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FAMILY ARCHIVES AND
HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ALMADA E LENCASTRE BASTOS ARCHIVE FOR THE STUDY OF PORTUGUESE MEDIEVAL HISTORY

ABSTRACT: The Almada e Lencastre Bastos archive, deposited in the National Library of Portugal since 1974, contains thousands of documents produced, received, and preserved by a few local, middle-rank, late medieval and modern elite families, between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries. The study of this archive allows us to trace their social paths and to understand their attitudes towards the creation and management of family archives. It also intends to reflect on how these families were themselves projected in their archives and on the relevance and the contributions that the study of similar archives can offer to historiography dedicated to late medieval and modern Portuguese elites.

Keywords: archives; families; elites; Porto

RESUMO: O Arquivo Almada e Lencastre Bastos, que se encontra depositado na Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal desde 1974, é composto por milhares de documentos produzidos, recebidos e preservados por algumas famílias das elites tardo-medievais e modernas entre os séculos XIV e XX. O estudo deste arquivo permite-nos, por um lado, traçar os seus percursos sociais e, por outro, tentar compreender as suas atitudes face à constituição e gestão dos arquivos familiares. Pretende-se ainda refletir sobre como estas famílias se projectam nos seus arquivos e no interesse e contributo que o estudo deste tipo de arquivos pode trazer para a escrita da história das elites tardo medieval e modernas portuguesas.

Palavras-chave: arquivos; famílias; elites; Porto

Introduction

Among the thousands of documents contained in the Almada e Lencastre Bastos archive (ALB), produced and preserved by several family groups

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between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries and lately deposited in the National Library of Portugal, we chose to focus on those belonging to a group of late medieval families. This allowed me, on one hand, to trace their social pathways and, on the other, to try to understand their attitudes regarding the establishment and operation of family archives, the meanings and uses assigned to their role within the house(s), and the construction of their memory and identity. My final goal is to reflect on the relevance and contributions that the study of this type of archives can provide for the history of Portuguese pre-modern elites.

The Almada e Lencastre Bastos archive — custodial history

The Almada e Lencastre Bastos archive, deposited in the National Library of Portugal since 1974, spans the period between the fourteenth and the twentieth centuries. It is named after its last owner, João de Almada e Lencastre Bastos, who sold it to the Portuguese state. This fonds includes the registries of two nineteenth-century noble houses: the viscounts of Vila Nova de Souto d'el Rei, a title first held by Francisco de Almada e Mendonça² and later passed on to his nephew, Antonio José de Almada e Melo, and his descendants, until the fourth viscount³; and the renewed second title of count of Feira⁴. In 1827, Miguel Pereira Forjaz Coutinho⁵, who had received the title of count of Feira in 1820⁶, passed on to his sister, Maria Joana da Câmara Forjaz Coutinho, the entirety of the family estate and archive. The latter was

² Cousin of Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo, marquis of Pombal. SILVA, 1917: 146-152; PINTO, 2012: 309.

³ ZÚQUETE, 1989: 516-517.

⁴ Miguel Pereira Forjaz Coutinho was appointed count of Feira on 13th May 1820 by João VI. PINTO, 2012: 310.

⁵ FUENTE, 2011.

⁶ The first representation of the title of count of Feira ended with the death, in 1700, of Fernando Forjaz Pereira Pimentel de Meneses e Silva, with no descendants. His relatives eventually tried to recover the title, which led to a long process that included, among other events, the forging of several documents that attempted to justify the claim to the title. PINTO, 2012: 310-311; CONCEIÇÃO, 1720.

collected in the registry of Souto del Rei, due to the lady's marriage with the third viscount, João José Francisco de Almada Velho e Lencastre.

The ALB remained with the Almada e Lencastre family until 1957, when Luís Silveira, the Supervisor of Portuguese Libraries and Archives, learned that João Almada de Lencastre Bastos intended to sell his family archive⁷. By order of the Director of Education and Fine Arts, a commission was created to appraise and to purchase the collection. Due to the owner's illness and subsequent death, the evaluation process was interrupted in September 1958⁸ and resumed some months later, by request of the widow. With the death of João Almada e Lencastre Bastos, his cousin, Maria José de Almada e Lencastre Sousa Teles, inherited a part of the archive.

In July 1959, the commission presented the Directorate of Libraries and Archives with a recommendation for the acquisition of the ALB, and reported that it was disorganized and split over three locations: Avenida de Roma⁹, Encarnação¹⁰, and the Palacete de Santo Amaro¹¹. Two years later, Maria José de Almada e Lencastre de Sousa Teles asked the Torre do Tombo for permission to deposit her share of the documentation, explaining that she was frequently away from Lisbon and feared for its preservation.

I am not aware of any further developments until 1974. In January that year, the National Library was authorized to purchase the ALB and to initiate preparatory work for the archive's reception¹². The documents belonging to Maria José de Almada Teles were transferred from the Torre do Tombo to the National Library, along with those in the other owners' homes¹³.

⁷ ANTT, Instituto Superior das Bibliotecas e Arquivos, cx. 329, proc. 274.

⁸ ANTT, Arquivo do Arquivo, nr 331, cx. 146, proc. 91 — "Aquisição do Arquivo Lencastre Bastos".

⁹ The home of João de Almada e Lencastre Bastos. From now on, this series, named "Avenida de Roma", will be referred to as "Roma".

¹⁰ Recolhimento da Encarnação, the home of Maria José de Almada e Lencastre de Sousa Teles, João de Almada e Lencastre Bastos' cousin. This series will be referred to as "ANTT".

¹¹ The home of Isabel Teresa de Jesus e Melo, João de Almada e Lencastre Bastos' aunt. From now on, this series, named "Encarnação", will be referred to as "Enc.".

¹² Verification of bundles, packaging, and transportation.

¹³ BNP, "Processo compra Almada Lencastre Basto", doc. n. n.. The part belonging to Isabel Teresa de Jesus, deceased in 1970, was collected from the Recolhimento da Encarnação and not from Santo Amaro. I believe that after the death of Isabel Teresa de Jesus, who left no direct descendants, the documents were inherited by her niece Maria José de

The archive was recently organized by librarians at the National Library, so as to allow researchers to access it. However, due to resource scarcity¹⁴, the only tasks completed were unpacking the bundles, putting them in new file folders (individually, only in boxes with the ANTT references) and boxes, and assigning new references to bundles that are summarily described in the consignment notes.

The ALB's finding aids include the (very generic) listing of bundles belonging to Maria José de Almada Teles, Isabel de Melo¹⁵, and João Almada e Lencastre Bastos; a preliminary catalogue, prepared and published by Pedro Pinto¹⁶, which only covered the first six boxes of the ANTT series and which I completed during 2016, in the context of an ongoing doctoral thesis; and, finally, four mid-nineteenth century inventories — two of which were written by the fourth viscount of Vila Nova de Souto del Rei, António José de Almada Melo Velho de Lencastre, between 1835¹⁷ and 1836¹⁸, and two others (“original”¹⁹ and reformed²⁰), dated from around 1825, belonging to the count of Feira registry²¹. When analyzing the documents it is plain that these two registries, even though they were kept by the same family since 1827, used different reference numbers and different storage systems. The production of inventories was a result of the organization and reorganization of numerous noble family registries, especially since the mid-eighteenth century and

Almada e Lencastre Teles, who died in 1992 and possibly sold it together with her own share. This hypothesis needs confirmation.

¹⁴ MARTINS; SILVA; FERREIRA, 2012: 526. The authors mention the lack of investment in the documental description of family archives.

¹⁵ ANTT, Arquivo do Arquivo, nr 331, cx. 146, proc. 91 — “Aquisição do Arquivo Lencastre Bastos”.

¹⁶ PINTO, 2012: 307-341.

¹⁷ BNP, ALB, Roma, pac. 116, cx. 116, liv. 192.

¹⁸ BNP, ALB, Enc., pac. 40, cx. 40, liv. 21.

¹⁹ BNP, ALB, Enc., pac. 27, cx. 27I, liv. h (vol. 1) and liv. b (vol. 2), the third volume was not found.

²⁰ BNP, ALB, Roma, pac. 111, cx. 111A, nr 178, “Índice antigo da casa dos Condes da Feira”, c. 1822.

²¹ The inventories of 1835 and 1836, as well as the one relating to the 1821 Freiriz and Penegate *morgadio*, were studied and presented at the exhibition of the “Rethinking the archive the in pre-modern Europe: family archives and their inventories from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century” research project (ref. EXPL/EPH-HIS/0178/2013), whose catalogue was published in 2015. GAGO, 2015: 83-88, 150, 162-163.

until the late nineteenth century. As Abel Rodrigues and Armando Malheiro da Silva²² stated, this was largely due to the process of restructuring noble families which had begun in the middle of the sixteenth century with the creation of entailed property and in the social and political context brought by the Portuguese *Restauração*²³. This reorganization of registries reached its final stage with the profound political, economic, and social changes experienced by the holding families after the abolition of the entails; the documents became useless, neglected, and many were sold²⁴.

The importance of the ALB for the study of Portuguese medieval history

As part of doctoral research work, I conducted a documental survey up until the year 1600, which allowed me to identify several producer/accumulator families, their elements and relationships, to establish family trees, and to determine their geographical implementation. The information was partly collected in the inventory, on the simple document level, and later completed with the first bibliographical survey. At this stage, one of the initial tasks was to determine and record the name of each family and then proceed to the selection and distribution of documents in the ALB pertaining to these families and individuals. As such, and up until 1600, we identified the following producer/accumulator families:

²² Among others, the house of Bragança, the counts of Povolide, the house of Melo, and the viscounts of Vila Nova de Cerveira. RODRIGUES; SILVA, 2012: 614-617; ROSA, 2009: 41-42; ROSA, 2016: 89-132.

²³ RODRIGUES; SILVA, 2012: 614. In 1580-1581, Felipe II of Spain, claiming the throne after the death of the Portuguese king Sebastião in 1578 at the Alcácer Quibir battle, conquered Portugal and acquired its empire. In December 1640 a palace coup in support of the duke of Bragança and his acclamation as king João IV restored the Portuguese monarchy, ending 60 years of rule by the Spanish kings. From 1641 to 1668 the two nations were at war, with Spain seeking to isolate Portugal militarily and diplomatically and Portugal hoping to find the resources to maintain its independence through political alliances and colonial income.

²⁴ The promulgation of the 19th May 1863 law gave the final blow on the entail system, by extinguishing the entails, considered as promoters of social inequality and an obstacle to the economic development of the country. ESTEVES, 2008: 60-97.

Family	Entail and foundation date	Location
Ferraz Barreto	Isabel Ferraz, <i>morgadio</i> , c. 1532; Catarina Ferraz, chapel, 1573	Freiriz, Porto
Magalhães	Manuel de Magalhães, <i>morgadio</i> , 1560	Barca, Nóbrega, Ponte de Lima
Carvalho	Vasco Lourenço, <i>morgadio</i> , 1454; Diogo Lopes de Carvalho, <i>morgadio</i> , 1532	Guimarães
Valadares	Álvaro Valadares, <i>morgadio</i> , 1592; Maria Vieira, chapel, 1538; Ana de Azeredo, entail, 1575	Porto
Carneiro	Maria Carneiro, <i>morgadio</i> , 1542; Ana Carneiro, <i>morgadio</i> , 1592	Porto
Cunha ²⁵	Pero Vaz da Praça, chapel, 1500	Monção
Ribeiro	Inês Vasques, <i>morgadio</i> , 1458	Canidelo, Porto
Machucho	António Machucho, chapel, 1538	Porto
Dantas	n/a	Galiza
Pacheco	n/a	Lisboa
Ferreira	Estevão Ferreira and Mor Martins, chapel at S. Simão da Junqueira, 1431	Fajozes, Porto
Almada	Catarina Lopes, chapel, 1438; Luís de Almada, <i>morgadio</i> , 1512?; Brites de Melo, <i>morgadio</i> , 1565	Lisboa
Delgado	n/a	Açores, Porto
Resende	n/a	Coimbra
Pereira	n/a	Aveiro, Lisboa, other
Lobo	Afonso Domingues and Maria Domingues, <i>morgadio</i> , 1378	Montemor-o-Novo
Faria	n/a	Palmela
Albuquerque	n/a	Lamego, Souto del Rei
Camões	Simão Vaz de Camões, chapel, c. 1550	Coimbra

After listing the families, I tried to find common features among them, so as to allow the reconstitution, analysis, and description of family information

²⁵ I have chosen to call this information system Cunha, after the family responsible for the *morgadio* created by Pero Vaz da Praça, or Pero Vaz, in May 1500. Pedro da Cunha married the daughter (Constança Soares) of the *morgadio*'s first administrator, Paio Rodrigues de Araújo, who was the founder's nephew. The surname Cunha was passed on to descendants until Maria Josefa de Lima da Cunha Velho married António José de Almada e Melo, in the mid-seventeenth century. These were the parents of the first Viscount of Vila Nova de Souto del Rei, Francisco de Almada e Mendonça.

systems (as many as the families represented by them). I also noticed that there were a number of families with identical traits: established entails no later than the first half of the sixteenth century; geographically located in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho province; belonged to the urban²⁶ or landed elites of the same region; and showed clear histories of social ascension. In fact, the trajectory of these families during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was characterized, in general terms, by upwards social mobility within social hierarchies, mostly supported by services rendered to the royal family (king, queen, and princes), by military service, and by administrative or bureaucratic service, both within the kingdom and in the overseas territories. More commonly, we find the first generations, from approximately 1450 to around 1550, serving the king (Pero Vaz da Praça, the Carvalho, or the Magalhães) or major noble houses, such as the dukes of Bragança, as squires or knights, in some cases taking on the responsibility for other military or administrative tasks. Concurrently, we see the progressive rise of the urban elites, composed of merchants and councilors from the city of Porto (Valadares, Carneiro, Machucho, and Ferraz Barreto). At the same time, these families invested their income in the acquisition of properties, almost always near the location of their homes or entails, and, finally, they married with other families of the same geographical area and similar social and economic status; this, with few exceptions, did not provide an immediate rise in the noble hierarchy, but nonetheless offered important increases to familial properties and wealth.

The documents of these families (Machucho, Valadares, Carneiro, Magalhães, Barreto, Carvalho, Cunha, Ribeiro) are the richest, most diverse, and most numerous in the ALB, and allow us to study the production, management, and uses of the archives belonging to elite families; in other words, they provide a window into the social practices of writing²⁷ and, consequently, the role of archives in the formation and consolidation of pre-modern families.

²⁶ From Porto, Monção, and Guimarães.

²⁷ See CHASTANG, 2006: 21-31, and GAMBERINI, 2008: 4 for a comprehensive view.

New and old actors

Carvalho, Ribeiro, Magalhães, Cunha, Valadares, Carneiro, Machucho. Who were they and what roles did they play?

The Carvalho family, originally from Guimarães, was started by Lopo Sanches de Sotomaior, a merchant, and continued by his son Diogo Lopes de Carvalho, a royal judge during the reigns of Manuel and João III, and daughter Brites Lopes de Carvalho, and her descendants — Gaspar de Carvalho and Luís Lopes de Carvalho. Diogo Lopes de Carvalho became the administrator of the chapel founded by Vasco Lourenço, a merchant in Guimarães and his great-uncle²⁸, later associated with the *morgadio* established by his nephew, which remained in the family until the extinction of the entails, half-way through the nineteenth century.

The Cunha family, on their part, took on the administration of the chapel created in 1500 by Pero Vaz da Praça, squire of the king, in Monção. He passed the responsibility to his nephew Paio Rodrigues de Araújo who then, later, handed it down to his daughter Constança Soares and her husband Pedro da Cunha, both members of the Cunha family, lords of Tábua.

Other families originated in Porto, such as the Valadares and the Carneiro, who served as town councilors (Fernão de Valadares, Diogo Carneiro); the Machucho (João Geraldês, accountant of king João I); the Ferraz and the Barreto (Fernão Nunes Barreto, *provedor (ombudsman)* for the Porto *Misericórdia* and husband of a granddaughter of Afonso Ferraz, town councilor); the Ribeiro (João Álvares Ribeiro, a nobleman from the house of king Afonso V and administrator of the chapel of Inês Vaz, his aunt), all of whom created entails before the second half of the sixteenth century.

Most of these elite families adopted the entail reproductive model, as Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro called it when he described their trajectories as paradigmatic, because they endowed the marrying daughters and maintained the expectations of inheritance for second-born sons, at least during the first half of the sixteenth century, a scenario that later changed²⁹. It should also be

²⁸ He was the uncle of his mother, Leonor Afonso.

²⁹ MONTEIRO, 2001: 19, 33; CUNHA; MONTEIRO, 2010a: 47-75.

pointed out that every one of these Porto families held important posts in the municipal government. They thus constituted an oligarchy whose members alternated while consolidating positions of power, a situation reinforced by the matrimonial alliances they established among them³⁰. This behavior has also been studied for Évora by Joaquim Serra³¹ and for Lisbon by Mário Farelo³², during the same time frame.

Another family, the Magalhães, came from a slightly different social background — they were lords of da Barca, where they had jurisdictional power and, in 1561, created a *morgadio*. The previously mentioned families from Porto started to converge on the Magalhães in the seventeenth century, a process that continued into the 1800s.

We can also highlight the Delgado (merchants from Porto and the Azores); the Pacheco (descendants of Duarte Pacheco Pereira³³); the Almada from Lisboa (also known as Almada from Olivais, administrators of the chapel of Catarina Lopes, created in 1498 and later annexed to a *morgadio* founded by Luís de Almada, in 1512); the Resende, related to the Inquisitor of Coimbra João de Resende; the Pereira from Lisboa, an illegitimate branch of the Pereira family, the counts of Feira, with whom they competed for the succession of the title, going so far as to forge documents in an attempt to justify the claim³⁴. We also find other small documental series related to the Faria, *alcaides* of Palmela; the Lobo, administrators of the Afonso and Maria Domingues chapel in Montemor-o-Novo; and the Camões, also from Coimbra. These last three families, however, have little documental expression.

The study of the production, record management, and social writing practices of these families³⁵, together with the reflection on the role of archives in their formation and consolidation, allows us to conclude that the production of written records and recordkeeping³⁶ were common practices; given that

³⁰ Some of them endogamous. See BRITO, 1997: 417-418; COSTA, 1993: 99-100.

³¹ SERRA, 2015: 1-37, 360-364.

³² FARELO, 2008.

³³ CARVALHO; PINTO, 2012.

³⁴ CONCEIÇÃO, 1720; FREIRE, 1917-1918: 754-760.

³⁵ CHASTANG, 2006: 21-31; GAMBERINI, 2008: 4.

³⁶ ROSA, 2017: 547-586.

most of these families were connected with municipal or royal administrations, they were well aware of the probative, administrative, and memorial value³⁷ of records. In my view, this constitutes a sign of family identity, in the sense that these are common characteristics, identifiers, and constructors of the elite's memory, in a similar fashion to onomastics, heraldry³⁸, or funerary art³⁹. The documental typology points us not only to the creation and definition of entails (the possession, preservation, and transmission of the titles being generally the responsibility of the creator and his successors/administrators appointed by testament, and they were transmitted down the generations) but also to the patrimonial management of the family (property contracts), memoranda (notes on tax collections or the transmission of properties), genealogical records or documents with probative value, such as letters of privilege, patents, or even *tombos*, like the one from the Ribeiro family, dated 1498. Written by Fernão Ribeiro, the administrator of the *morgadio* of Canidelo, this *tombo* was intended to be presented to the judge of *resíduos* of Entre-Douro-e-Minho by his wife, Filipa de Sousa, for proof and copy. It is mentioned as a bound book that compiles several documents, such as the founder's will and testament and the list of the chapel's estates. It constitutes an important account of the owner's manuscript record, in that he updates his father's earlier notes and uses the document for management purposes, and

³⁷ Several authors emphasize the importance of the organized conservation of documents in the formation and sociological affirmation of social groups. MORSEL, 2010: 17-18; MORSEL, 2012: 83-106; NAVARRO BONILLA, 2003: 62-64; COELHO, 2015: 27.

³⁸ SOUSA, 2013a: 27-33; MORSEL, 2010: 22. Miguel Metelo de Seixas states that heraldic expressions, such as archives, served "each in their own way, as instruments of construction, renewal, confirmation and maintenance of identity and personal and family memory", SEIXAS, 2012: 456.

³⁹ Examples of this are the various elements of the Carneiro family that were buried in the Misericórdia, in the church of S. Francisco, and in Porto cathedral. In 1684, João de Valadares asked the Porto town hall for permission to engrave his coat of arms on the tomb of his father, Luís de Valadares Carneiro (a chessboard with two sheep and a sign: "Here lies Luís de Valadares Carneiro, nobleman of the house of His Majesty, knight-commander of the Order of Christ, year 1681"). The same document states that a letter of burial had been written for Luís Valadares, but that his heir only found the one belonging to Luís Delgado de Abreu, of whom he was also a successor. In another document we find that Álvaro de Valadares and Antónia Carneiro were buried in one of the four graves inside the rails between the two altars under the chapel of D. Lopo (de Almeida) at the Porto Misericórdia., 22th February 1592. The grave only had a signboard. BNP, ALB, Enc., mç. 59, cx. 1, cap. 6, doc. n. n. See also: ROSAS, 2013: 464-465; FREITAS, 2006: 169-179.

serves as testimony of the archival practices of Portuguese late medieval families. Andrea Gamberi considers this type of document an embryonic system of cartulary, with a double function: on one hand, practical and archival; on the other, “memorialist and ideological”⁴⁰, representing a “cartulary-inventory”, a concept also used by Concepción Mendo Cardona, Robert-Henri Bautier, and Maria de Lurdes Rosa⁴¹.

Conclusion

Because of its long custodial history, the Almada and Lencastre Bastos archive constitutes an interesting documental source for the study of Portuguese pre-modern elites. Scholars conducting research on Portuguese medieval and modern history will have access to new sources beyond those of the national, district, and municipal archives, which have already been used by several generations of historians. These family archives reveal new historical research data and allow for a more in-depth understanding of ancien régime social history, by increasing knowledge about the local elites, their social context, and their relation with documents. Elites of various origins and provenances, who have been connected by marriages or other relationships (kinship, friends, clientele and economic relations). The latter allowed them to administer their own goods, free or entailed, as well as those left by other individuals connected to each other by family ties.

Since the fifteenth century, the creation of numerous *morgadios*, such as the Canidelo *morgadio*, enabled the documentation — with utilitarian but also affirmative and probative purposes — to maintain its cohesion, and, therefore, to avoid dispersion among multiple family elements.

Finally, these archives allow us to study not only the social written practices of those families and, consequently, of archives in the formation and consolidation of pre-modern families, but also the forms of organization of archives, their constructions and reconstructions, and their preservation throughout the centuries.

⁴⁰ About cartularies-inventories see GAMBERINI, 2008: 4-8.

⁴¹ MENDO CARMONA, 2005: 122, 134; BAUTIER, 1993: 376; ROSA; HEAD, 2015b: 17.

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