source of revenue.

It has been discussed how the establishment of 1402 failed to curb the redistributive pressures that affected the court of João. Barely three years after the counsel of Coimbra, the set limits for the household had been disregarded (see *supra* Fig. 33). Nonetheless, in 1405, the 357,994 r. paid to the members of the royal household amounted to only 6.2% of the revenues. Would this percent rise?

⁶⁶ See Costa and Rodrigues, *Batalha dos Alcaides*, pp. 24-6.

⁶⁷ Gomes, *The Making of a Court*, pp. 241-2.

Fig. 38 – Expenditure on Royal Household Pensions, 1446-1527



Sources: Fig. 14; TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 3, fl. 85v-86 (1446-9); RED, doc. 5 (1473), doc. 22 (1462), doc. 23, doc. 24 (1478); Lobo, *História da Sociedade*, p. 430 (1490); TT, Chanc. Manuel I, Livro 6, fol. 70v (1500-1), Livro 11, fol. 115-116v (1510-3), Livro 28, fol. 52-53 (1475-9), Livro 35, fol. 130v (1520); Livro 36, fol. 8v (1505-6); Livro 41, fol. 18v (1507-9); CQM, 46 (1494-6), 174 (1507-9), 200 (1519), 229 (1498), 317 (1475-9), 322 (1505-6), 413 (1500-1); TT, NA 352, fol. 173 (1511); AHP, vol. II, p. 430 (1523); Pereira, 'O Orçamento do Estado' (1527).

As with the North African possessions, household pensions did not grow during the middle decades of the century. As Fig. 38 testifies, between 1446 and 1480 there was a very slight tendency for the burden of the household pensions to swell. However, in the early 1470s that tendency seems to have stopped, hypothetically curbed by the austerity measures imposed by the *Cortes* and executed by the *Vedores da Fazenda*.⁶⁸ However, in the decades of fiscal buoyancy, household pensions went steeply upwards: between 1480 and 1490, their total volume increased by 63,3% and between the latter year and 1494 they grew 60% more. While this steep growth cannot be dissociated with the increase of the revenues, it is important to notice that household pensions also enlarged their share of the royal payments, going from 10,6 % in 1473 to 16,2% in 1511.

⁶⁸ The austerity measures suggested by one of the *Vedores da Fazenda*, the count of Penela, can be seen at RED, doc. 25, p. 225-9.

The expenditure on the royal household, however, had a decisive role in the military and imperial efforts of the monarchy. While only a prosopographic study could clarify the substitution of the *contias* by the *moradias* as claimed by Rita Costa Gomes, the *moradia* retained a distinctively military nature in the reign of Manuel I. Members of the household formed provided the military and administrative elite of the empire. According to the data compiled by Teresa Lacerda, between 1497 and 1521 60% of the ships' captains in the Indian Armadas were members of the royal household.⁶⁹ As Lunardo Ca Da Masser noticed, and documents confirm, the royal household also provided the cavalry in Portuguese Morocco without receiving payment and undergoing severe hardships. 800 of the 1,800-strong garrison of Azemmour were young members of the royal household.⁷⁰ This number is not surprising given that since c. 1500 the monarchy offered the privileges and the pension of royal household to whoever appeared in India or in North Africa with adequate equipment (including horses) and fought 'at his own cost.'⁷¹ Extraordinary expeditions also drew on the members of the royal household which dispensed with wages.⁷² The household pensions were the counterpart for a large and cheap army, with only the costs of logistics, guns and shipbuilding being sustained by the crown. The monies paid to the members of the royal household assured that the state had a permanent 'nobility of service'. As such, household pensions were an investment that would be recovered in form of free military service. In practice, they deferred the cost of the imperial expansion to future expenditure.

⁶⁹ Lacerda, Teresa, *Os Capitães das Armadas da Índia no reinado de D. Manuel I. Uma Análise Social*, Lisbon, 2006, p. 79.

⁷⁰ *Documentos do Corpo Cronológico Relativos a Marrocos (1488 a 1514)* ed. Antóio Baião, Coimbra, 1925, pp. 61, 64 and 125.

⁷¹ See laws and ordnances collected in *Inventário dos Livros de Portarias do Reino*, ed. Pedro de Azevedo, 2 vols, Lisbon, 1909-12; *Inventário dos Livros de Matrículas das Moradias da Casa Real*, ed. Pedro de Azevedo, 2 vols, Lisbon, 1911-17.

⁷² See the order for all the members of the household living in Entre Douro e Minho to serve under the duke of Braganza in the coming expedition in *Documentos do Corpo Cronológico*, p. 55.

Subsection 8.3.3 – Annuities

Letters of acquittal for the paymasters of annuities are very scarce. Those for the years 1508 and 1509 confirm the growing trend through the sixteenth century, as presented on Fig. 36. In these years the *tenças* totalled already 21,500 million *r*, and reached 32 millions in 1523 before getting 42,750 million *r*. of 1527.

**Fig. 39 – Total Expenditure on Annuities, 1473-1527
(in million *r*.)**

| Year | Expenditure |
|------|-------------|
| 1473 | 6,700 |
| 1477 | 11,725 |
| 1508 | 21,500 |
| 1509 | 21,500 |
| 1511 | 32,100 |
| 1527 | 42,750 |

Sources: *RED*, doc. 4, p. 85, doc. 25, pp. 226-7; *CQM*, n. 27, n. 28 ; *TT*, Núcleo Antigo, doc. 352; Pereira, 'O Orçamento do Estado,' p. 65.

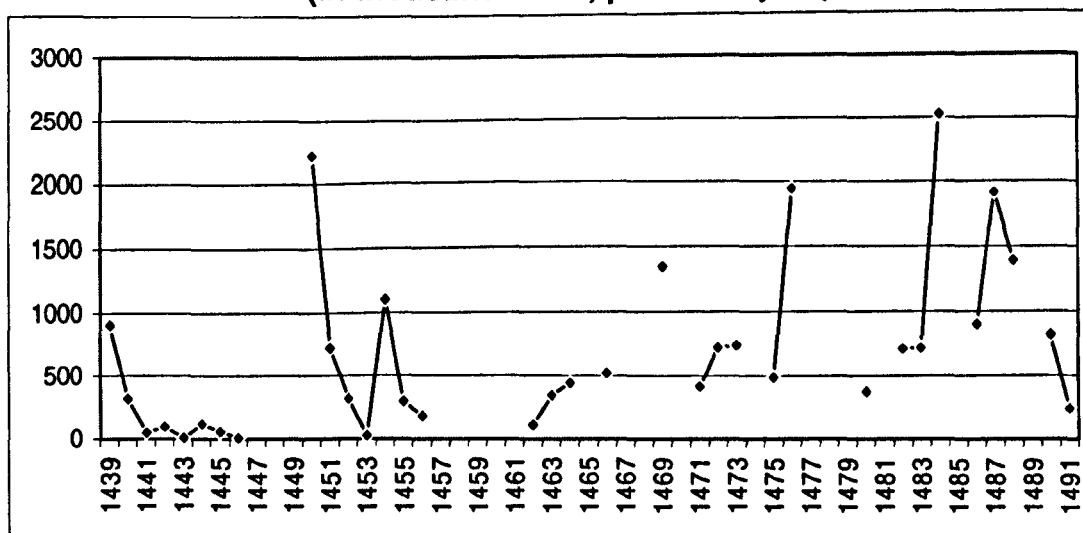
While letters of acquittal provide no substantial information for the decades before 1473, it was still possible to understand their growth through an alternative source: the chancery registers. These figures can be complemented by a temporally wider point of observation: the chancery registers. As mentioned, before payments of annuities were assigned in the 'summary' books because the private holders of annuities had to present a token or certificate of the king's grant which had to be issued by the royal chancery. Given that entire annual chancery registers survive for the reigns of Afonso V and João II, it is possible to assess the expansion of annuities.

Like other redistributive payments, notably the household pensions and the dowries paid to members of the nobility, annuities (*tenças*) emerged in the

first decade of the fifteenth century, after the truce with Castile.⁷³ However, unlike dowries and scholarships, which were considered *graças*, that is to say arising out of the mere will of the monarch who had obligation to do it, annuities were *mercês*, that is to say recompenses for 'merits.'⁷⁴ Indeed, fifteenth-century annuities appear explicitly as the counterpart to 'services performed and to be performed', with sometimes a brief mention to what those (mostly military) services were.

The ideology present in the tokens is very eloquent in this respect, as most use one of the countless variants of the idea that 'it is proper of kings to reward and benefit those who deserve and who have served him.' Indeed, obtaining an annuity implied that the prospective beneficiary actively invoked his services in, say North Africa or in the War with Castile (1474-8), and demanded to be rewarded by the king. For this reason, more than with any other expense, the volume of annuities reflects the receptiveness of royal finances to the redistributive pressures.⁷⁵

**Fig. 40 – Value of New Annuities Granted, 1473-91
(in thousands of r.; per fiscal year)**



Notes: Fig. 38 comprises only years for which there complete chancery registers; these are missing, or very incomplete, for the years 1447-9, 1457-8, 1460-1, 1470, 1474, 1477-9, 1481, 1485, 1489. Indexes for year 1459 and 1481 were very incomplete.

⁷³ The oldest known annuity dates from 1409 and is known because it was mentioned in a letter of confirmation in 1476. TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 7, fol. 98.

⁷⁴ On these distinctions and their legal foundations, see Olival, *As Ordens Militares*, pp. 23-5.

⁷⁵ The monarchy was aware of this pressure: on the wake of entering Castile in 1474 Afonso V ordered that the concession of a *tença* higher than 10,000 r. required the approval of his son. Góis, *Chronica do Príncipe*, chapter xviii, p. 116.

Sources: TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livros 1-34; Chanc. João II, Livro 1, fl. 22; indexes used: Mendonça, Manuela, *A Chancelaria de D. João II – Índices*, 2 vols., Lisbon, 1993; Freire, A Braancamp, 'A Chancelaria de D. João II', *AHP*, vol. II, pp. 337-43; Freire, A Braancamp, 'A Chancelaria de D. Afonso V', *AHP*, II, pp. 479-87, vol. III, pp. 62-74, 130-54, 212-26 and 401-40; <http://antt.ttonline.pt>; 'A Chancelaria de Dom Afonso V,' ed. Humberto Baquero Moreno [database].

Unlike what we can infer from the letters of acquittal on household pensions, the concession of annuities did not grow at a regular pace. They were given away sparingly by Pedro, in his capacity as regent (1439-48), as they had been under João I and his sons King Duarte.⁷⁶ After this period, their weight grew significantly. During the reign of Afonso V, most of the peaks are identifiable: 1439 – ascendancy of Afonso V to the throne and regency of Pedro; 1450 – victory of Afonso V over his uncle the regent; 1472-3 – aftermath of the conquest of Tangiers and Asilah; 1475-6 – offensive against Castile. However, from 1482 onwards, the military settings that provided opportunities for the vassals to seek the king's favour no longer seem to explain their concession. In the reign of Afonso V civil strife (1440 to 1449), African campaigns and fighting with Castile (1475-8) resulted in concessions of annuities at an annual average of 495,411 *r.*⁷⁷ By contrast, concessions by João II during his largely peaceful and economically buoyant regnal years averaged 1,155,322 *r.* per regnal year, an increase of 233%. After all, it was under João II, who attacked the privileges of the nobility censored his father's profligacy and tried to expunge the annuities from the 'registers books' payroll in 1481-2, and not under the, allegedly profligate, Afonso V that the concession of annuities grew more intensely. As such, the reasons for the increase in the volume of the annuities should be sought in the growth of revenue, rather than in military or political circumstances.

As mentioned beforehand, in the early 1460s and 1470s, the crown had let its expenditure grow disproportionately. The *Cortes* of 1460 and of 1472-3 both addressed this problem and proposed a programme of austerity which implied both the diminution of existing annuities and the suspension of further grants. These measures, which were defended by the *Vedores* and the *Cortes*

⁷⁶ e. g. a knight called Joham Landrim who had served Afonso V, Duarte I and João I received as single reward the exemption of extraordinary subsidies in 1442. TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 23, 73v. Many other examples could be provided.

⁷⁷ Despite his decree demanding that in time of war, any annuity worth more than 10,000 *r.* had to be confirmed by him and by his son. Góis, *Chronica do Príncipe*, chapter xlviii, p. 116.

alike,⁷⁸ explain the weak increase in annuities. Yet, the war with Castile broke the impetus of these financial reforms. In the first stage, times of war were a justification for cutting all annuities by 20% or 25% and other extreme decisions.⁷⁹ Similarly, dowries were only paid to those whose families had not benefited from earlier annuities or *graças*.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, war was the eminent occasion for serving the king. 'Service in the wars of Castile' was the explicit reason for the concessions of numerous annuities that were still being demanded in 1484 or 1485, ten years after the start of the war.⁸¹ However, there was a different trend underway. As mentioned above, money payments, *tenças*, were a substitute for land tenures that João I had so liberally bestowed. This process continued until 1499, when Jews were expelled. However, from the 1430s onwards, chancery records testify to a process of gradual emancipation of the *tenças* from specific sources of revenue. In the 70s, payments were no longer assigned to *almoxarifados* or to specific sources of revenue, but merely in the 'register books'.⁸² It was up to the *Vedores da Fazenda* to execute their payments. While on the one hand this seemed to strengthen the power of the *Vedores*, on the other hand, tenures ended by contaminating the annuities that supposedly replaced them. In the reign of Afonso V, annuities were either lifelong or precarious, that is to say removable at the king's will. Under João II a decisive change occurred: *tenças* hereditary were granted from 1490 onwards.⁸³ From the reign of João II onwards, annuities underwent a decisive mutation that would make them a dead weight in the Portuguese finances.

The accounts of expenditure of the Portuguese monarchy are a powerful reminder for historians that state finance does not always pursue the ends of

⁷⁸ E. g. RED, doc. 25, p. 225-9.

⁷⁹ On the prohibition in 1475 of paying dowrie to whom already had annuities, see TT, Chanc. João II, Livro 21, fol. 155v; on the cutting of 'quarters' and fifths of the annuities still in use in 1480, see TT, Chanc. João II, Livro 8, fol. 213v.

⁸⁰ TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 33, fol. 175v.

⁸¹ e. g. TT, Chanc. João II, Livro 8, fol. 213v (1486). In most of the documents conceding *tenças* the nature of the 'services' are not explicitated.

⁸² 'Nos assentamos ora per nossas rendas e direitos desse almoxarifado de Ponte de Lima a Fernando Pereira de tença 1,100,000 libras em preço de 3000 dobras de ouro'; TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 18, fol. 34 (1432); 'os quaes lhe seram paguos aos quarteas delles no nosso almoxarifado d'Estremoz per nossa carta que lhe em cada huun anno sera dada em a nossa fazenda.' TT, Chanc. Afonso V, Livro 13, fol. 174. (1454). 'e mandamos aos vedores da fazenda que assentem os ditos dinheiros nos nossos livros della [fazenda] ... e mandamos dar carta de desembargo cada ano TT, Chanc. João II, Livro 1, fol. 2 (1480).

⁸³ The oldest being given to the dowager of João da Cunha in August 1490 (Chanc. João II, Livro 11, fol. 1).

the state. Indeed, it was the rising annuities, not treasury-bound money, that tapped the economy-fuelled fiscal buoyancy. Yet, it would be wrong to regard the huge share of the expense claimed by the higher and lower nobility as a reflection of their economical or political strength. As Ca Da Masser shrewdly remarked, the nobles whom the kings so magnificently bestowed were poor and, apart, from the royal disbursements and from lands held from the crown, they had little rent of their own.⁸⁴ By liberally granting the profits of internal taxation, the Manueline state was assured that nobles, *great and small alike*, were bound to serve the crown. In 1513, of the 18,000 men enrolled to storm Azemmour 3,000 were, as Damião de Góis noticed, paid by the duke of Braganza, even if the rent of the ducal household was about 4% that of the king.⁸⁵

The monarch brought up his men in the household, obtained more or less free service from them and after this he was bound to grant annuities. This peculiar exchange of military and administrative service for ante-factum upbringing and post-factum grants on depending on merits (*mercês*) was the very fabric of state and empire alike. As such, João I was right when he claimed in 1407 (see section 8.1) that the *sisas* were destined to finance not war but his *estado*.

⁸⁴ 'Sono poveri de danari universalmente tutti; né per grando che sia in questo regno, né per grand'intrada che loro abbino, non s'attrovano uno ducat, perché tutti vivono sopra quella poca d'intrada de questo re.' *Relazione*, § 6.

⁸⁵ This was a flagrant contrast to contemporary Castile where in 1501, the income of the noble households put together was smaller than the royal income. Ladero Quesada, 'Castile', p. 190.



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CONCLUSION

The analysis of the periods pre- and post- the End-of-Century-Wars largely confirmed the stark difference between that which, borrowing from Fernão Lopes, we could call the times of the 'old' and 'new' kings. These two phases can also be identified with, respectively the 'domain state' and the 'tax state' of the Bonney-Ormrod model.¹ Given that these authors did not take into account Portuguese state finances, the present case contributes to strengthen the model. Yet, on the other hand, the dynamics and the features of the two systems appear considerably different from what the model anticipates. The present conclusion will first articulate the changes between these two systems in the four aspects studied in this thesis – revenues and the economy, fiscal-constitutional aspects, warfare and the autonomy of the state - and will end up by addressing the forces for change that influenced this case.

When the varying relationships between economy and revenues are considered (see chapters 1 and 5), the key difference between 'old' and 'new kings' lies in the combination of sales taxes with the prerogative of debasement in the hands of the latter. The *sisas* made for between 75% and 90% of royal income, while free-hand in coinage allowed the monarchy to limit the real costs of its payments without affecting its sales-tax-dependant revenues. These major introductions, which occurred in 1385-7, do not reflect any alteration in the country's economic life. For at least half century, sales taxes were already efficient at the municipal level. While transition from the 'tribute state' to the 'domain state' responds to new economic conditions (the reflux of gold and the material decay of the adversary and of self-subsidising warfare), the emergence of the tax state is not the effect of such changes. As suggested by Bonney and Ormrod, contrary to Schumpeter's views, the transition to a tax state did not directly correspond to change of economic systems. If so, what has caused this change?

Military burden is an obvious candidate and historians that dealt with the *sisas* thought so. As the model predicted, wars were a turning point in the

¹ For what follows, consider Table 0.2 in Bonney and Ormrod, 'Introduction: Crises, Revolutions', pp. 4-8. The addition of two factors – fiscal constitution and transformation of local administration – will be argued *supra*. These changes could be added to the model without it losing any of its consistency.

transition from domain revenues to taxation. Nonetheless, it was debasement, rather than military expenditure, that brought the dissolution of the domain state. Given that the domain had been constituted in the second half of the thirteenth century, in a period of stable coinage and strong municipalities, its customs and taxes largely based on nominal terms and, possibly outdated, lost their significance with debasement.

While the Bonney-Ormrod model ascribes relatively little importance to constitutional aspects, in the Portuguese case these problems are essential in distinguishing the two periods. Whereas the itinerant, predatory monarchy of Sancho I, that fits so well the notion of a 'tribute state', lived off prerogative, the 'domain state' was structured according to limits. The existence of the constitutional agreements, *already hinted at* by the Laws of 1211, defined the limits of internal predation. Thirteenth-century municipal development allowed municipalities to limit some aspects of royal intervention and, ultimately, to negotiate a constitutional definition of the monarch's fiscal prerogative. By repeatedly negotiating taxation with the monarchy and by altogether prohibiting monetary manipulations, the municipalities limited the crown to its customary revenues. Indeed, the establishment of permanent *sisas* made it possible for the monarchy to go over a limit that old kings had not trespassed: municipal administration.² The correlative 'inventions' of the *Povo* and universal taxation deprived municipalities of their obstructing strength. On the other hand, *municipalities participated more actively than beforehand* in shaping fiscal policies and instead of limiting the state, they *directed their energies in* influencing, as revealed by the discourse on finances that surfaced in the *Cortes*. The transition towards the 'tax state' cannot be dissociated from war. However, it must be noted that Fernando's offensive ambitions and military expenditure failed to trigger a fiscal revolution similar to that of England or Castile. Fiscal demands only succeeded in the constitutional settings brought by a context of all-and-out defence of the realm.

The military organisation and strategies of the 'old kings' as well as the important hoards respond to the end of profitable war. Expensive wages, exclusive *quantias* and the importance of maritime warfare meant that war

² It should be stressed that the first complains against the *sisas* do not attack the tax itself but its administrative and judiciary structures. See *supra* p. 216.

under the old kings was capital-intensive. The hoarding of monies for the 'defence of the realm' was a means of meeting the intensive demands of warfare without forcing both constitutional limitations and the little elasticity of the revenues. Constitutional and economic restrictions contributed to a prudent external policy that, unlike other cases, was designed in accordance to revenues. Unlike the better-known contemporary states which embarked in costly political and military ventures irrespective of their own resources, in Portugal war appears contingent on the available resources. Again, more than taxation, it was debasement that changed this picture. Cheap wages and inclusive *quantias* made war far more affordable to the monarchy and decision-making less thoughtful. Debasement allowed the monarchy to finance an aggressive expansion with occasional contribution from extraordinary taxes. Indeed, there is evidence that, contrary to the old kings hoarding habit, the extremely frequent Portuguese offensive warfare would not be possible without the availability of wider revenues.

To a large extent, the formation of the hoarding 'domain state' is the emergence of the 'state' proper. From the second half of the thirteenth century to the second will of Dinis I (1322), the crown built a system of autonomous revenue-collecting territorial institutions, the *almoxarifados*, that spanned the entire kingdom, along with a comprehensive system of customs. These local organisations were linked by regular procedures to the central institutions (*Contos* and, later, *Vedor da Fazenda*). Thus, territorial *almoxarifados*, together with the Lisbon revenue-specific *almoxarifados* and the customs, formed a system orientated to the capacity of produce 'expendable revenue' either to be hoarded or allocated to specific ends defined by the political centre. Moreover, even if details from expenditure are missing, it is clear that by the early fourteenth century, the monarchy had managed to screen the king's nominal landed revenues from the participation of the nobility. Redistribution took the form of payments from the treasury with an ultimately military rationale (*contias* and *tenças*) and was destined to the upper ranks of the nobility. Redistribution merely touched a thin layer of society.

End-of-Century-Wars, by contrast, left the monarchy structurally indebted to the military nobility. Wars contributed to the formation of a large military class that dominated the channels of royal redistribution, namely the royal and

princely households, funded by the *sisas*. Their hold on royal revenues was such that the monarchy benefited little from the late-fifteenth-century fiscal buoyancy. On the other hand, the Portuguese system of 'fight first, receive later' is very different from other European expenditure-driven systems. By sponsoring permanent war in North Africa, the crown both served the interests of some of its subjects and used them for a policy of territorial expansion. Portuguese imperialism simultaneously provided what can be deemed a 'public good' – war – and obtained new territories in return. This peculiar system did not result from unilateral decisions of the monarch but from the post-war conditions of cheap military labour and acute inflation

The fact that roughly two-thirds of the expenditure was used up in redistributive payments and that military effort did not consume more than a fifth of the recorded expenditure justify that Portugal's finances were run principally on a 'redistributive' model (see *supra* chapter 8). The Portuguese 'tax state' was more than an agent of the dominant class. Redistribution was not an end in itself. The recipients of royal redistribution were *ipso facto* involved in the pursuit of imperial projects and, crucially, with their emphasis on post-factum rewards, allowed the crown to mobilise impressive coercive means with low short-term costs. However, as wars and expansion dragged on the crown's available revenues became more and more indebted to these services and, unlike the 'old kings', rulers did not have the capacity to *re-structure their expenditure* and adopt a stipendiary force.

In sum, the fourfold analysis of the transition from 'domain' to 'tax state' denies that expenses in wars really were a *primum mobile* for the changes in the Portuguese case. It was the 'defence of the realm' by João I that allowed the monarchy to combine the *sisas* and minting prerogative, not Fernandine expansionist military expenditure. Moreover, ample reasons were provided to regard warfare as revenue-driven, that is to say determined by the receipt. Indeed, debasement and *sisas* contributed to fickle decision-making and the stringencies of the fiscal constitutions and the hundred-years-old customary limitations definition of the domain calling for a limited military intervention.

As mentioned, the dynamics are different from what is anticipated in the Bonney-Ormrod model. Indeed, redistribution was an essential element in the adoption of the *sisas* which were requested for the purpose of upholding the

estado. Indeed, in the better-studied cases, military effort did rely in the allocation of a fraction of the kingdom's resources obtained by taxation to pay for stipends. Monetary prerogatives, coupled with control over the municipalities and with a serving nobility, allowed late fourteenth-century and fifteenth-century Portuguese monarchs to pay for an army at the scale of a major power with their small tax-base. However, the monarchy was bound to compensate the low wages and the fidelity of its vassals and thus resorted to the *sisas* to pay for annuities, pensions and similar payments. Thus, Portuguese monarchs, in order to field their grand armies deferred the real costs of war making military costs and redistribution hard to disentangle.

The redistributive role of the post-war monarchy hints at a different understanding of this transition that is not simply the outcome of particular military events or even a particular country. Indeed, it points to the increasing participation in the state of wider groups of society. In England, intense demands for taxation resulted not in the expansion of the crown's attributions but to an increasing interaction between the king and the local elites.³ Similarly, in Portugal, royal favour is more widespread, political participation via the *Cortes* as well. On the other hand, the monarchy is closer to these interests, instead of retiring itself a situation of great autonomy vis-à-vis the other power organisations.

The state of the 'old kings' was certainly more autonomous than the post-war monarchy. It had a firm hold on the more cashable segments of the country's economy: the maritime customs, mostly those of Lisbon, the wheat-fields of the Tagus and urban housing. Even if these revenues could prove both inflexible (given customary norms and rates) and precarious (given the fluctuations of trade and harvests), the stability of the coinage kept their fiscal yields at acceptable levels. Furthermore, the monarchy was autonomous enough to hoard up to 7.5% (more likely 5%) of the income. That is to say, Portuguese kings were able to yearly take out of circulation a sizeable proportion of the metallic flow. Indeed, the formation of the domain state as described here (see chapters 2 and 4) is a process of dividing

³ This opinion was expressed by G. L. Harriss in response to the excessively stark separation division between 'war state' and 'justice state.' For a review on the various theories on the change of the nature of the state in fourteenth-century and fifteenth-century England, Harriss, G. L., 'Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England', *Past and Present*, n. 138, Feb., 1993, pp. 28-57.

Domain state defined itself as an autonomous institution by distinguishing its interests from all others. In the discussion of the coinage in 1254 and 1261, the interest of the king was diametrically opposed to that of the realm. The resulting monetary constitution defined a strict boundary between the king and the realm. Afonso III and Dinis took away lands and houses to constitute the king's domain. The formation of a network of *almoxarifados* further encapsulated of royal revenue and the hoarding habits set apart monies to be used by the king with perfect autonomy.

The strong autonomy of the 'domain state' meant that its power was merely 'distributive.' That is to say, the old kings were very powerful if power is regarded as a zero-sum game. However, in terms of 'collective' power, that is to say the capacity of one party to combine its strengths with other party in order to achieve something, the post-war monarchy is stronger. Universal taxation, the *Cortes* representing the *Povo*, the mechanism of the *pedido*, the considerable, but cheap, armies of more than 5,000 knights, the participation of the municipalities in decisions are all factors that testify to the emergence of common causes between the dynasty and the 'realm'. In the relationship between the monarchy and the low-cost military nobles receiving pensions and annuities, the mutual advantage is obvious. It was the abundant subsidised nobility that made the bold imperial projects more than geopolitical daydreaming. On the other hand, the nobles depended on the monarchy's riches. Indeed, sixteenth-century general accounts do not depict the crown, unlike the time of Afonso III or Dinis, or a force striving to separate its revenues from the rest of society by creating autonomous institutions. Sixteenth-century state finances testify to an increasing interaction between the state and the remaining sectors of society. The shortness of 'expendable revenue' depicted in the general accounts does indicate that the new kings were less autonomous. However, if weaker in distributive terms, fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century monarchs had the means to integrate both municipalities and nobles in its projects. The development of the symbiotic interaction was not possible without the *sisas*. Indeed, both Fernando I and João I demanded the *sisas* not only for war but also to uphold their *estado*. This was the name that fifteenth-century Portuguese used to denote the relationship between the monarchy and the men to whom it redistributed.

Appendix 1 – Timeline: War and Taxation in Portugal and England, 1245-1525

The extent and rhythm of the military projects of the Portuguese crown can be grasped without recurring to narrative. The annexed timetables (Appendix 1) show a relationship between the occurrence of wars (defensive, offensive or 'civil') and the collection of general taxes. In order to provide some comparative background, the extraordinary taxes and the participation in wars should be contrasted with those of another country. England would provide a good example, since it is arguably the best-known case of a warfare-led development of the fiscal system in the period studied, and it was regarded by fourteenth-century Portuguese as the example of a warlike country.⁴

These timelines aim to reflect the long term oscillations between war and peace and its relation with general extraordinary taxes and some decisive technical and administrative changes. In order to focus on the long run, provide a clear image and, most of all, allow for comparison, the usual intricacy of military confrontations was reduced to four different categories: peace, civil war, defensive war and offensive war. This categorisation was made after the historiographical narratives and specialised chronologies.⁵ After the most encompassing inevitably, this implied a great deal of simplification which was undertaken according to determinate lines that require further analysis:

Peace does not imply a formally constituted peace, like a truce or a treaty, but the absence of expeditions defensive efforts of some magnitude. Occasional outbursts of violence in the borders of the two kingdoms are not considered.

⁴ In 1383, future king of Portugal João I, then Great-Master of the military order of Avis, compared his country with England, a nation which 'often have wars and seldom peace [...] whereas we often have peace and seldom wars.' The suggestion by the future João I in 1383 can be followed. In a spirited dialogue with widow queen Leonor, told by Fernão Lopes, widow queen Leonor seeing João in full armour advised him to be more like the English who in peaceful days wore gentle clothes: '[João, Great-Master of Avis:] *Isso [to wear armour] fazem eles porque ham a meude guerras, e poucas vezes paz, e podemno [the English] mui bem fazer; mas a nos he pollo comtrairo, ca avemos mui a meude paz e poucas vezes guerra; e sse no tempo da paz nom husarmos as armas, quando vehesse a guerra nom as poderiamos soportar.* Lopes, *Cron. João I*, Part I, chapter IX, p. 21.

⁵ For England, the works used were: Powicke, F. M., *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307*, Oxford, 1953; McKisack, May, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307-1399*, Oxford, 1959; Saul, Nigel, *Richard II*, London, 1999; Ramsay, *Lancaster and York: a Century of English History (A.D. 1399 - 1485)* Oxford, 1892; Schofield, *Taxation Under the Early Tudors*; For Portugal: Port. Def. and Marques, *Portugal na Crise*; Costa, D. Manuel I; Buescu, Ana Isabel, *D. João III*, Lisbon, 2005.

Such 'chronic border feuds', as Tout dubbed them, do not imply any organisation in the central level and thus are not relevant to the purpose here, not to mention the impossibility to track them systematically. It is only used when none of the following kind of military episodes occur in that year.

Civil War was applied only when actual confrontation (a long siege, one battle, devastation of adversary lands) between two parties took place. Civil unrest was not counted as a civil war.

Defensive war implies the defense of lands held against an enemy attack. The emphasis is on the military aspect, and not on the legal nor on national aspects. Thus, the defense of English-occupied territories in France or Wales (as in 1294-1295 or in 1400) or of the captured cities by Portuguese in the North of Africa (the great sieges of Ceuta in 1419 and Alcácer Ceguer in 1459) all fall within this category.

Offensive war covers expeditions independently of financial arrangements having been made or not. This clarification would be useful but, unfortunately, most of the Portuguese events are insufficiently documented in this aspect. For the same reason, expeditions organised which did not fight (as in 1253 against a non-existent Castilian invasion of Gascony or Henry III's 1255 military demonstration in the North) are also included as a financial effort should be presumed. This category applies both to land and seaborne expeditions (involving transport or combat fleets). Portuguese incursions in Castille in the period after 1384 were considered offensive war, despite the ultimately defensive stance which inspired them. The Flemish war by proxy with France financed by England in 1339-40 was included because of the intense financial burden it caused and for the same reason activities of English mercenaries for other causes (the Black Prince in Castile fighting for Pedro I, the English army of Edward Balliol) are excepted. Excluded as well are the 'spontaneous' battles fought without royal initiative or organisation on either party, as the naval fight of St. Mahé 1293 between Bretons and English seamen.

The distortions caused by the use of the year as the time unit in defensive and civil wars were limited and operations in the end and beginning of the year. For instance, the invasion of Portugal by Juan I which lasted all the year of 1384 started in the 13 December of the previous year, which saw military activity. The peace of Malestroit which ended the first phase of the Hundred Years War was signed in 13 January 1343 and thus, as no other conflict occurred that year, it was categorised a peace year. Whenever there were two wars of different category in the same year, they were signalled but without no proportionally. Similarly, no differentiation was made even for years with two or more operations of the same category (1355 is an extreme case with Lancaster preying Normandy, the Black Prince in expedition in Aquitaine and Edward plundering the Lothians). It also should be added that to categorise these conflicts, the emphasis was laid on the military dimension, not on the legal. Thus, a year of war is one with invasions, expeditions or civil war, regardless of the terms of truces and peace treaties.

KEY

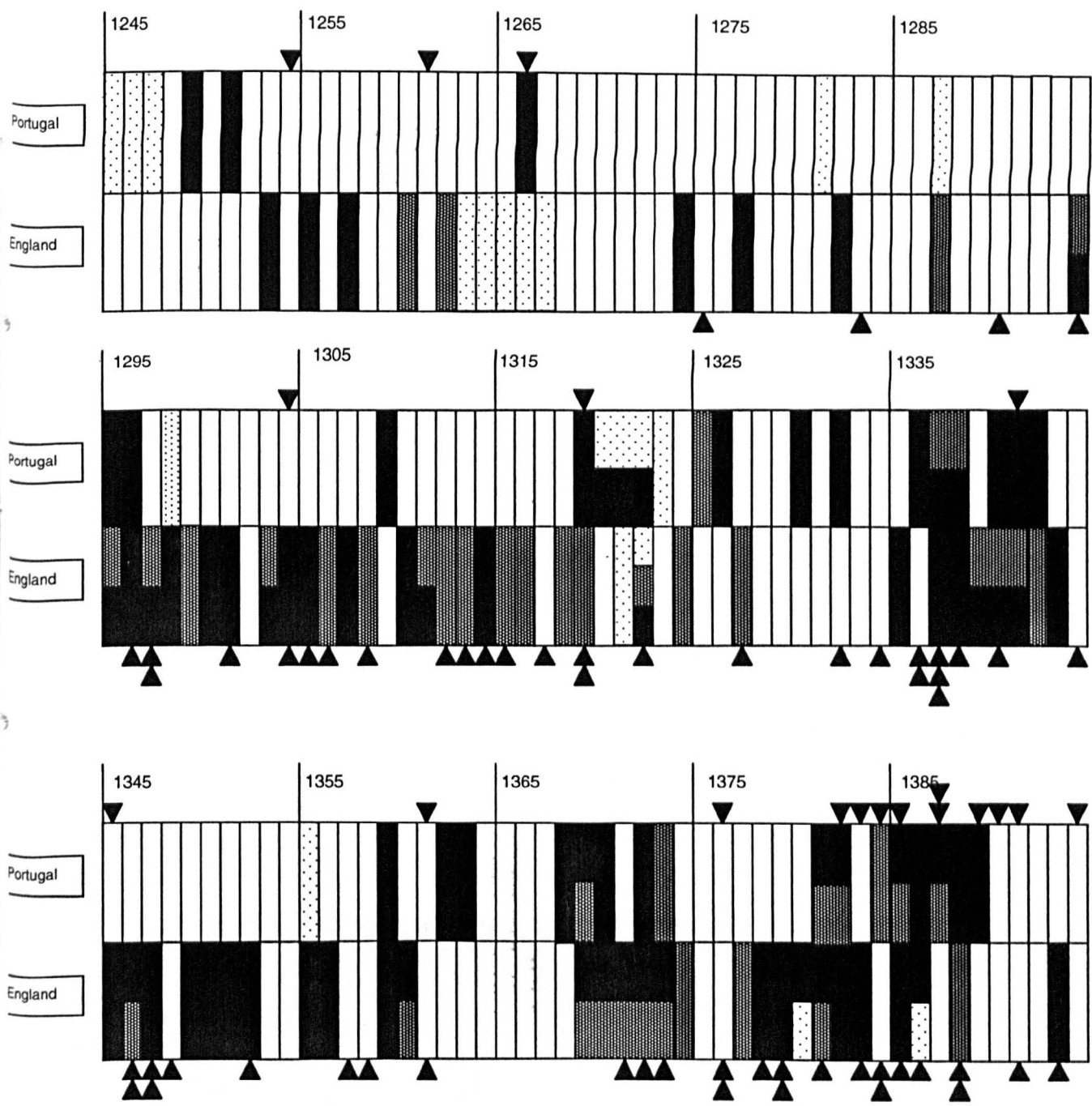


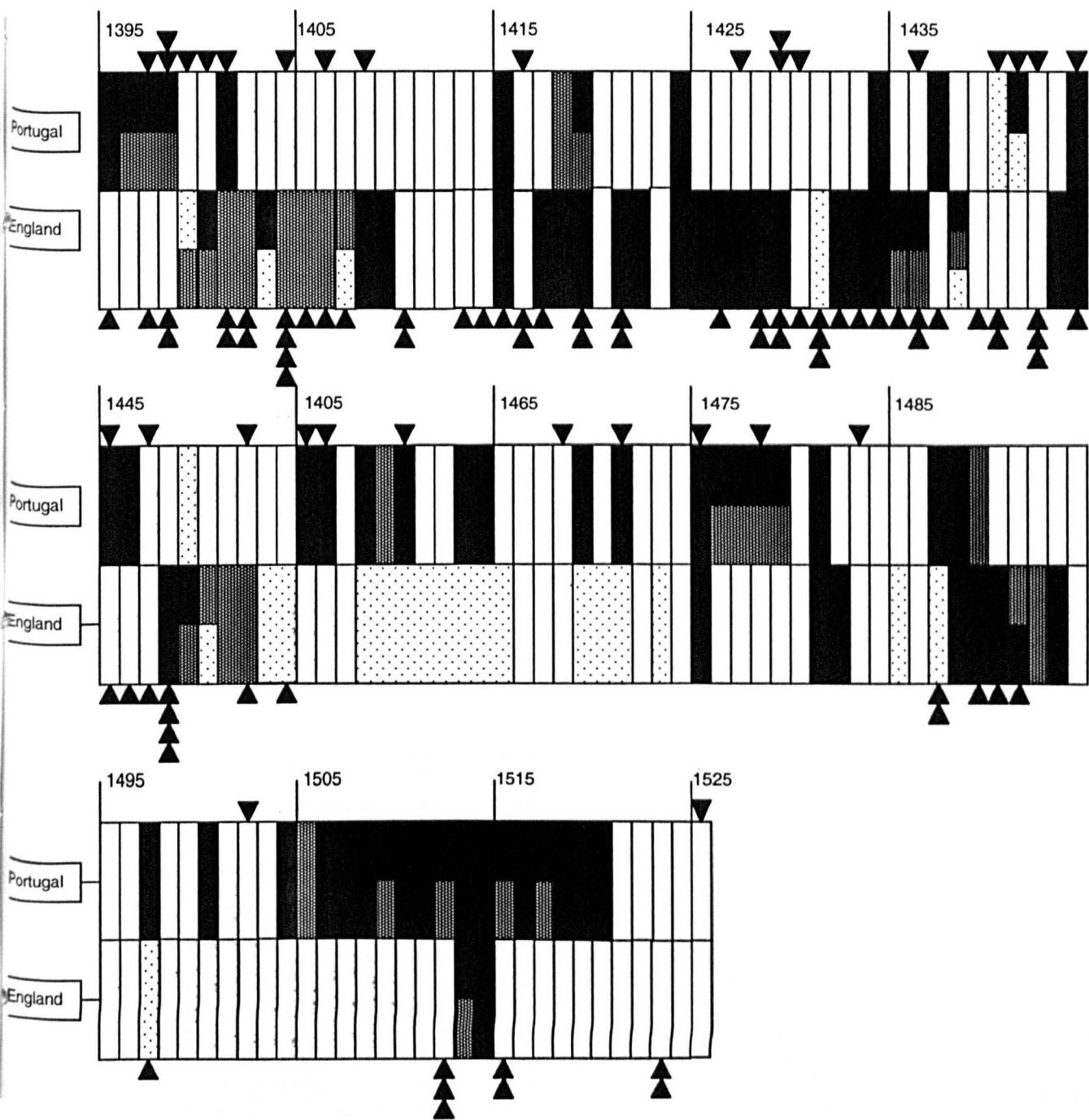


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Appendix 2 – The Libri de Recabedo Regni

The first documented step taken by Afonso II to organise the tax-collection of the kingdom was the creation of the four *Libri de Recabedo Regni*. These books – referred to five times in diploms between 1216 and 1222 –⁶ were to be held by the three high-officers of the *Curia* (steward or *maior domus*, constable and chancellor) and by a special book-keeper known only as *ille qui tenet quartum librum*.⁷ The precise nature of this record has challenged the efforts of many institutional historians disturbed by the little-known term *recabedum* and by the contrasting types of the documents to be included in it.⁸ All of them, nonetheless, identified the books of *recabedo* as a register of revenues, or a rental record.

However, a closer look can clarify things: the term *dare recabedum* is used in a 1221 royal charter from with the clear meaning of delivering the revenues.⁹ The first letter mentioning the *Recabedo* books, dated July 1216, is indicative of one of possible functions: it commanded that the king's *ovençais* should only collect the rights (*fora*) that the king had assigned to them.¹⁰ Thus, it is reasonable to assume that it contained a list of the sources of revenue of the kingdom with the officers to whom each of those was ascribed.¹¹ Possibly, this

⁶ In July 1216 – DCC, vol. I, n. L, p. 263; in May 1217 – ANTT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, L^o 3, f. 25; in May 1221 – Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas e Criticas*, vol. IV, 2nd part, 2nd ed., Lisbon 1810, doc. L, p. 263 and, vol. IV, n. XV, p. 187; in November 1221 – TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 3, fol. 6-6v; in June 1222 – PMH, *Leges*, p. 179.

⁷ Cf. Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas e Criticas*, vol. I, 2nd part, 2nd ed., Lisbon 1810, doc. L, p. 263. The chancellor, the constable (*signifer*) and the high-steward (*maior domus curiae*) were the three main palatine officers. Homem, Armando Luis de Carvalho, 'A Corte e o Governo Central', *Port. Def.*, p. 533.

⁸ João Pedro Ribeiro, followed by H. da Gama Barros, Virgínia Rau and Hermínia Vilar. To Ribeiro, the *Recabedo Regni* books alluded in a few thirteenth-century documents were equivalent to the late rentals, the late-fourteenth-century *Livros dos Próprios*. Rau acknowledged these books as records of revenue without further enquiry about their features and even the, rather opaque, term *recabedo* was left unexplained. Recently Hermínia Vilar, while considering that the word *recabedum* had to be related with the collection of revenues, commented the fact that the four documents whose copying in the *Libri de Recabedo* was demanded have all different typologies. Ribeiro, *Memorias Autenticas*, p. 77-9; Barros, *História da Administração Pública*, vol. III, 2nd, Lisbon, 1928, p. 212; Rau, *A Casa dos Contos*, p. 4; Vilar, *D. Afonso II*, pp. 199-200.

⁹ 'Comendatores qui tenent uel teneuerunt bailuias Hospitalis in regno meo dent recabedum unusquisque de bauilia bonis ipsis de omnibus redditibus ipsarum bauillarum et dent inde totum recabedum hominibus meis' TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 3, fol. 6-6v.

¹⁰ Ribeiro, *Dissertações Chronologicas e Criticas*, vol. I, 2nd part, 2nd ed., Lisbon, 1810, doc. L, p. 263; TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 3, fol. 7v-8.

¹¹ The hypothesis that it the quadruplicate book *De Recabedo* contained the assignment of revenues, and expenditure thereof, is coherent with the type of documents which the king ordered to be copied in the *Recabedo Regni* books. The inclusion in the books of the 1221 writ (by which the king sent 600 morabetins to the castellan and judges of Évora in order that they should purchase a field and convert it into a vineyard whose render would be

included tenures as much as the custody or the tax-farming by *ovençais*. As all the members of the *Curia* had one of these registers, it is very likely that it was related to the audit of these officers. By referring to the '*Libri De Recabedo Regni*' and to the *Libri Repositi Mei*, the 1216 ordinance tells us what the former are not: registers of the sums perceived by the royal person. In fact, the expression *Libri Repositi Mei* clearly pertains to the money or kind effectively received (*repositus*) by the monarch's household, while *recabedum* relates to the kingdom.¹² Although the functions of these elusive records remain in doubt, from the statute of 1216 it is obvious that one of their functions was to clarify the assignment of revenues and rents.

Even if this reference does not reveal the precise nature of the *Recabedo* records, it casts some light on them. On one hand, this helped the king to control better the distribution of tenures by the steward, on the other hand, it made possible the audit of the custodians. The compilation of the *Recabedo Regni* books cannot be dissociated from another important change in the management of the king's receipt. In a series of charters dated from November 1218, Afonso II granted to each bishopric of the realm the tithe of the king's revenues (*regalia iura*) within the diocese.¹³ This implied the knowledge of the king's revenues and, more importantly, their territory-based management. Although the only evidence of a close relationship between the grant of the royal revenues' tithe and the *Recabedo Regni* books is merely the two-year sequence between their surfacing, it is patent that the two imply the same perception of the king's revenues as a unit divided in different cells. Even if the *Recabedo Regni* had not a territorial organisation, the diocesan organisation supplied the monarchy with the only system of 'undifferentiated' territorial system available throughout the kingdom: the diocesan organisation.

assigned to the works of the local cathedral) can be justified as this would expand the list of sources of income. In addition, the order to insert in the *Libri de Recabedo Regni* the two household statutes of 1216 and 1221 seems justified as both included the court officers' wages, pretty much as happened with Henry I's earlier manuscripts of the *Constitutio Domus Regis* that were kept *ad usum* in the Exchequer. Cf. Johnson, Charles (ed.) 'Introduction', *Dialogus de Scaccario. The Course of the Exchequer* by Richard, Fitz Nigel and *Constitutio Domus Regis. The Establishment of the Royal Household* (Oxford, 1983) pp. xi-xii, xlix. Afonso II's command may well have derived from the exceptional character of the regulations.

¹² This distinction probably reflects the division between the king's household and the *curia* which had begun in the late Twelfth Century and consolidated by Afonso II with his household reorganisations of 1211, 1216 and 1222. This had started with the appearance of a *dapifer regis* in opposition with the *maiordomus curiae* Mattoso, José, *Identificação de um País* (2nd, Lisbon, 1991) vol. II, p.102-103.

¹³ On this grant, see Vilar, D. *Afonso II*, p. 181-2.

Appendix 3 – Almoxarifes and Almoxarifados

Almoxarife is the Portuguese version of the Islamic learned word for tax-collector (*al-mushrif*). A royal charter of 1195 conceding immunity to the houses of a particular religious community in Lisbon was addressed to the deputies of the *pretor* (Latin word used for the Port. *alcaide*, castellan) and of the *maiordomus*. This documental emergence of the *almoxarife* is as problematic as it is significant. Does this mean that a new office had been introduced or was this a mere terminological variance, at the mercy on the peculiarities of each scrivener's vocabulary? Possibly, *maiordomus*, a term of powerful Carolingian resonances, merely translated the Arabic *almoxarife* into Latin,¹⁴ a usual procedure in the writings of the twelfth-century Portuguese chancery.¹⁵ In a letter issued four years later about a similar question in the municipality, Sancho I addressed himself to the 'castellan [*alcaide*], judges, *almoxarife* and the men of the municipality [*bonis homines*]'. This is the first appearance of the word in Portuguese documentation, quickly followed by a letter of 1200 where the king referred to his *meo almoxarifo*. However, in another letter the *almoxarife* again appeared among the municipal authorities in 1206.¹⁶ Did the *almoxarifus* of the 1195-1206 merely translated into Latin the oral, Arabic *almoxarife*, revealing thus a survival from Muslim administration, or did it mean the *maiordoms* mentioned in the municipal charter of 1179?

The etymology is not particularly relevant in terms of institutional history. Recent researches have shown that the Islamic classical vocabulary was loosely, when not arbitrarily, applied to the diverse fiscal institutions disseminated throughout the Mediterranean.¹⁷ Christian conquests created further distance between classical Islamic paradigms and the usage of their words.¹⁸ Moreover, even within Arabic-speaking areas, *al-mushrif* was a very broad term translatable as a courtly 'overseer' whose functions comprehended,

¹⁴ The addenda to the municipal charters of Santarém, Sancho I styles the three municipal authorities as *pretor ville*, *maiordomus*, *aluaziles* (DR, doc. 335) but in this king's later letters the trio is called *pretor*, *alvazilis* and *almoxarifo* (DS, doc. 116, p. 180). Thus, it can be questioned whether *maiordomus* translated the everyday term *almoxarife*.

¹⁵ Similarly, the oral Arabic term *alferes/alferaz* was styled in solemn chancery charters as *signifier* or *vexilifer*, while the castellan (*alcaide*) was designated by *pretor* (a Roman dignity). Mattoso, *Identificação de um país*, vol. 2, p. 102.

¹⁶ DS, doc. 79, 116, 214 and 237.

¹⁷ See oral presentation by Josep Torró Abad 'Las conquistas latinas y los órdenes fiscales antiguos en el Mediterráneo (siglos XII-XIV)' presented at the Congress *Fiscalidad y sociedad en el Mediterráneo Bajomedieval* (Malaga, 19th May 2006) (forthcoming).

¹⁸ See Torró Abad, 'las Conquistas Latinas y los ordenes fiscales antiguos' (forthcoming).

but were by no means restricted to, the functions of collector of revenues. Within Al-Andalus, the word designated first the tenth-century inspectors sent to the provinces by the central treasury. By the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the *al-mushrif* was concerned with the levying custom duties.¹⁹

Beyond this terminological difficulty the question remains on whether the *almoxarife* was indeed a custodian of the king's interests or rather a representative of the municipality. Indeed, in the surviving royal letters directed to the councils, the *almoxarife* appears in the address immediately afterwards other municipal authorities, the castellan and the judges,²⁰ making difficult to ascertain how far he is not a representative of the municipality rather than a custodian. On the other hand, the use of the designation *meus almoxarifus* makes very likely the possibility that he was the king's representative before the higher municipal instances. The fact that the *almoxarife* in 1210 was a Jew and that the Castilian *almojarifes* were Jewish financiers²¹ makes the

The concentration of all the first mentions of *almoxarifes* in the municipalities and *terrae* (Feira and Faria) is presented on the following table. It shows that only in the reign of Afonso IV there is the possibility of a perfect kingdom-wide coverage and that the 'specialisation' of the Lisbon revenues was already set in 1317. Furthermore, it clearly shows that the spread of the *almoxarifes* went both northwards and southwards from its origins in the centre of the kingdom – Lisbon, Coimbra, Santarém and Évora.

¹⁹ Bosworth, C. E., 'Mushrif', 1. In the Arabian and Persian lands', *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van Dozel, W. P. Heinrichs, Ch. Pellat, Leiden, 1993, vol. VII, pp. 678-79.

²⁰ In the twelfth century, these were generally elected by the *concilium*. On Coimbra, See Caetano, *A Administração Municipal*, p. 10.

²¹ Bosworth, 'Mushrif', p. 679.

| REIGN | NEW ALMOXARIFES |
|----------------------|---|
| Sancho I (1185-1211) | Lisbon (1195) |
| Afonso II (1211-23) | Santarém (1220), |
| Sancho II (1223-48) | Coimbra (s.d.) Évora (s.d.) |
| Afonso III (1248-79) | Alenquer (s.d.) Guimarães (1254), Leiria (1255), Beja (1259), Feira (1264) |
| Dinis I (1279-1325) | Tavira (1282), Torres Novas (1282), Loulé (1290), Porto (1299), Estremoz (1314), Moura (1314), Silves (1314), Guarda (1315) <i>almoxarife das ovelhas</i> of Lisbon (1317),* Faro (1321) |
| Afonso IV (1325-57) | Valença (1325), Ponte de Lima (1326), Sintra (1326), Aveiro (1328), Viseu (1329), Portel (1331), Muge/'of the <i>lezírias</i> (paddy fields) of the Tagus (1337), Feira with Faria (1338), Torres Vedras (1338), 'of the wood in Lisbon' (1338), Óbidos (1339), 'king's lands in Sacavém and Frielas' -near Lisbon- (1338), Bragança (1338), Alvaíazere (1338), <i>almoxarifes</i> of Lisbon (1339), Elvas (1339), Montemor-o-Velho (1340), Terena (1342), Arganil (1344), Chaves, Torre de Moncorvo, Vila Real, Portalegre, Serpa, Setúbal (all s.d.). |

Sources: *Chanc. Afonso IV*, 3 vols., *Chanc. Pedro I*; DP; DR; DR; LL, PT; *Portvgaliae Monumenta Historica. Leges et Consuetudines*, vols. I-II, Lisbon, 1858-60; *TAIII*; *Vimaranis Monumenta Historica*, ed. João Gomes de Oliveira Guimarães, vol. II, Guimarães, 1931; TT, *Chanc. Dinis I*, Livros 1-4; TT, *Chanc. Afonso II*, Livro 1; TT, *Chanc. Afonso III*, Livro 1.

* The *almoxarife* of Lisbon is last mentioned in 1318. TT, *Chanc. Dinis*, Livro 3, fol. 120v.

Note on Currencies

In this dissertation *l.* stands for the *libra(s)*, *s.* for *soldo(s)*, *d.* for *dinheiro(s)* and *r.* for *real* or *reais*; non-Portuguese currencies are written in full.

Libras, soldos, dinheiros are the Portuguese terms for the old Carolingian reckoning system of *librae, soldi, denarii*. *Libras* and its multiples became the standard money of account in the second half of the thirteenth century in substitution of the *morabitino*. Although older forms of reckoning were remained in place (most of all in the north of country), the *libra* remained the dominant money of account from c. 1260 until c. 1437. As elsewhere in Europe, the *libra* was equivalent to 12 *soldos* and to 240 *dinheiros*. However, it should be noted that the *dinheiro* as a coin was minted only up to the 1250s. From then up to 1369 the standard coin in circulation was the *dinheiro novo* or *afonsi* (first minted in 1261) valued at 1.(3) *dinheiros*. After this date, the new types of currency emerged were valued in the old *l., s., d.* system. As such, from 1261 onwards the *dinheiro* was in practice a money of account. In the reign of Duarte this system was abandoned because of the strong debasement.

From c. 1437 onwards the money of account used was the Port. *real* (plural: *reais*). This designation had been applied to three bullion coins: a) the *Real de Dez Soldos* first minted in the reign of Pedro I (1357-67), valued at 10 *s.* or half *l.*; b) the *Real de Três Libras e Meia*, minted from 1398 to 1406 with the value of 3.5 *l.*; c) the *Real Branco*, with the value of 35 *l.*, minted from 1416 onwards. The name *Real Preto* or Simply Preto ('black' real) was also used for the copper coinage worth a tenth of the *r.*., one which, given its extremely low value, does not appear on this thesis. Thus *r.* stands always for *r.* as a money of account, equivalent to 35 *l.*

Two other coinages will be often mentioned in this thesis:

Morabitino was the Latin designation used for diverse gold coins minted by Muslim, Castilian, Leonese and Portuguese rulers between the early twelfth century and the 1220s (in Portugal last minted in 1226). In Portugal this term was the standard money of account until c. 1260. After that date, it survived in some specific cases, however in this thesis such values will be converted to *libras*.

Dobra was a generic name for mostly Muslim and Castilian gold coins which circulated in Portugal (it was also applied to a rare Portuguese coin which had little circulation and use and is not relevant for this thesis). In their Castilian version, the *dobras* were used by chroniclers and administrative documents, as a means to express the value of old coinages and monies of account. Accordingly its value in Portuguese coinage varied between 3 *l.* in 1357 and 370 *r.* in 1521.

Glossary

For technical terms used once in Portuguese or Latin (*alfitra, lançar, jugata*), a direct translation was immediately provided. The Portuguese words in the Glossary are used more than once in the text without immediate translation. In the cases where a detailed explanation of the term is given in the text, it was deemed better to provide reference for the page(s) where the term is presented or discussed.

Ajuntamento – Meeting of the municipal representatives without the formal features of the *Cortes*. See pp. 189 and 209

Almoxarife and *Almoxarifado* – see pp. 24-7, 108-49 and 314-6.

Cavaleiro – this term word means both a man who has been knighted and a man who fought on horseback. See also '*Escudeiro*' and '*Fidalgo*' below.

Concelho – The term was systematically translated as municipality except where it occurs in the, slightly different, sense of municipal assembly (see p. 205).

Contos, Casa dos Contos – see pp. 22-31, 13744

Contia – see p. 100

Cortes – Representative Assembly with a varying composition. : *Povos*, nobles (*fidalgos*) and clergy.

Dinheiros Novos – see pp. 72-80.

Direitos Reais – literally 'royal rights'; legal term used for royal lands (*reguengos*), jurisdiction of municipalities, customs and royal prerogatives. It was normally used in opposition to *sisas* and *pedidos*.

Dom – literally 'lord'; address used for high-ranking nobles

Escudeiro – In functional terms *escudeiro* translates as 'squire.' It was applied to the lower level of nobility, immediately below the knight. See also *Cavaleiro* and *Fidalgo*.

Fidalgo – It means 'hereditary noble'. In the second half of the fifteenth century, it designated the rank above knight. In this *Fidalgos*, like *Escudeiros* and *Cavaleiros* were grouped together in the word 'nobility.'

Finta – see p. 151.

Graça – see p. 233, 296.

Infante – Title given to the sons and daughters of kings.

Mercê – see p. 296

Moradia – see pp. 292-4. The term was normally translated as 'pension.'

Outorgar – pp.212 and 222.

Pedido – pp. 207-34

Povos – Term used in *Cortes* for the proctors of the municipalities when acting as a whole.

Quantia – see pp. 102, 252-3.

Sisa, Sisas – see p. 145-62

Talha – see p. 151

Tença – see p. 99. In the sense of annual payment, it was translated as annuity.

Terra – see pp. 102, pp. 252-3.

Vedor da Fazenda – see pp. 26-9 and 138-9.

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- ACSE Arquivo Catedralício da Sé de Évora
 ADB Arquivo Distrital de Braga
 AML Arquivo Histórico da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa
 AHP *Archivo Histórico Portuguez*
 AMP Arquivo Histórico da Câmara Municipal do Porto
 BACL Biblioteca da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa
 BN Biblioteca Nacional
 Chanc. Afonso III TT, Chancelarias Régias, Chancelaria de Afonso III, Livros 1-3.
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 DHP Serrão, Joel, ed., *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, 9 vols., 2nd, Porto, 1999.
 DR *Documentos Medievais Portugueses. Documentos Régios*, ed. Rui de Azevedo, vol. I, Lisbon, 1962.
 DS *Documentos de D. Sancho I*, ed. Rui de Azevedo, Avelino de Jesus da Costa, Marcelino Rodrigues, Coimbra, 1979.
 ESSF Bonney, Richard, ed., *Economic Systems and State Finance*, Oxford, 1995.
 Gloss. *Les Mots de l'Impôt dans les Villes de l'Occident Méditerranéen. Glossaire Critique de Fiscalité Médiévale* (<www.mailxxi.com/fiscalita/Glossairelist.asp> accessed in June-July 2007)
 HMMP Marques, Mário Gomes, *História da Moeda Medieval Portuguesa*, Sintra, 1996.
 Leges *Portugaliae Monvmenta Historica. Leges et Consuetodines*, 8 vols., Lisbon, 1858-68.
 LL *O Livro das Lezírias d'El Rei Dom Dinis*, ed. Bernardo de Sá-Nogueira, Lisbon, 2003.
 LM-1 *Livro I de Místicos de Reis*, vol. 1, *Livro II dos Reis D. Dinis, D. Afonso IV e Dom Pedro I*, Lisbon, 1947.
 LM-2 *Livro I de Místicos de Reis*, vol. 2, *Livro I del-Rei Dom Fernando*, Lisbon, 1949.
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 MH *Monumenta Henricina*, ed. António Joaquim Dias Dinis, 15 vols., Coimbra, 1960-1974.

- PEP Iria Gonçalves, *Pedidos e Empréstimos Públicos em Portugal Durante a Idade Média*, Lisbon, 1964.
- Port. Defin. Coelho, Maria Helena da Cruz and Homem, Armando Luís de Carvalho, eds., *Portugal em Definição de Fronteiras*, Lisbon, 1995, pp. 530-40.
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- OA *Ordenações Afonsinas*, 5 vols., Lisbon, 1998-9
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- RFS Bonney, Richard, ed., *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe. c.1200-1815*, Oxford, 1999.
- SS *Sancius Secundus Rex Portugalensis - A Chancelaria de D. Sancho II (1223 - 1248)*, ed. Bernardino, Sandra, vol II, Coimbra, 2003 (unpublished PhD thesis, U. Coimbra).
- TAIII 'O Tesouro de Afonso III no Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra', ed. Pedro de Azevedo, *Boletim de Segunda Classe da Academia das Sciencias de Lisboa*, vol. VII, Coimbra, 1913, pp. 230-63.
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