

# IN SEARCH OF NEW MONASTIC IDENTITIES: THE TENSION BETWEEN THE TEMPORAL AND THE SPIRITUAL RESULTING FROM THE CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE (ESPECIALLY THE URBAN WORLD) IN THE MONASTERY OF ALCOBAÇA IN TIMES OF RENEWAL AND OBSERVANCE<sup>1</sup>

## EM BUSCA DE NOVAS IDENTIDADES MONÁSTICAS: A TENSÃO ENTRE O TEMPORAL E O ESPIRITUAL RESULTANTE DO CONTATO COM O EXTERIOR (SOBRETUDO O MUNDO URBANO) NO MOSTEIRO DE ALCOBAÇA EM TEMPOS DE RENOVAÇÃO E OBSERVÂNCIA

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper considers how the reformist abbot Estêvão de Aguiar, in close association with the Portuguese crown, managed the coexistence of two antagonistic notions at the helm of Portugal's principal Cistercian house: the Cistercian ideal of Santa Maria of Alcobça as *Domus Spiritualis* and the temporal reality of a community where travel, circulation and interaction with the exterior, particularly the urban world, were vital.

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**KEYWORDS:** Travel/Circulation; Monastery of Santa Maria of Alcobaça; Abbot Estêvão de Aguiar; Royal Power; Religious Reform; Urban Landscape; Late Medieval Portugal.

**RESUMO:** O presente artigo analisa a forma como o abade reformista Estêvão de Aguiar, em estreita colaboração com a coroa portuguesa, geriu a coexistência de duas noções antagônicas ao comando da principal casa cisterciense de Portugal: o ideal cisterciense de Santa Maria de Alcobaça como *Domus Spiritualis* e a realidade temporal de uma comunidade onde as viagens, a circulação e o contacto com o exterior, em particular o mundo urbano, eram vitais.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Viagem/Circulação; Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça; Abade Estêvão de Aguiar; Poder Real; Reforma Religiosa; Paisagem Urbana; Portugal Tardo-Medieval.



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The following pages focus on the subject of travel and circulation during the abbacy of Friar Estêvão de Aguiar in the most emblematic Cistercian community in Portugal, the Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça, perfectly consecrated to monastic stability and isolation from the world. We will examine this phenomenon between the monastery and the outside world – especially the urban world – in a temporal arc that encompasses the years between 1431 and 1446, using as a basis *Book 14* of the Alcobaça archives, also known as the *Livro da Fazenda (Book of Estate of Alcobaça)*<sup>3</sup>.

We will reflect about the displacements mentioned therein articulating them with the broader framework of the Order's normative on this topic and the evidence of its

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<sup>3</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Livro da fazenda do Mosteiro de Alcobaça*, 1437-1440, Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro Santa Maria de Alcobaça, Livro 14.

practice in other Alcobacean documentation. Always keeping in mind, as a backdrop, the three-pronged reform programme covering temporal administration, visitation and religious culture implemented by Estevão de Aguiar during the fifteen years of his abbacy.

Within his reformist scheme at Alcobaça, and in close association with the Portuguese crown, the journeys that Estêvão de Aguiar personally undertook or those authorised by him, were of vital importance. Indeed, circulation and mobility were a constant at almost every level of Estêvão de Aguiar's performance as abbot of Alcobaça with the sources relating countless comings and goings of people linked in one way or another to the Abbey, especially monastery officials.

Although it might have been mobility controlled by the rules of the Order, there is no question of the importance of travel in the daily life of Portugal's leading Cistercian community. It is, therefore, our intention to consider on the ways in which Estêvão de Aguiar, as abbot of Alcobaça, driven by a deeply reformist spirit, managed the coexistence of these two antagonistic notions – the Cistercian ideal of Alcobaça as *Domus Spiritualis* and the temporal reality of a community based on elevated movement –, contributing to the definition of a very specific identity for the main Cistercian house of the Portuguese kingdom.

### **Book 14 and mobility in the Monastery of Alcobaça**

A record of the cenobium's bookkeeping, *Book 14* was produced between 1437 and 1440, and contains a daily registry of the revenues and expenses of the monastery. The annotations in the different entries into which the monks had divided their accounting covered the many aspects of their daily life in the cenobium, particularly those inherent to the management of its estate, the provisioning and defense of the monastery's property and rights, and the pursuance of all the different affairs of the community's life and its interactions with the exterior.

Among the accounting annotations, a profile of the diverse human community that integrated or gravitated around this institution in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century emerges; it comprised monks, monastery officials, secular dependents, and the local population whose existence transpired largely in the orbit of the cenobium. And that is without mentioning all those who for one reason or another travelled to, or stayed in the Monastery, but did not establish a permanent association with it.

In this context we also find there a great variety of information regarding the subject under analysis: mobility<sup>4</sup>. The book carefully preserved not only records of the expenses associated with displacements done in service and by order of the monastery, but also the dates, destinations, and sometimes even their duration and purpose.

The travelers listed in *Book 14*, and thus to some extent connected to the monastery, were diverse in nature: peasants, mule-drivers, foot messengers, pilgrims, emissaries of the king, employees of the monastery, and although less frequently, the monks themselves.

The extensive content of *Book 14* enables us to reconstruct the work of the community under the leadership of Estêvão de Aguiar. Service in the *scriptorium* and service in the temporal administration of the vast complex of the Alcobaça monastery. If we add to the data of this documentary source mostly related to the management of the monastery, particularly the purchase of necessary products for the community that were hard to obtain in the rural environment of the *coutos* (land belonging to the monastery), information about the legal disputes that marked the abbacy of Estêvão de Aguiar, we observe a high number of displacements in the agenda of the cenobium during those fifteen years, many of which were to distant places and involved extraordinary preparations and conditions.

For these journeys, the monastery used its own officials as well as professional messengers and individuals from the most diverse areas. However, given the importance and specificity of the travels, sometimes these services had to be carried out by the monks themselves.

On some occasions, hiring services implied important trips back and forth, as in the case of 1438 when the abbot suffered a long illness and several doctors had to be called. Another emblematic case was when a specialized workforce was employed to build a new chamber for Estêvão de Aguiar in the abbey. These workers were, at the

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<sup>4</sup> GONÇALVES, Iria. *O património do mosteiro de Alcobaça nos séculos XIV e XV*. Lisboa: Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1989, p. 23-350 and 445-485; GONÇALVES, Iria. *Viajar na Idade Média: de e para Alcobaça na primeira metade do século XV*. In: GONÇALVES, Iria. *Imagens do mundo medieval*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1988, p. 177-200.

time, in the town of Batalha where they were engaged in the construction of the respective monastery.<sup>5</sup>

Political motifs related to the government of the kingdom also spurred some travels to urban centres, namely the death of king Duarte (r. 1433-1438), the 1438 Courts of Torres Novas, and the turbulent process of the regency, in which Estêvão de Aguiar participated actively, supporting the *infante* Pedro<sup>6</sup> and in opposition to the prince's sister-in-law Leonor of Aragon (r. 1433-1445).<sup>7</sup> Travelling to Lisbon by Pedro's side, at the head of a host of five hundred men on horseback and on foot, entirely financed by the monastery, Estêvão de Aguiar took on the role of the main symbol of tension between ideal and real.<sup>8</sup> So much so that the abbot, as royal counsellor and long time Master Almsgiver of the kingdom, maintained regular contact with the monarchs and their entourage, which would explain many of the travels between the monastery and whatever place the Court was at, but which unfortunately were not recorded in *Book 14* for reasons unknown to us.<sup>9</sup> One possible hypothesis is that the abbey may have had a separate record of the expenses of his administration and his movements at the service of the cenobium, of the Order, and the kingdom.

Making use of the data provided by Iria Gonçalves, who deeply studied the sociology and motivation of the displacements mentioned in *Book 14*, we deduce that the monks were the smallest group to register any mobility outside the cenobium, representing only 3% of the total number of the agents of displacements (see Table 1).

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<sup>5</sup> The Monastery of Santa Maria da Vitória, better known as the Monastery of Batalha is situated in the town of Batalha in the central region of Portugal. It was commissioned in 1386 by king João I of Portugal (r.1385-1433) in gratitude to the Virgin Mary for the victory over Castille in the battle of Aljubarrota (1385).

<sup>6</sup> Pedro, *infante* of Portugal, First Duke of Coimbra, born in 1392 and died 1449. Brother of king Duarte, he was regente of Portugal between 1439 and 1448.

<sup>7</sup> He was regente of Portugal between 1438 and 1439.

<sup>8</sup> RAU, Virgínia. O infante Dom Pedro e a regência do reino em 1439, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras*, Lisboa, III série, 8, p. 143-150, 1964. For a broader understanding of this context, see MORENO, Humberto Baquero. *A Batalha de Alfarrobeira: antecedentes e significado histórico*, 2ª ed.. Coimbra: Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, 1979, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> *Esmoler-Mor do Reino* (Master Almsgiver) was an official title of the court of the kings of Portugal reserved for ecclesiastics, whose functions included supervising all charitable actions and almsgiving that were the sovereigns' obligation. See GOMES, Rita Costa. *A Corte dos Reis de Portugal nos finais da Idade Média*. Carnaxide: Difel, 1995, p. 117-118.

Table 1: Agents of dislocations.

<b>Agents of dislocations</b>	
Monastery officials	33,6%
Walkers	31,5%
"Servants" of the monastery	12,4%
Relatives of the abbot	10,7%
Mule drivers	8,4%
Monks	3,4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1988, p. 177-200.

This fact is even more surprising when the same data shows an intense and diverse universe of contacts that the institution had with the outside world – especially urban clusters –, for different reasons and making use of an assorted sociology of agents. It seems clear that there was preoccupation with safeguarding the closure of the monks, their isolation from the world, entrusting to other protagonists – professional emissaries but also the stewards and procurators of the monastery, other officials, and even merchants and peasants connected to the cenobium – the regular establishment of connections with the exterior, mostly of an economic and judicial nature.

But the monks could not always avoid travel, in which case, even when the journeys were to more distant places, *Book 14* reveals that they did so with the approval of the abbot, thereby guaranteeing the legitimacy of such trips and the abbot's vigilance over them. The interruption of stability was legitimized by obedience and service to the monastic community, even if associated to temporal matters, which were, in fact, the main motive for the travels recorded in *Book 14*.

There is nothing odd about this fact in a monastic universe that depended vitally on the good administration of its estate, and on respect of their privileges and rights, as well as their autonomy, avoiding any unwanted intrusion of secular powers. The data in our source shows how 41,9% of the displacements were related with the administration of their property, 24,8% with the transportation of money out of the *couto* (see Table 2), 12,8% were motivated by the need for purchases, 8,5% were for guide services and 5,1% were to find qualified services. More residual were travels made for political (4,3%) or personal (2,6%) reasons.

**Table 2: Reasons for the dislocations.**

<b>Reasons for the dislocations</b>	
Administration of the estate	41,9%
Transportation	24,8%
Purchases	12,8%
Guide services	8,5%
Search for qualified services	5,1%
Political motives	4,3%
Personal affairs	2,6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1988, p. 177-200.

The volume of judicial disputes with other institutions and private individuals regarding land possession and entitlement during the abbacy of the reformist Estêvão de Aquiar, reveals the weight of the daily reality and purely temporal questions on the ideal of contemplative life, renunciation of worldly matters, and search for peace and quietude within the monastic world.

To answer the question of whether the monastery of Alcobaça under Estêvão de Aguiar showed many signs of concern about defending and disputing its land, we answer affirmatively. But such does not contradict either the religious intent of the monastic option made by the monks, nor the reforming action of its abbot. The properties owned by the monastery were highly precious and had to be preserved and administered at all costs, as well as maintaining land that was at risk of being lost. And if necessary, to resort to the support of the king or even the pope, namely through the dispatch of procurators, who could or could not be monks (therein lies the inevitability of circulation outside the space of the monastery).

As the researcher Luís Rêpas states, “Disputes over property were more than simple quarrels, but a question of the survival of the Monastery and its community. To let property be disaggregated could be the beginning of its downfall...”<sup>10</sup> As we will see further ahead with other reformers, both secular – as in the case of the archbishop

<sup>10</sup> RÊPAS, Luís. *Quando a nobreza traja de branco. A Comunidade Cisterciense de Arouca durante o Abadessado de D. Luca Rodrigues (1286-1299)*. Leiria: Magno Edições, 2003, p. 136.



Fernando da Guerra – and religious – here we just need to remember the Benedictine Friar João Alves and the constitutions he drafted for the monastery of the Palace of Sousa –, the reform of religious life was reliant on the correct administration of the temporal and on an uncompromising defense of the rights of ecclesiastical institutions, safeguards of their independence and survival.<sup>11</sup> Estêvão de Aguiar did this without jeopardizing monastic closure, that abandonment of the world in favor of the monastery where a monk, under the direction of the abbot, would develop his ascetic and contemplative itinerary in union with God.

Given these circumstances, it is understandable that the cenobium, as a powerful religious and economic entity, had a group of notable men to deal with exterior affairs. Any other way would have been unthinkable; the monks' mobility was indispensable, even as officials of the monastery, for the management of the institution.

Well illustrative of this fact is the dispute, who, between 1431 and 1435, opposes the Abbot of Alcobaça Estêvão de Aguiar and the Archbishop of Lisbon, regarding the visitation of the churches that belonged to the monastery. The process, which culminated in the 1435 sending of emissaries by the monastery to the Court of Rome, also involved intense negotiations in Lisbon, using a group of prosecutors sent by the abbot, mostly lay people placed at the service of the monastery and the defense of its interests<sup>12</sup>.

### **The monastery of Alcobaça and the urban world**

King Afonso Henriques (1143-1185) donated the lands of Alcobaça to the Cistercian monks in 1153, with the obligation to plough them. The donations made over the following reigns, coupled with the fact that, in addition to their religious and cultural activities, the monks carried out a considerable amount of cultivation and organisation, meant that a vast territory – the *coutos* of Alcobaça – came under the monastery's jurisdiction. To such an extent that the Alcobaça monks came to be masters of 14

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<sup>11</sup> FONTES, João Luís. Frei João Álvares e a tentativa de reforma do mosteiro de S. Salvador de Paço de Sousa no século XV. *Lusitania Sacra*, Lisboa, 2ª série, 10, p. 217-232, 1998; MARQUES, José. D. Fernando da Guerra, prelado reformador do século XV. *Anais*, Lisboa, II Série, vol. 33, p. 39-65, 1933; MARQUES, José. Relações entre a Igreja e o Estado em Portugal no século XV. *Revista da Faculdade de Letras. História*, Porto, 11, p. 137-172, 1994.

<sup>12</sup> MARQUES, Maria Alegria. *Duas visitas em igrejas dos coutos de Alcobaça, no séc. XV. A propósito de um litígio*. In: MARQUES, Maria Alegria. *Estudos sobre a Ordem de Cister em Portugal*. Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 1998, p. 199-237.



towns<sup>13</sup>, four of which, crucially, were seaports: Alfeizerão, São Martinho do Porto, Pederneira and Paredes da Vitória.

The monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça maintained permanent contact with this urban tissue, in other words, it promoted intense mobility and circulation of people, objects and, of certainty, techniques and ideas. In this sense, it dominates such a large territory, but also depends on it for its own functionality and good administration<sup>14</sup>.

But this contact with the urban landscape extended to towns and cities much further afield than the *coutos* of Alcobaça, such as the head city of the kingdom of Portugal. Good examples are, on the one hand, the aforementioned journey of Estêvão de Aguiar to Lisbon at the head of an army funded by the monastery in support of *infante* Pedro against his sister-in-law, Leonor of Aragon, in the process of assigning the regency of the kingdom, during the minority of King Afonso V (1438-1481). Then there were the necessary travels to Lisbon and other cities in the kingdom undertaken by the abbot in the context of his role as royal counsellor and Master Almsgiver of the kingdom.

Related to the monastery's intense cultural activity during the period under review, the very presence, for example, of parchment makers and bookbinders necessarily evokes contact with the urban space, particularly the city, since it was there that these materials, especially paper, were obtained in greater abundance and quality. Take the case of Estêvão Eanes Lourido, a copyist and bookbinder, who is referred to in the accounting documents either as having made "books for the Order"<sup>15</sup> or for the task of "making and binding the books"<sup>16</sup>. What's more! This professional was also a silversmith, a privileged urban activity, and for this occupation he was also paid by the monastery.<sup>17</sup>

Also worthy of note are the transport professionals – the walkers, *almocreves*, *azeméis* and *carreteiros* – whose services the monastery hired on a large scale. These practitioners of the paths were permanently on the move to and from the monastery, carrying out various missions. They travelled the roads of the *coutos* and beyond, often

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<sup>13</sup> Alcobaça; Alfeizerão; Aljubarrota; Alvorninha; Cela Nova; Cós; Évora; Maiorga; Paredes; Pederneira; Salir do Mato; Santa Catarina; São Martinho; and Turquel.

<sup>14</sup> GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1989, p. 351-407.

<sup>15</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Livro da fazenda do Mosteiro de Alcobaça*, 1437-1440, Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro Santa Maria de Alcobaça, Livro/Book 14, fl. 66 and 77.

<sup>16</sup> Livro/Book 14, fl. 66 and 77. See GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1989, p. 374.

<sup>17</sup> GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1989, p. 374.

travelling to large urban centres such as Lisbon, Leiria, Santarém and various other cities and towns<sup>18</sup>. This was in terms of land transport, as there was also river and sea transport, albeit in smaller numbers.

All these transport agents, to which we can add the monks themselves and representatives of other crafts – merchants, magistrates, officials (e.g. from the monastery or even royal officials), procurators, among many others – connected the monastery of Alcobaça to the national urban landscape, whether for commercial reasons, for craftwork or due to various services such as administrative (particularly municipal), political and religious missions. After all, the Alcobaça cenobium maintained contact with almost the entire country.

Lastly, this circulation and mobility in the context of establishing contacts with the national urban tissue is well demonstrated by the coeval infrastructure. In fact, the settlements of the *coutos* were connected to each other and to the exterior (national) by a complex network of roads and paths. At the confluence points of these communication routes – possibly intersecting with others of a different type, river or sea – urban centres (cities and towns) were built, generally defined and delimited from the surrounding landscape by the walls that protected them. The kingdom's urban landscape was thus deeply linked to the monastery of Alcobaça<sup>19</sup>, and contact was very frequent.

In short, all these cases are objective indicators of close relations (political, social, economic...), and therefore of circulation and mobility, between the monastery and the urban life and culture that exist beyond its boundaries. And in this sense, they faithfully reflect the tension between the ideal and the real that every day marks the life, and in particular the management/subsistence binomial, of the cenobium that the abbot governs.

### **A mobility controlled and regulated by guidelines**

*Book 14* reveals that during the three years it encompasses, 238 trips were made in the ambit of monastic duty, that is, by order of the abbot. But in reality, many more were surely carried out. The normative and liturgical texts of the Order give us a

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<sup>18</sup> Livro/Book 14, fl. 123-125, 254-255v, 390-390v.

<sup>19</sup> GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1989, p. 380-386.

better perspective of the guidelines that regulated this mobility, and how it was controlled in the monastery of Alcobaça.

Its entire normative structure was based on the Rule of St. Benedict, rigorously observed by Cister, with an ideal balance between work, prayer and study, molded by an austere and simple life and by the affirmation of the monastery as a place where, under obedience to the abbot, each monk lived, in penitence and contemplation. The careful way the *Rule* regulated daily monastic life was the foundation of the Cistercian guidelines. And mobility was no exception, as contemplated in five of its chapters.

The first of these, chapter 29, mentions a regulation concerning the return of monks who left on their own volition, that is, without previous authorization of the abbot, and the sanctions to be applied to these rulebreakers and the conditions in which they should be received.<sup>20</sup>

Chapter 50 focuses on the brothers that worked away from the cenobium or were travelling, to ensure the obligatory recitation of the liturgical hours.<sup>21</sup>

The following chapter is intended as a guide for the conduct of monks who travelled to places that were no more than a day away from the monastery, prohibiting them from eating outside the cenobium without the authorization of the abbot.<sup>22</sup>

Chapter 61 regulated how monks on pilgrimage, or from other monasteries, should be received. It is a long chapter that considers the central question of the stability vote.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, chapter 67 dealt with brothers who were going to travel, and those who returned.<sup>24</sup> It indicated rigorously and clearly that the monks on trips must dedicate their prayers to all the brothers of the Abbey, and in the last prayer of the Divine Office they should always commemorate those who were absent. Regarding those returning, on the day of their return in all the cannon hours, when the Divine Office ended, lying on the floor of the oratory, were to ask for a collective prayer for any excesses that may have possibly occurred during the trip, seeing or hearing bad things or engaging in idle conversations. And no one should report to another any of the things he saw or heard outside the monastery, because of the evil that it could bring to the rest. And if anyone

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<sup>20</sup> COSTA, Sara Figueiredo (Ed.). *A Regra de S. Bento em português. Estudo e edição de dois manuscritos*. Lisboa: Edições Colibri / NOVA FCSH, 2007, p. 97.

<sup>21</sup> COSTA, op. cit., 2007, p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> COSTA, op. cit., 2007, p. 122.

<sup>23</sup> COSTA, op. cit., 2007, p. 136 and 138.

<sup>24</sup> COSTA, op. cit., 2007, p. 148.

attempted to do so, he would be submitted to regular punishment, just like anyone who left the monastery's cloisters or went somewhere, or did something, no matter how small, without the Abbot's permission.

In all these chapters special attention is given to safeguarding stability and closure as fundamental elements of monastic life, the vigilance of which was the responsibility of the abbot, who had an unquestionable centrality in these guidelines. He had absolute power over the different forms of mobility. For example, 51 stipulates: "a brother who is sent on a task and expected back in the monastery that same day should not eat out, even if he is invited by any person; unless by chance the Abbot gave him specific orders to do so. If he proceeds differently, he will be excommunicated."<sup>25</sup>

All other rules regarding this topic derived from the primary source, either in terms of uses and customs, or at the liturgical level. One example is the *Alcobacense 166*, a Collectar-ritual which included praying for the brothers that were on the roads.<sup>26</sup>

The same can be said of the *Alcobacenses 208* and *278*, both books in Portuguese and both used by the Order of Cister, the second one having been produced by indication of Estêvão de Aguiar, in 1444.<sup>27</sup>

Then there is what we consider the most emblematic reforming action of this abbot, the very important *Alcobacense 218*, which includes the Portuguese translation of *Exordium Parvum*, the *Compilations of the Definitions of the General Chapter of 1318*, the *New Definitions*, that is, from between 1316 and 1350, and the *Form of visitation and how to visit*.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> COSTA, op. cit., 2007, p. 122.

<sup>26</sup> Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa, Alc. 166 (*Colectário-ritual = Collectane = Collectar-ritual*), 1185-1191. About this manuscript consult BARREIRA, Catarina. Abordagem histórico-artística a dois manuscritos litúrgicos do scriptorium do Mosteiro de Alcobaça do último quartel do século XII ou o início de 'huma livraria copiosa'. *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura*, Coimbra, Centro de História da Sociedade e da Cultura, Universidade de Coimbra, nº 17, p. 33-62, 2017. On the designation of the type of codices consult PALAZZO, Eric. *A History of Liturgical books from the beginning to the thirteenth century*. Collegeville/Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998, *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa, Alc. 208 (*Livro dos usos da Ordem de Cister = Liber Usuum / Ecclesiastica Officia = Book of Usages of the Order of Cister*), 1415; Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa, Alc. 278 (*Livro dos usos da Ordem de Cister = Liber Usuum / Ecclesiastica Officia = Book of Usages of the Order of Cister*), 1444. About the manuscript 208 see BARREIRA, Catarina. O quotidiano dos monges alcobacenses em dois manuscritos do século XV: o Ordinário do Ofício Divino Alc. 62 e o Livro de Usos Alc. 208. *Cadernos de Estudos Leirienses*, Leiria, nº 11, p. 329-341, dez. 2016. On the designation of the type of codices consult PALAZZO, op. cit., 1998, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa, Alc. 218 (*Costumes, definições, visitas e estatutos da Ordem de Cister, e diplomas relativos às ordens militares de Cristo e Calatrava e ao Mosteiro de Odivelas = Customs, definitions, visitations and statutes of the Order of Cister, and diplomas relating to the military orders of Christ and Calatrava and the Monastery of Odivelas*), 1439-1440.

Mobility in Alcobaça was thus duly regulated by the rule of the Order, particularly in its most essential form, the *Rule of St. Benedict*. The key to the balance between what was ideal and what was really experienced resided in the figure of the abbot. A truly central figure, it was he who determined who, what, when, how and where. Nothing escaped the reach of his powerful arm.

### **From going to the General Chapter and the practice of visitation, main symbols of mobility in Cister**

Although very concrete data about visitations that took place is lacking (dates, places, etc.), but legitimized by the fact that they were considered absolutely obligatory for all monasteries of the Order, it should be pointed out that the practice of visitation and the journey to the General Chapter in Cister, were the main symbols of mobility exercised within the institution, especially regarding the figure of the abbot.

In the time of Estevão de Aguiar, the abbots of Galicia and Portugal were obliged to go to the General Chapter in Cister once every four years. This had been stipulated between 1237 and 1257, in the codifications of the Order, and the entire trip was to take approximately six months, which deprived the respective monasteries of their leaders during almost half a year. This was particularly onerous if the tradition of an annual dislocation to Cister was maintained.

A different matter were the visitations required of the abbot of the cenobium of Alcobaça to its affiliated monasteries, and those under his supervision. As Saul Gomes pointed out about the definitions of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, we find confirmed visitation orders to all the Portuguese monasteries in the General Chapters of 1430, 1438, 1439, 1444 and 1445, just to mention the years that correspond to the abbacy of Estêvão de Aguiar.<sup>29</sup> This necessity for vigilance of the Portuguese monasteries, apparently also present in other Iberian kingdoms, seems to indicate, on one hand, a clear intent to support the reform of Cistercian monastic life which Estêvão hoped to achieve in Alcobaça, but also, by its repetition, the difficulties and resistance that some of the other houses raised regarding the visitational prerogatives. At times contestation reached such proportions that it was necessary to resort to the confirmation rights of the abbots, and even to royal intervention, like the case of the monastery of Bouro in

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<sup>29</sup> GOMES, Saul António. *Visitações a mosteiros cistercienses em Portugal: séculos XV e XVI*. Lisboa: IPPAR, 1998, p. 9-56.

1437.<sup>30</sup> On this occasion the response of the king, Duarte, was fast and always in favor of the abbot of Alcobaça. In any case, the action of Estêvão de Aguiar was perfectly valid from the point of view of the general normative of the Order, because Portuguese Cistercian monasteries, like all similar Iberian and European ones, were under the sphere of visitation and reform. Visitation was a precept written in the *Charta Caritatis* (1114-1119) and reinforced by all later normative.<sup>31</sup>

It should be noted also in relation to the topic of visitation, a central point in his program of reform in the monastery, and indicative of the importance of mobility and circulation therein, that it is not gratuitous that one of the main works Estêvão de Aguiar had translated in the *scriptorium* of Alcobaça, the above-mentioned *Codex 218*, contained a chapter especially dedicated to the 'Form of visitation and manner of visiting'. A unique compilation, this codex is very representative of the reformist intention of Estêvão de Aguiar, demonstrated in the prologue written by him: 'In it are written necessary and very useful things and as they were written in Latin, if they were not saved and not understood by those who do not know Latin, because it was important for the monks to know the old Definitions and the new ones (...) They were just translated into language.'<sup>32</sup>

### A man of pragmatism and governance

It is not our objective to discuss the trajectory of Estêvão de Aguiar before he was appointed abbot of Alcobaça in 1431, but we can mention the reasons that led to his nomination.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> MARQUES, Maria Alegria. Um litígio entre mosteiros cistercienses no séc. XV: Alcobaça e Bouro. In: MARQUES, Maria Alegria. *Estudos sobre a Ordem de Cister em Portugal*, Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 1998b, p. 275-308. This cenobium was located in the district of Braga, near the northern border of Portugal.

<sup>31</sup> GOMES, op. cit., 1998, p. 9-56.

<sup>32</sup> Alc. 218, fol. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Estêvão de Aguiar was from a noble family. He was from Lisbon, but his date of birth is not known. He went to Italy early on; we do not know exactly when, but we know that by April of 1420 he was already there. The date of his return to Portugal is not known either, although there are signs of his presence in May of 1426. He lived, therefore, about six years in Italy, in a different cultural environment, and profoundly reformist. See COSTA, António Domingues de Sousa. D. Gomes Eanes, reformador da Abadia de Florença, e as tentativas de reforma dos mosteiros portugueses no século XV. *Studia Monastica*, vol. 5, nº 1, p. 59-164, 1963; FERNANDES, Carlos Roma. *O scriptorium de Alcobaça no tempo de D. Estêvão de Aguiar (1431-1446)*. 1970. Tese (Licenciatura em História da Arte), Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, 1970, *passim*; BATTELI, Guido. Due celebri monaci portoghesi in Firenze nella prima metà del Quattrocento. L'Abate Gomes e Velasco di Portogallo, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 2, XCVI, p. 218-227, 1938; BATTELI, Guido. L' Abate Don Gomes Ferreira da Silva e i portoghesi a Firenze nella prima metà del Quattrocento. In: BATTELI, Guido (Ed.). *Relazioni Storiche Fra l'Italia e il Portogallo*, Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1940, p. 149-163.



At the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the monastery was going through a period of crisis: a decrease in the number of monks and novices, disciplinary problems like lax customs and non-compliance of the *Rule*, simultaneously with innumerable financial problems resulting from debts, insufficient donations, ignorance about the real extension of land owned by the monastery, evidenced by the inexistence of a solid inventory of properties, fallow land, small number of contracts, empty parcels, in summary, general bad management.<sup>34</sup> The Monastery was going through a turbulent period: Friar Fernando do Quental<sup>35</sup> had been suspended in 1426 and substituted by Friar Estêvão de Lima<sup>36</sup>, named director of the monastery.<sup>37</sup> The Court was aware of this crisis in the community in Alcobaça and saw in Estêvão de Aguiar the perfect person to reform it.<sup>38</sup>

Subsequently, king João I of Portugal (r. 1385-1433) interceded with Pope Eugene IV (1431-1447), who was himself originally from a circle of reformists in Florence, to get the appointment of this *estrangeirado*<sup>39</sup> as abbot of the monastery of Alcobaça, which he obtained by papal bull on 29 October, 1431.<sup>40</sup> He remained in this office for approximately fifteen years, until his death (1431-1446), though he went to live in Lisbon after he was named councilor of the king by the prince regent, *infante* Pedro.<sup>41</sup>

As the general chapter of 1422 shows, there was an urgent need for visitation and for a reform of the internal life of the abbey and of its monks.<sup>42</sup> This implied necessarily a search for the original path, in the observance of the *Rule* and monastic discipline – a spirit clearly influenced by the *Devotio Moderna*. It was a return to the origins, a spirituality that arose from the almost ascetic rigorism that preceded the foundation of the Order of Cister. That is why during the decade and a half of Friar

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<sup>34</sup> GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1989, p. 23-350 and 445-485; MARQUES, Maria Alegria. *Estudos sobre a Ordem de Cister em Portugal*. Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 1998, p. 181-198.

<sup>35</sup> Abbot of the Monastery of Alcobaça from 1415 to 1426.

<sup>36</sup> Administrator of the monastery between 1426 and 1431, the first year of Estêvão de Aguiar's abbacy.

<sup>37</sup> GOMES, Saul António. Abbés et vie régulière dans l'abbaye d'Alcobaça (Portugal) au Moyen Age : un bilan. In: COTTIER, Jean-François; HUREL, Daniel-Odon e TOCK, Benoît-Michel (Ed.). *Les personnes d'autorité en milieu régulière*, Saint Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint Étienne, 2012, p. 137-149.

<sup>38</sup> FERNANDES, op. cit., 1970, *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> Someone who, as a consequence of a prolonged stay abroad, brings with him values, perceptions, attitudes and, finally, a socio-cultural experience and learning, which allow him to have a different vision about his country of origin.

<sup>40</sup> NUNES, Eduardo Borges. *Dom Frey Gomez: abade de Florença, 1420-1440*, vol. 1. Braga: Ed. do Autor, 1963, *passim*.

<sup>41</sup> By letter of 9 January, 1440. RAU, op. cit., 1964, p. 143-150.

<sup>42</sup> GOMES, op. cit., 2012, p. 137-150.



Estêvão de Aguiar's abbacy there was a clear renovation in the cultural and intellectual spheres of the Cistercian community of Alcobaça – initiated, in fact, during the ministry of João de Dornelas, abbot between 1381 and 1414.<sup>43</sup>

Here it should be noted that like his mentor in Italy, the Benedictine Gomes Eanes (c.1383-1459), the famous and dynamic *Abbot of Florence*<sup>44</sup>, Estêvão de Aguiar was closer to Pope Eugene IV than Martin V (1417-1431), both his contemporaries, the first pontificate coinciding almost exactly with the period that Estêvão de Aguiar was at the head of Santa Maria de Alcobaça (1431-1447).

Eugene IV defended a case by case reform, using the ideal men and occasions, and not with general laws, like Martin V advocated. Thus, his program had better results than that of his predecessor (only in the next century would Christianity be ready for the reformist initiative of a general and all-encompassing nature)<sup>45</sup>.

A reflection of his leadership in Alcobaça, the data supplied by *Book 14* confirms the action of Estêvão de Aguiar in Italy – of the six years that he lived in the turbulent Italian peninsula, five were spent as a monk in Santa Maria of Florence under the direction of Gomes Eanes.

His folios reveal at each step that the action of the reformist Estêvão de Aguiar was also that of a realist person, since he carried out reform with concrete actions, be it in the *scriptorium*, or in the temporal administration of the estate of the monastic community. In last analysis, they show that usefulness and faith seem to have been the guiding principles of this restless reformer.

Estêvão de Aguiar was a career Benedictine monk. By nature, consistent and lucid spirit, enterprising, and most probably, in the line of his mentor Gomes Eanes,

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<sup>43</sup> GOMES, Saul António. D. João Eanes de Dornelas, abade de Alcobaça (1381-1414). In: ANDRADE, Amélia Aguiar; FERNANDES, Hermenegildo; FONTES, João Luís (coord). *Olhares Sobre a História. Estudos oferecidos a Iria Gonçalves*. Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2009, p. 253-270.

<sup>44</sup> The 15th century in Portugal was rich in terms of religious reform, whether promoted by the Church or by lay initiatives, particularly the crown. Connecting both spheres was an important figure: Gomes Eanes. His voice resounded in hundreds of records exemplifying Portugal's openness to the currents of reform and observance that ran through Christianity. Between 1419 and 1439 Gomes Eanes lived in Italy at the service of the Benedictine monastery of Sta. Maria of Florence, traditionally known as *Badia*. His contribution was decisive for the establishment of religious dialogue of a reformist nature between Portugal and Italy in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The extensive *carteggio* of Gomes Eanes reveals how Estêvão de Aguiar actively circulated around the Italian Peninsula, especially between Florence and Rome, performing reformist functions assigned to him by his abbot and mentor. This experience certainly influenced the latter's way of thinking and acting. See GOMES, Rita Costa (Ed.). *A portuguese Abbot In Renaissance Florence. The letter collection of Gomes Eanes (1415/1463)*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2017, *passim*.

<sup>45</sup> For an overview of his pontificate, see UGINET, François-Charles. *Eugène IV*. In: LEVILLAIN, Philippe (Dir.). *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*. Paris: Fayard, 1994, p. 642-645.

assertive. For him, the reform should follow the *Rule* and express the Benedictine tradition at its best, the canonical norms and the existing hierarchy. This made Estêvão de Aguiar one of the precursors in Portugal of a movement of religious reform which strived for rigor and organization, and where, consequently, method, perseverance and obedience were priority precepts.

Just like his mentor in Italy, Estêvão de Aguiar's objectives in Alcobaça were reform, observance, good management, and, above all, spiritual elevation. All interconnected. The ultimate aim and reason for the institution's existence as *Domus Spiritualis*.

At the head of this powerful Cistercian community, Estêvão de Aguiar was guided by an attitude of correction and reorganization, as evidenced by an extensive documental *corpus*, which include the statutes of governance of the cenobium – especially those associated with the management of the estate and defense of the monastery's prerogatives and privileges – the inventories where he had all the property belonging to the community recorded, as well as many texts, from the normative to those of spirituality, which he had copied for reading and spiritual sustenance of his monks.<sup>46</sup>

Estêvão de Aguiar followed the model adopted by Gomes Eanes in Florence, namely as the temporal administrator: centralization, obedience and loyalty to the figure of the abbot. Teacher of reformers, Gomes Eanes had in Estêvão de Aguiar a prime disciple, to the point where it is not possible to separate the reformist actions of the latter in Portugal from the time he spent in Italy under the jurisdiction of his mentor – the extreme rigor in temporal management and the relation with the book and written text were two of the best examples of this fact.

In this context, it is therefore not surprising that Estêvão de Aguiar pursued a centralist policy in relation to Alcobaça's dependent monasteries.<sup>47</sup> His abbey guaranteed a good administration. Proof of this was the criterion used in the accounting records – of which the *Tombo das Propriedades (Inventory of Properties)* and *Livro da Fazenda (Book of Estate of Alcobaça)* are the best examples -, the way he dealt with

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<sup>46</sup> Namely letters or instruments of *aforamento* (rents), permits, appeals, applications, rents, payments for services, citations, settlements, confirmations and attestations, continuance (for example of ownership, conventions, demarcations, donations, elections, tenures, annulments, barter, excommunication, inquiry, inventories, oaths, favors, nominations, obligations, sharing, pardons, ownership, proclamations, procurements, receipts, renewal (for example of tenancies), renunciations, requisitions, sentences, *sesmaria* (land grants), transactions and sales.

<sup>47</sup> MARQUES, op. cit., 1998b, p. 275-308.

debts, and the multitude of royal decrees regarding Alcobaça during his government, showed the favoritism, confidence and freedom to act granted to this abbot.<sup>48</sup>

In the cultural sphere, as confirmed by the inventories of Alcobaça, Estêvão de Aguiar would be the great proponent of the intensive work of copying and translating Latin codices recorded by the *scriptorium* of the monastery, in order to provide more abundant and easy access to the sources of Cistercian and monastic spirituality to the community.<sup>49</sup> The biggest indication of the Abbot's concern at this level is the compilation of the emblematic codex *Alc. 218*, whose translated text would henceforward allow the religious community of the convent to have full knowledge of the fundamental rules that guided their daily lives. The aforementioned prologue written by Estêvão de Aguiar is evidence of this clearly reformist initiative. As a result, his abbatial direction was marked by important cultural and intellectual renovation within the Cistercian community of Alcobaça.

There is no doubt about the kind of life the Abbot wanted for his monks: prayer, meditation and spiritual elevation, always accompanied by the sincere practice of mercy, devotion and contemplative life. The actual way he managed the cenobium's relationship with the exterior is proof of this fact. The number of laypeople who served in the monastery, namely as procurators and officials, guaranteeing true cloistered life and monastic stability.<sup>50</sup>

If in temporal administration Estêvão de Aguiar was a loyal follower of the *Abbot of Florence*, in terms of religious culture, expressed in the ecclesiastical training of the monks and the increase in *scriptorium* production, it can be considered that he transcended his mentor. Regarding this point, we cannot forget that Estêvão de Aguiar was brought up in the house of the *infanta* Isabel (1397-1471), daughter of the king João I and future duchess of Bourgogne, where he was her attendant. From early on Isabel had been a supporter of the movements associated with the renovation of religious life.<sup>51</sup> In fact, it was in the royal Court that Estêvão de Aguiar established his first contacts with humanist thinking, where the translation of classical works was a

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<sup>48</sup> CARVALHO, José Adriano de Freitas. *Antes de Lutero: A Igreja e as Reformas Religiosas em Portugal no século XV. Anseios e limites*. Porto: CITCEM, 2016, *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> CARDEIRA, Esperança Maria da Cruz Marreiros. *Contributo para o estudo da norma ortográfica no Scriptorium de Alcobaça (1431-1446)*. 1990. Tese (Mestrado em Linguística), Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, 1990, *passim*; FERNANDES, op. cit., 1970. *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> GONÇALVES, op. cit., 1988, p. 177-200.

<sup>51</sup> SOMMÉ, Monique. *Isabelle de Portugal, Duchesse de Bourgogne. Une femme au pouvoir au XVe siècle*. Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1998, p. 451-478.

focal point, and tightened ties between reformist ideals and sophisticated cultural aspect.<sup>52</sup>

### Relationships with royal power

In this sense the Court was a hub where authors, translators and defenders and promoters of reformist ideals congregated, starting with the actual king, queen and *infantes*, especially Duarte, Pedro and Isabel.<sup>53</sup> It was a meeting and dissemination point, from which a message irradiated which would circulate over the kingdom, extending its tentacles to the lay and clerical universe, very especially to the monastic world.<sup>54</sup> In the prologue of the chronicle of João I, Fernão Lopes traces carefully the profile of this panorama: 'He (João I of Portugal) had great scholars translate the scriptures, the acts of the apostles and the epistles of St. Paul into vernacular, as well as other spiritual books of the saints, so that those who heard them being read would be more devout about the law of God.'<sup>55</sup>

The abbacy of Estêvão de Aguiar in Alcobaça only confirmed something that had begun before, even with his mentor, Gomes Eanes, chosen twice by the Crown to travel from Italy to Portugal with reformist intentions, first for the Benedictine Order in 1424-1426, and later for the monastic orders in Portugal in 1435-1436. In the second case it was a general visitation and a project of reform of the entire Portuguese clergy.<sup>56</sup>

These projects had been lived in a climate of heated confrontation between the Crown and the national clergy, which marked the entire 15<sup>th</sup> century, associated also to the reformist ambitions of the Crown in terms of religious life in Portugal. The royal commitment to renew and alter the problematic context that existed at the time was earnest, as we can see in the *Leal Conselheiro (Faithful Councilor)*, where Duarte advocates reform from an essentially spiritual perspective, that is, the interior

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<sup>52</sup> MONTEIRO, João Gouveia. Orientações da cultura da corte na primeira metade do século XV (a literatura dos Príncipes de Avis). *Vértice*, Lisboa, 2<sup>a</sup> série, 5, p. 89-103, 1988.

<sup>53</sup> HOOREBEECK, Céline Van. *Livres et lectures des fonctionnaires des ducs de Bourgogne (ca 1420-1520)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014, p. 243-328.

<sup>54</sup> To some extent the work of king João I and the princes of Avis established a cross-road in the late Medieval world between the clerical culture produced in the monasteries, which dominated for centuries, and a rising lay culture located mostly in a well-defined social environment: the royal court. The background for this process was the influence brought by the reformist religious movements of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries from Europe north of the Pyrenees. In other words, religiosity, observance and reform arise as key concepts in the entire process of renovation of the Portuguese cultural context.

<sup>55</sup> LOPES, Fernão. *Primeira parte da crónica de D. João I*. FREIRE, Anselmo Braamcamp (Ed.), Lisboa: INCM, 1915, p. 115.

<sup>56</sup> COSTA, op. cit., 1963, p. 59-164.

renovation of Christian, lay and clerical believers.<sup>57</sup> In effect, the new dynasty claims the *obligation* of good spiritual conduct of its believers, with emphasis of the actual clerics.<sup>58</sup> Only in appearance is this situation contradictory; if on one hand the Crown develops legal measures that tend to restrict ecclesiastical freedom – see the famous *Jacobine Laws* of December 1419 – on the other it invests in initiatives intended ultimately to correct the Church and its members - which in last analysis means recognizing the superior importance of the ecclesiastical universe, in the most diverse levels, for the destinies of Portugal.<sup>59</sup>

In all this process, the affection and preference displayed by the royal family for Gomes Eanes and Estêvão de Aguiar, as reforming elements and zealous supporters of observant spiritualism. There is, therefore, a clear alignment/synchrony between the Crown and Santa Maria de Alcobaça. A synchrony characterized by humanism, stimulus to the culture of the book – all the Avis characters aspired to create important libraries and many resorted to Alcobaça for that end –, morality and sincere religiosity.<sup>60</sup> This explains the importance attributed to making accessible to everyone, lay and religious, through the vernacular, texts that could stimulate renovation, which was essentially nothing more than a return to an ideal associated to the origins of the different orders and actual Christianity.

### **A note for the Tombo das Propriedades (Archive of Properties)**

Ordered by Estêvão de Aguiar in 1435, the *Tombo das Propriedades (Archive of Properties)* is another record of bookkeeping of the cenobium which materializes what has already been said about the pragmatic man of government that Estêvão de Aguiar was.<sup>61</sup> This is the most detailed record that the monastery of Alcobaça produced until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century regarding the description of its lands.

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<sup>57</sup> A book written by Duarte, king of Portugal. The work is a treatise on ethics and morality intended to be read by members of the court. It is believed that the king compiled it around 1438, the year of his death.

<sup>58</sup> MARQUES, José. *A Arquidiocese de Braga no século XV*, Lisboa: INCM, 1988, *passim*; DIAS, José Sebastião da Silva. *Correntes de sentimento religioso em Portugal (séculos XVI a XVIII)*, vol. 1. Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1960, p. 1-92.

<sup>59</sup> The promulgation of the *Jacobine Laws* at the end of 1419 greatly displeased the Portuguese clergy. It was an important moment in the relations between the Portuguese crown and church, which after that became quite tense. See MARQUES, op. cit., 1994, p. 137-172.

<sup>60</sup> NASCIMENTO, Aires Augusto. As Livrarias dos Príncipes de Avis. In: NASCIMENTO, Aires Augusto (Ed.). *Ler contra o tempo. Condições dos textos na cultura portuguesa*, vol. 1. Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa / Centro de Estudos Clássicos, 2012, p. 249-267.

<sup>61</sup> Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Tombo das Propriedades*, 1435, Ordem de Cister, Mosteiro Santa Maria de Alcobaça, Livro 15.

The care and zeal placed in the rigorous and exact registration of the information is evident. This archive is the result of the abbot's concern and priority in making the inventory of the monastery's properties, bringing about the *aforamento*<sup>62</sup> of all land that was lying fallow. In reality his written work was preceded by an extensive number of contracts celebrated the previous year but reached its highest number during the year it was elaborated, and was still considerable in 1436. This ensured that most of the monastic estate was under production.

Worth noting is that the production of this codex involved a large number of journeys, both of monastery officials and of persons belonging to the private, more intimate circle of the abbot. After all, good management required constant presence and vigilance, which included different comings and goings to the places in question. Reforming meant exactly that, being alert, and especially, being present. In this measure, circulation and mobility became intrinsic procedures to reform. They served as indispensable steps of a previously established methodology.

As can be deduced, the *Tombo das Propriedades* constitutes *per se*, that is, independently from the information provided therein, another example of the larger role of circulation and mobility in the reforming program of Estêvão de Aguiar. All at the service of the renovation of the powerful and emblematic monastery of Alcobaça and the safeguarding of the monastic life led by its inhabitants, stable and faithful to closure, conducted in the obedience of the *Rule* and their abbot.

## Final remarks

*Book 14* provides an insight not only into the state of the roads and the greater or lesser speed of means of transportation, but of circulation as an obvious element in Alcobaça in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, as well as monastery's permeability with the surrounding world.

The motives were manifold, but one constant was particularly noticeable: administration and management of the monastery's estate, resolution of judicial conflicts, and acquisition of products and services that could not be produced on their own land. But also, the support of the Crown, to which the monastery was deeply bound, was another reason for this emphasis, only partially portrayed in this codex.

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<sup>62</sup> Assignment of the usufruct of a property upon payment of a certain income or an agreement by which the owner of a land transfers to another person the useful domain of that property against the payment of a periodic rent.



On one hand, all these reasons are incorporated in a horizon of reform of the community. This was clearly the great aim of the abbot. And on the other hand, there was a minimum number of travels explicitly involving the monks.

The monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça had an ideal dimension, utopian, of *Domus Spiritualis*, and a real life dimension, the day to day life of the monastery as a human community and socio-economic complex that had to be managed to be preserved, and ideally, to grow.

Reform was necessary if one, or both aspects were in crisis, whereby the monastic institution did not correspond with what was intended. Particularly in terms of the first scenario, the real *raison d'être* of the Order and the monastery and its monks. The idea in this case consisted always in a return to the purity of the origins, to the *Rule of St. Benedict* and the *Exordium Parvum*.

Let us recall that the precepts laid out in the *Charta Caritatis*, and successive statutes approved by the General Chapter ordered and underlay cloistered discipline, promoting the religious men's dedication to prayer, liturgical celebration of the prayers and masses, silence as absolute condition for the voice of God and for the consideration of the other spiritual realities.

However, the process was neither easy nor linear, because in each moment of that daily life there was inevitable tension between the ideal and the real, what we could call a 'permanent unease'. On the other hand, the actual reform, as we can verify, for example, from an analysis of the *Tombo das Propriedades*, necessarily implied a degree of mobility by the human resources of the monastery, which in a way connect the cenobium to the outside world. And more! The first dimension only exists if the second one works well, and for this to happen there must be mobility.

Essentially, what Estêvão de Aguiar did was articulate, as far as possible, norms with the limitations and constraints of reality. And he managed this, in terms of mobility, through contact with the exterior world, that is, representation of the monastery in the most varied acts outside the walls, through an almost absolute use of non-monastic figures (relatives, procurators, and other officials), thus avoiding secularization of the cloistered life in Alcobaça, and a potential promiscuity between the sacred and the profane.

This seems to have been the solution he found so as to not affect the Cistercian ideal with the constraints of reality.



In summary, the *Livro da Fazenda (Book of Estate of Alcobaça)* shows the relevance of mobility in a Cistercian community ideally dedicated to monastic stability and isolated from the world. Even though it was, obviously, a mobility controlled and regulated by the Order's normative, particularly through the supreme person of the abbot.

An evaluation of the situations, motives and agents of this circulation between the monastery and the exterior in this bookkeeping record helps to envision the simultaneity between the ideal spirit as *Domus Spiritualis* and real-life experience of the community.

The monks, specifically, led a religious monastic life guided by Cistercian ideals, which were not greatly affected by the mobility that guided the day-to-day of the institution and its good management. Proof of this is the small number of displacements explicitly involving the monks that figure in *Book 14*.

But to correct and impose authority means being alert, and especially, present, that is, good management required constant attendance and vigilance, which implied journeys to the places in question. Consequently, people and goods became an intrinsic process of the reforming action.

The monastery is thus revealed as a space that is permeable to the outside, especially urban, and with a strong irradiation and influence outside the walls that separate it from the world. Furthermore, it is vital to bear in mind that the displacements that are the basis of this state of affairs intended, ultimately, the continued improvement of the community, namely in terms of training and religious culture.

It is curious how Estêvão de Aguiar balanced the ideal dimension of the Cistercian spiritual purpose with reality guided by considerable vigor, expressed both in his temporal administration, and in the extensive production in the scriptorium, and in the legal mechanism of the visitations that targeted both the spiritual and temporal perception of the subordinate communities.

During the fifteen years that he headed the cenobium of Alcobaça his mobility was remarkable, both as temporal administrator and as devout reformer. Also notable is the dynamism of the community he headed. Something which, in essence did not contradict the commitment to stability and escape from the world upheld by the Cistercians and Benedictines.

All the processes and practices evoked until now contribute, on the one hand, to the definition of the coeval identity of the cenobium and, in particular, of its abbot; and, on the other hand, for the development of a more flexible, dynamic, and less-unified understanding of medieval monasticism as a spiritual, social, and institutional phenomenon. After all, beginning in late antiquity and continuing throughout the medieval period, monastic identities were subject to continuous definition and redefinition. This took place both for individuals and for whole communities. In this specific case, the evidence can be found in a record of the cenobium's bookkeeping, which, after all, also functions as an identity mirror of the practice and of the monastic life in this particular Cistercian community. This, in addition to showing the flexibility and real potential of medieval representations of monastic life and enabling a critical reflection on how this specific typology of sources can help to grasp the panorama, both conceptually and in terms of practices between monastic life and the secular world.

Naturally, as we have shown, there is an intimate relationship between the monastic identity here under examination (and, of course, the processes and practices that underlie its definition) and the specific ideological, cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional context in which it was created.

In another aspect, the trajectory of Estêvão de Aguiar as abbot of Alcobaça contributed significantly to demonstrate how Medieval society was dynamic, open and in constant movement. The complete opposite, therefore, of the reductive and simplistic historiographic currents that for so long portrayed the Medieval world as static and crystalized. Legacies like that of the abbot of Alcobaça show us how the Medieval man travelled much more than was imagined. A *Homo Viator* who either alone, but mostly in groups, travelled the internal and external roads of Western Christianity, exchanging experiences, techniques, knowledge and ideas, that all together contributed to a progressive affirmation of a civilization with characteristics and values quite distinct and differentiated from those that coexisted with it<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> For an approach to the theme of travel in the medieval world, see the most comprehensive study of CHAUNU, Pierre. *La expansión europea (siglos XIII al XV)*. Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1982, *passim*; LABARGE, Margaret Wade. *Viajeros medievales. Los ricos y los insatisfechos*. Madrid: Nerea, 1992, *passim*; MOLLAT, Michel. *Los exploradores del siglo XIII al XVI: Primeiras miradas sobre nuevos mundos*. Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990, *passim*; NEWTON, Arthur P. (Ed.). *Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 1996, *passim*; OHLER, Norbert. *The Medieval Traveller*. Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1998, *passim*; PHILLIPS, J. R. S.. *La Expansión Medieval de Europa*. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998, *passim*; RICHARD, Jean. *Les récits de voyages et de pèlerinages*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1981, *passim*; ROUX, Jean-Paul.

A final word to underline the need for a larger study that compares the data in Book 14 with the witnesses of the practice documents (*emphyteusis* – in the sense of ‘ground rent’ –, sentences, among others) and with the data from the chronicles and the chancellery to verify who emerges to represent the monastery and thus, by comparison, obtain more data about the mobility of the monks, the abbot and their contractors outside the cenobium. Due to its size, such a study falls absolutely outside the limits of the present reflection. However, the clue is laid for further investigation.

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