

The Avis utopia in the writings and political action of the Infante Dom Pedro

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ABSTRACT

Dom Pedro's father, King João I, had left his sons and daughter with a very strong inheritance, a true utopia, based on clear ideas of what he thought a good king/prince should be. Indeed, Portugal had just overcome a very hard and dangerous war against its traditional fierce enemy, Castille, which had been imposed on the nation by the ongoing greed of the two first Trastámara kings, Enrique II and Juan I. It was the right time to establish strong new foundations for a new era, a new style of king, a new dynasty, a new government, a new and much richer, stronger, and more developed country.

The Infante Dom Pedro was the king's second born surviving son. He was an uncommonly intelligent and learned young man, both in classical as well as Christian authors. His personality was also uncommonly rich. He was a brave soldier, who had served in Emperor Sigismund's armies against the feared and fierce Ottomans for two years. He had travelled and visited most of the European courts during a period of three years, received with great respect everywhere, obtaining uncommon honours from foreign kings and princes, including Pope Martin V. He was wise and generous, and he was loved by his people. On his return to his homeland he went through Aragon (Catalonia and Valencia), and Castile, where he felt the ongoing subversive activity of the *Infantes* of Aragon (Ferdinand I of Aragon's children) against the Castilian king Juan II. Dom Pedro was shocked and he realized that this family, Castilian by birth, would

surely be the strongest and the most dangerous enemies of Portugal in the future. This menace had greatly increased through the marriage of prince Duarte (the future king) to Lady Leonor of Aragon, the youngest of the sisters of the extremely ambitious *Infantes* of Aragon. In Dom Pedro's mind it became clear that Portuguese society urgently needed to implement major reforms, in its military forces, its justice and administration, its economy, the rhythm of its overseas expansion and its level of education, with each of these features considered as an essential element in a new system, according to a complex ideal of what good government should be. Indeed, this would in fact reinforce the political utopia he and his brothers and sister had inherited from their parents (King João I and his English queen, Philippa of Lancaster).

In this talk we will study the prince's activity in two different fields: as a pedagogue and as a politician, mainly during his regency.

Unfortunately for Portugal, most of King João I's sons had tragic and short lives (a topic which needs to be studied in much greater depth). The Infante Dom Pedro was one of them. After his death in the fields of Alfarrobeira, Portugal interrupted this promising utopia during the long reign of Afonso V, who was totally dominated by the major national nobles. The Avis utopia was only recovered by Dom Pedro's grandson, the great king João II, who fully assumed his grandfather's political action. However, unfortunately for the country, he only reigned for fourteen years, and also died early, in 1495, when he was forty years old.

KEY WORDS: utopia, good government, national defence, pedagogy

Introduction

The Infante Dom Pedro was the second surviving son of King João I and his wife, Philippa of Lancaster.

In this talk we will study the prince's activity in two different fields: as a pedagogue and as a politician, and mainly during his regency.

1. The Infante Dom Pedro, a great pedagogue

The pedagogical action of the Infante Dom Pedro was noteworthy both in relation to the future king Afonso V, of whom he was the guardian, and in relation to his children.

At the base of this pedagogical action was his intellectual training, based on the classical and biblical cultures, well exemplified in the *Book of Virtuous Improvement* (Livro da Virtuosa Benfeitoria).

The ideal of a just ruler concerned with serving the Common Good guided the Infante in all his pedagogical activity. Unfortunately, due to the negative influence of his mother, Queen Leonor de Aragão, and her foreign (the brothers, the *Infantes* of Aragon) and national allies (the count of Barcelos, Dom Afonso, his children and the archbishop of Lisbon, Dom Pedro de Noronha), the future King Afonso V made little use of what was instilled in him through this pedagogical activity of his guardian uncle.

This ideal of a ruler takes its roots in the utopia developed by the great classical authors such as Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca, as well as the major holy books. Once again, the book *Livro da Virtuosa Benfeitoria*¹ mirrors this ideal step by step through constant and recurring citations of those authors.

Although scattered throughout the work, references to the Classical Antiquity period are particularly emphasised in Chapter XXII of Book II with an inalienable cultural identity inheritance.

Thus, the Republic of the Wise, advocated by Plato², is also adopted by the treatise in question: “so the world can be called blessed and glorious when the wise men reign, so that wisdom and royal power be joined in one person, and prince and wise man be only one thing”³.

That classical heritage is made explicit through the reference to the “knowledge the ancient people left for the governance of the world”⁴, which points to university education as the “apple of the eye” of the community: “ordering a solemn university in which the wisemen, which are the apple of the eye of the community, living in scholastic exercises, consider all things for their arts”⁵.

In this context, Egypt, Greece and Rome are cited as examples of wisdom: Egypt, for its wisemen; Greece, for its philosophy; Rome, which conquered lands “for studious

¹ Infante D. Pedro, Frei J. Verba, *Livro da Vertuosa Benfeytoria*, critical edition by Adelino Calado, Coimbra, Universidade de Coimbra, 1994.

²Cf. *República*, 427^a-428^a.

³ Infante D. Pedro, Frei J. Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁴ *Id., Ib.*

⁵ *Id., ib.*

senators”⁶. France and England are esteemed because of the universities of Paris and Oxford⁷.

Law and Justice are, after wisdom, the most important characteristics of the cultural legacy of the Classical Antiquity period.

Law shortens the distance between the lords and the people, reducing the inequality between them: “the inequality between the lord and the people is not only an outrage, but cannot yet be cured without great pain. However, inequality must be avoided to begin with”⁸. As a natural guardian of his people, the prince should not use “cruelty with those who have given their sword to defend him but, feeling the pain of the community, should be compassionate with the members who support him”⁹. This way, a true communion of solidarity between the ruling elite and the servant people is advocated.

Justice implies the punishment of the wicked, namely the “general stealers of the land”¹⁰. The search for Justice seeks, particularly, to defend the small, as a result of compensation against the injuries done to the common people, as is proclaimed, by citing Cicero:

And, as proof that this justice is necessary, there is a sentence from Tully (Cicero) that says that, the same way the natural body would weaken if every member took for itself the virtue which the other leans on, so too the people shall perish and the union of men if that which ones use for support, others steal for themselves. Therefore, to defend this, justice is necessary.¹¹.

However, the enforcement of Justice should not be excessively rigorous, in an appeal for balance and mercy: “the torment should not be greater than the guilt, but controlling their wrath, those who reign should judge solely that which is beneficial to the moral body”¹².

Wisdom, Law and Justice, pillars of classical cultural heritage, do not invalidate a modern opening to the outside, although the priority is on honouring the best of one’s compatriots: “mainly, we will honour our own rather than outsiders, being equal among

⁶ *Id., ib.*

⁷ *Cf. Id., ib.*

⁸ *Id., ib.*, p. 135.

⁹ *Id., ib.*

¹⁰ *Id., ib.*, p. 136.

¹¹ *Id., ib.*

¹² *Id., ib.*

states, because those who do not have ordinances towards their own cannot be virtuous towards others”¹³.

The excellence of liberalness, the foundation of *virtuosa benfeitoria*, finds in the classics one of its basic vectors.

The Common Good is the essential objective of government action, as can be cited from Aristotle's *Politics*¹⁴. The metaphors of the “string” and the “wall”, associated with the prince, from Book I of *De Clementia*, by Seneca, illustrate the narrowing of civic relations between the governors and the governed: “The prince is the string that ties the people together, he is the wall behind which the subjects are protected and the spirit that defends them”¹⁵.

The allegory of the three maidens, sisters, always young, beautiful and pure, already outlined by the “ancient poets”, is the embodiment of benefit without corruption, boredom or fatigue, with persevering liberalness: “the first sister represents the bestower and the second sister shows us the one who should show gratitude and the third shows us the one who receives the benefit or the gratitude”¹⁶. Their everlasting youth “shows that the liberal heart should never arbor distress and the one who shows gratitude always in his actions should avoid fatigue”¹⁷. Their virginal state shows us that “benefits should be without corruption”¹⁸. Their beauty makes us understand that “doing good [...] gives the receiver more joy” and the benefit should “be done for things which are lasting to those who have them”¹⁹. The costume, made by their own hands, signifies that “the true benefit, that which is ours, should be bestowed and not that which is someone else’s”²⁰. The “precious splendour of the clothing [...] teaches us that the benefits want to be kept, of which, assuming the giver wants to keep quiet as he should, the receiver is obliged to speak where he thinks he is compliant”²¹.

In turn, the book *Livro da Virtuosa Benfeitoria* is a repository of biblical citations from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In this way, the repository

¹³ *Id., ib.*

¹⁴ Cf. *Id., ib.*, p. 101.

¹⁵ *Id., ib.*, p. 103.

¹⁶ *Id., ib.*, p. 52.

¹⁷ *Id., ib.*, p. 53.

¹⁸ *Id., ib.*

¹⁹ *Id., ib.*

²⁰ *Id., ib.*

²¹ *Id., ib.*

represents, alongside Classical Culture, one of the pillars of knowledge and human values of the life of the Infante Dom Pedro de Avis (1392-1449).

The Bible, seen as a prophetic source of divine inspiration, thus forms the base of the enlightened and solid faith of the Infante, shaping his view of the world (worldview) and of men (anthropology). At the root of this faith is, without a doubt, the pedagogical action of his mother, Queen Philippa of Lancaster, faithful to the Sarum rite which she brought from England, her native country.

God's act of creation, the Christ-centered redemption and the charismatic action of the Holy Spirit provided structure to the book *Livro da Virtuosa Benfeitoria*, in which devotion to the Virgin Mary also has a prominent place.

The Christian utopia, imbibed from both the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the light that illuminates all of the Infante's pedagogical action.

In the Old Testament, the promise of salvation is the most important fact of this utopia, as revealed from the *Book of Genesis* (the covenant with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) to the *Book of Psalms* and other books of wisdom and prophecy, with particular emphasis on the prophet Isaiah.

In the New Testament, the exemplary figure of Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the whole promise of salvation. Indeed, the proclamation of the Gospel, announcing the good news of the liberation of the poor and the oppressed, accompanied by the miraculous signs through which he liberated blind, deaf, mute and lame people, as well as others plagued by different afflictions and even the dead, is the most evident sign of this act of liberation. A new world emerges through the actions of Jesus Christ.

2. The Regent Infante: his political action

The Infante's political action began long before he was regent of the kingdom. Already in his writings and translations, he structured the basic ideas of his utopian vision of governance, absolutely inseparable from his way of seeing the world, life and his Christian faith. He had consolidated them in his long journey through European countries and in the hard battles he fought against the fearsome Ottoman Turks, in the two full years he served the Emperor of Germany and King of Hungary, Sigismund (March 1426-March 1428). He realized the righteous path he had chosen to follow when visiting the cities of

the Italian Peninsula, especially rich and exotic Venice²², the undisputed lady of long distance trade in the Eastern Mediterranean, and humanistic Florence²³. Back in the kingdom, he continued to give advice in response to the requests from his dear brother Duarte²⁴, while still an *Infante*, at the same time applying this advice with great success in the Duchy of Coimbra, which, under his rule, experienced an era of great economic prosperity and social harmony²⁵. It was the happiest and most fruitful period of the *Infante*'s life, from which he was forced to part, while delaying as much as possible the acceptance of the rule of the kingdom, after the unexpected and premature death of dear brother Duarte, insisting on not accepting it until after the holding of the *cortes* of Lisbon in 1439. However, he knew well it was inevitable, an imposition of his conscience, not only in its coherence, which he always sought to have, between ideology and life, but also in the deep love for his land, country and mother, which he had spoken about in his book *Livro da Vertuosa Benfeytoria*. With Dom Duarte alive and King, everything would have been perfect. He was a very experienced and well-prepared ruler and was guided by the same ideals as the *Infante* himself, through his education and by choice. If that had been the case, he would have been able to continue his serene and effective action in his beloved duchy, among his people, who also loved him, living in absolute familial harmony and guiding his children in life and watching them grow. He passed on to them his demanding and righteous character, his strict and stoic sense of duty, the aspiration to a full spiritual and Christian life, in the acceptance of the great virtues proclaimed by the classical authors and by Christianity, his motto being *Desir* (Desire).

However, the year 1438, with the death of King Duarte, shook his life to the core²⁶. The disastrous marriage to Dona Leonor of Aragon, a tremendous mistake of Dom João I, without the well-intentioned king having the slightest suspicion, placed Portugal in the

²² A special source of information about Venice is the work of Júlio Gonçalves, *O Infante D. Pedro, as "Sete Partidas" e a Gênese dos Descobrimentos*, Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955.

²³ For the whole of his European trip see Francis M. Rogers, *The Travels of the Infante Dom Pedro of Portugal*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-Massachusetts, 1961.

²⁴ *O Livro dos Conselhos de El-Rei D. Duarte (Livro da Cartuxa)*, diplomatic edition and transcription by João Alves Dias, Lisbon, Editorial Estampa, 1982, which includes several of these pieces of advice given by Dom Pedro to his brother.

²⁵ Cf. Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho, "O Infante D. Pedro, Duque de Coimbra", in *Biblos*, Vol. LXIX (1993), *Actas do Congresso Comemorativo do 6º Centenário do Infante D. Pedro*, University of Coimbra, from 25 to 27 November 1992, pp. 15-57.

²⁶ On the death of Dom Duarte, the regency shared with Leonor of Aragon and the regency *in solido* of Dom Pedro, see Rui de Pina, *Chronica do Senhor Rey D. Affonso V, in Crónicas de Rui de Pina*, Tesouros da Literatura e da História, Porto, Lello & Irmão Editores, 1977, pp. 588-758.

direct line of sight of the insatiable *Infantes* of Aragon²⁷, of which Leonor was the youngest sister. Since the father, Fernando of Trastámara, from Antequera (due to the battle he won against the moors of Granada and on which all his powerful political propaganda was based), being the second son of Juan I of Castile (defeated at Aljubarrota), had become king of Aragon through a very clear process of games of influence, in 1412, the new line of Trastámaras dreamed of taking over all the Iberian kingdoms. It is a fact recognized by contemporary Spanish historians, even those from the nationalist period of General Francisco Franco. Therefore, the sons, the *Infantes* of Aragon (who had no Aragonese characteristics, since they always remained structurally Castilian), inherited from Fernando I that same voracious obstinacy of Iberian domination. Because it was a very risky project, they worked out cooperation involving clan/lineage interests amongst themselves, with the same objective in mind. The same historians agree that if they had always remained united (which did not happen), they would have accomplished their dream of Iberian hegemony. However, despite political coups, intrigues and even crimes, they never managed to dominate either Castile or Portugal. In Castile, they were met with the strong resistance of the constable and master of Santiago, Dom Álvaro de Luna²⁸; in Portugal, with the identical opposition of the Infante-Regent Dom Pedro. The *Infantes* of Aragon launched on both of them, out of revenge and strategy, the most violent attacks on their integrity, their intelligence and on the exceptional governing qualities that they both had, ending up eliminating them. First Dom Pedro, in the fields of Alfarrobeira, on 20 May 1449 and, later, submitting Dom Álvaro to a violent and public death, at the beginning of June 1453. The hatred they had for Dom Pedro was such, as confirmed by a letter from Alfonso V to an ambassador of

²⁷ On this important period in the history of Spain, fundamental to the correct understanding of political events in Portugal, see some of the authors we have studied, namely: Andrés Giménez y Soler (1869-1938), archivist of the Crown of Aragon and dean of the University of Zaragoza, “Retrato Histórico de Alfonso V de Aragón”, tripartite study published in *Revista Aragonesa*, book 1, Barcelona, 1907, pp. 97-102; 155-160 and 359-361. See, also, *Historia de España*, Dir. Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1993, Vol. XV, *Los Trastámaras de Castilla y Aragón en el Siglo XV*, entirely consisting of the studies of Luis Suárez Fernández (University of Valladolid), especially about Castile (1407-1474), pp. 3-318; Ángel Canellas López (University of Zaragoza), “El Reino de Aragón en el Siglo XV (1410-1479)”, pp. 323-594 and Jaime Vicens Vives (University of Barcelona), “Los Trastámaras y Cataluña (1410-1479)”, pp. 599-785. See, also, Julio Valderón Baroque, *Los Trastámaras. El Triunfo de una Dinastía Bastarda*, Temas de Hoy. Historia, Madrid, 2001, and Pedro Andrés Porras Arboledas, *Juan II, Rey de Castilla y León (1406-1454)*, Ediciones Trea, Gijón, 2009, and Eduardo Manzano Moreno, *Épocas Medievales, in Historia de España*, Dir. Josep Fontana and Ramón Villares, Vol. 2, Barcelona, Crítica/Marcial Pons, 2010. On the history of Navarre in the 15th century, see Georges Desdevises du Dezert, *Don Carlos de Aragón, Príncipe de Viana. Estudio sobre la España del Norte en el Siglo XV*, Gobierno de Navarra, 1999.

²⁸ See *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna, Condestable de Castilla, Maestre de Santiago*, edition and study by Juan de Mata Carriazo (from the chronicle of Gonzalo Chacón, loyal servant of Dom Álvaro), Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1940.

his sent to Dom Afonso V, in Portugal²⁹, that they fiercely persecuted almost all of the *Infante*'s children, Dona Filipa being the only one who escaped (because she was protected by the nuns of the Monastery of Odivelas, where her paternal grandmother had died) and the youngest, Dona Catarina, who died as a child, already after her father's death. All the other brothers, despite the prominence they reached through their upbringing and the influence of their aunt Isabel, Duchess of Burgundy, died with strong suspicions of poisoning.

In fact, it is impossible to penetrate the considerable complexity that surrounded the regency of the *Infante* without following very closely the events that happened in Castile and the other Iberian kingdoms. Dom Pedro had the misfortune of taking on the government of the kingdom exactly at the moment when the *Infantes* of Aragon reached the height of their dominion in Castile, more exactly from 1438-39 to 1445. Through subversive action, at the forefront of the League of Nobles (of which they were the true bosses and promoters) they were successful in cornering the legitimate king, Juan II, and imposing on him their will, reducing him to a mere decorative figure, completely devoid of political power. Not satisfied with that, on 9 July 1443 the Infante Juan of Trastámara managed to imprison the king and keep him under tight vigilance for eleven long months until the royal nobles, through a ploy simulating a hunting trip, were able to free the King in June 1444. But it was not only in Castile that his subversive action was felt. The same Infante Dom Juan had married Blanca of Navarre in May 1419 and was, therefore, only king-consort. Quite opportunely, the queen died in 1441, returning from a pilgrimage, in a small and insignificant village of Castile, just before entering the territory of her Navarre, where she would have been safe. After her supposed will was opened and read (document forgers were common in the anarchy which characterised Castile) in it a very

²⁹ On 3 February 1451, Alfons V of Aragon wrote in a memo to Vasco de Gouvea, his adviser and ambassador to Dom Afonso V, that he was to propose to the Portuguese king the marriage of one of the king's sisters to the duke of Clèves, nephew of the powerful Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. This greatly pleased Alfons V, attempting in this way to prevent Dona Isabel, the duchess, Infante Dom Pedro's dear sister, from marrying him off to Dona Beatriz, the *Infante*'s daughter, which she had taken in and into her court with two of the girl's brothers after the death of their father. Not happy with that, he ended up expressly declaring that, *considering that the infante Dom Pedro's offspring is the enemy and hateful towards the kings [of Aragon and Navarre, Infantes of Aragon] any way to glorify them should be forcefully stopped, and because of this the servant Vasco warns the king of Portugal to keep from revealing anything of this business to the Queen, his wife, so she does not warn her aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy. In Monumenta Henricina, Vol. XI (1451-1454), Doc. 7, p. 12.* Thus the Infants of Aragon governed, and schemed. In this case, Alfonso V accomplished nothing and Dona Beatriz married Adolfo of Ravenstein, duke of Clèves, being very respected and loved, both for her thorough upbringing, and for her kindness and sweetness. However, she too was poisoned and died young. Who could have been the people responsible for her poisoning? It is very easy to draw conclusions.

strange clause was found which gave Juan the chance to remain king... He immediately usurped the throne from his eldest son, Carlos of Viana, who at the time was about twenty years of age, an exceptionally cultured prince, legitimate heir of queen Blanca and grandson of Carlos III, the Noble, who for his grandson and successor had created the principality of Viana. Such were the methods used by the Infantes of Aragon.

In Portugal, the sequence of the facts was very similar, proving, through that similarity, the very likely common origin, that of the same mentors. Dom Duarte also died, presumably from the plague, of which, strangely, he was the only victim: not even the queen, who was with him permanently, in her role of “very faithful and loving wife”, was infected, even though she was pregnant and therefore more fragile due to that pregnancy. She knew only too well why she was safe... At the same time, the king's body was hurriedly placed in a tomb and immediately taken to be buried in the Monastery of Batalha, a hurry never seen before upon the death of a Portuguese king. A strange death and just as timely: King Duarte died at the beginning of September 1438. In January 1439, just four months later, Dom Afonso V completed seven years of age, the age at which his upbringing would be handed over exclusively to his father, with his mother losing the preponderance which she had had in his upbringing. However, as if that were not enough, soon an amazing and uncanny will was opened and read, which was attributed to the late king, who, because he was dead, obviously could not deny it. The queen, *Infanta* of Aragon, was declared regent in absolute, *in solido*, with all the resulting powers: total governance, with the administration of the treasury, justice and defence of the kingdom, in addition to the raising of the children - in particular, the king. However, the Portuguese were not governed by the coups of Castile, so voices soon appeared calling out the legality of the will, as it was not for the king to choose the regent, but for the *cortes*... It was all very strange and in no way reflected the government, nor the personality of the prudent king Duarte, the main person responsible for the mythification of his father's governance. How could he have made such a will, handing over the kingdom to the governance of a foreign woman, never mind who her brothers were?

It was this environment of coups and constant intrigues, deceptions and boycotts of an effective and legitimate government, that the *Infante* Dom Pedro had to face and overcome³⁰. On the other hand, it was very evident that in Portugal there were also those

³⁰ Even after Dom Pedro left the regency, of Perpignan, on 5 December 1448, Dona Maria, wife and lieutenant of Alfonso V of Aragon, wrote an insidious letter, for it was indeed dishonest and deceptive, to her adviser and treasurer, Dom Galcerán Olivier, to widely spread the rumor, which she acknowledged to

who adhered to the style of action of the *Infantes* of Aragon, marvelling at their power, anesthetized by their powerful propaganda, in which they saw the effective means of subverting the legitimate order of the *Infantes* de Avis, to avenge their frustrated ambitions and their thirst for Castilian power, without the hassle of going up against laws or popular will, as manifested in the *cortes*. The *Infantes* of Aragon's style of political action was always guided by the principle of a *fait accompli* policy with regard to the legality of laws. Promoters and political leaders of this faction in Portugal were Dom Afonso, count of Barcelos (later made 1st Duke of Bragança, precisely by Infante-Regent Dom Pedro), who was Dom João I's bastard and firstborn, D. Afonso's eldest son, count of Ourem, the hated archbishop of Lisbon, Dom Pedro de Noronha (Dom Afonso's brother-in-law and similarly from a bastard branch of Enrique II of Castile) and several other nobles of the kingdom, namely the nobles from the Beira. They were faithful allies of the interests and subversive action of the *Infantes* of Aragon in Portugal, thus undisputed supporters of the Queen's party.

It was then, in this context of permanent unrest in which powerful forces from abroad joined the Portuguese accomplices, that the *Infante* was forced to govern the kingdom, when everything or almost everything, permanently ran away from his control and his political guidance. Even so, with great prudence and clarity, never losing the notion of his conception of a just government, he tried to continue and deepen the policies his father and brother had upholden, continuously travelling the kingdom, making direct contact with the people, their complaints and their desires, realizing one of the great dreams of his predecessors, the codification and restructuring of the dispersed and so often contradictory laws of the kingdom, the *Ordenações Afonsinas*, which constituted the basis of Portuguese Law until liberalism. He vigorously defended the precious and essential national independence, going as far as sending military reinforcements to the Castilian king, who asked for them, making possible, in 1445, the defeat of Olmedo, which resulted in the expulsion of the *Infantes* of Aragon from Castile. He relaunched the economy, due to the support given to the productive classes, especially in the urban areas of Lisbon and Oporto, but without ever forgetting to grace the nobility, while encouraging

be false, that Dom Pedro had entered Castile with soldiers, causing a great division between the kings of Castile and Portugal: [...] *the fact is that the infante Dom Pedro of Portugal entered Castile and a great division followed between the king of Castile and the king of Portugal. All of this is said without truth [...] so you may sow it where you see fit [...] but be careful so you may tell us what has been said. In Op. cit. Vol. IX (1445-1448), Doc. 210, p. 344.*

navigation and oceanic discoveries³¹. He also populated and intelligently developed the island of São Miguel/Azores and laid the foundations for a new and more open university, the *Estudos Gerais de Coimbra* (the General Studies of Coimbra), which sought closer orientation with the universities of Oxford and Paris, as opposed to the old-fashioned and closed off university of Lisbon. He was a tireless patron when it came to supporting the arts, from architecture to sculpture and painting. However, his greatest and undisputed legacy to the country was the guarantee of its independence, in the face of the very powerful and treacherous attempt to neutralize it and incorporate it in a single Iberian block, under the tyrannical rule of the *Infantes* of Aragon.

Controlling his whole life, personal, familial and political, the clear and extremely demanding course of ethics and the Christian religion, which he fully and stoically accepted until his last moment of life, when a large arrow, most likely poisoned, killed him at Alfarrobeira. Not a battle, as has been said, but a trap, where the *Infante* found a royal army of about thirty thousand men³², completely surpassing Portugal's capacity to mobilize soldiers, but made possible through the military cooperation and friendship agreement that Dom Afonso V had established with his uncles, the *Infantes* of Aragon, Alfonso V and Juan, a few months before Alfarrobeira³³. In those green fields of May, transformed into fields of confrontation and death, on a Tuesday morning, Dom Pedro did not want to follow the advice that his people were giving him to escape, to save himself. Rather, he dismounted and fought on foot amongst his companions, to the end.

³¹ See Alfredo Pinheiro Marques, *A Maldição da Memória do Infante Dom Pedro e as Origens dos Descobrimientos Portugueses*, Figueira da Foz, Centro de Estudos do Mar (CEMAR), 1994, a major milestone in the defence of dignifying the *Infante*'s memory, especially in the areas of cartography and Portuguese Discoveries, having been a disciple and having worked directly with Prof. Luís de Albuquerque. He is, also, a scholar of the multiple facets of the administration of Dom João II, who was the grandson, avenger and successor of the *Infante* Dom Pedro's legacy.

³² Indeed, through the authorisation that Alfonso V handed to his brother Juan, dated 27 January 1449, less than four months before the tragedy of Alfarrobeira (20 May of the same year), we know that Dom Afonso V, *after taking on the reigns of the kingdom, wishes to join and be on good terms with us* [the *Infantes* of Aragon Alfonso V and Juan], reason why Alfonso V handed him his authorisation, so that Juan could *deal, practice and appoint leagues, intelligences and confederations between us and the illustrious king of Portugal [...] with the conditions and for as long as the king of Portugal agrees, because the help each one demands of the other will come at a cost*, in *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. X (1449-1451), Doc. 5, pp. 8.9. This aid was mainly aimed at the war with Castile, which did not mean that it was limited to it, since the greatest enemies of the *Infantes* of Aragon in the Iberian Peninsula were Dom Álvaro de Luna and *Infante* Dom Pedro, combining their forces against the hegemonic pressure of the two surviving brothers, in defence of the independence and monarchy of the two countries. In fact, it was Dom Afonso V himself who, in a letter addressed to the Municipality of Porto, declares that it **is his purpose to destroy *Infante* Dom Pedro and surpass him**, in *Id., ib.*, Doc. 45, 19 April 1449, p. 55.

³³ Cf. Rui de Pina, *Op. cit.*, p. 747.

What happened at Alfarrobeira has also been poorly told, requiring a new analysis, less prejudiced and more enlightened.

In the air, when the *Infante* fell, soon followed by his ever-present *brother*, Álvaro Vaz de Almada, resounded the absolute fidelity to his *Desir* (desire), of coherence and search for spiritual wholeness, his profound and deep-rooted utopia, according to which he always lived and for which he, fighting on foot among his companions, died.

Conclusion

We have seen the *Infante* Dom Pedro's pedagogical and political action, especially as regent. It was a remarkable and exemplary action, praiseworthy at all levels throughout Portugal's national history.

Unfortunately for Portugal, the major of D. João I's children had too tragic and short lives (a theme which needs a much greater depth). The *Infante* Dom Pedro was one of them. After his death in the Alfarrobeira fields, Portugal interrupted this promising utopia during Afonso V's long rule as he was totally dominated by the national great nobles. The Avis utopia was only recovered by the *Infante* Dom Pedro's grandson, great king João II, who totally assumed his grandfather's political action. However, unfortunately for the country, his reign lasted only fourteen years and he died too early as well, at the age of forty, in 1495, also with strong signs of having been poisoned.