

The World of Constable D. Afonso (c. 1480-1504): Glimpses of Portuguese Dynastic Politics, Noble Household and Material Culture

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Abstract:

The main goal of this article is to unveil some dimensions of the life of Afonso (c.1480-1504), Constable of Portugal, and place him in the context of dynastic politics during late medieval/renaissance Iberian society. The illegitimate son of the deceased D. Diogo duke of Viseu, executed as a traitor by King D. João II, Afonso spent a hidden childhood in a remote village in Alentejo. After being rehabilitated by his uncle, King D. Manuel I, he experimented court life, albeit for a short period. The analysis of his "book of treasure", kept between 1500 to 1502 – one of the few ledgers surviving for this period – can provide glimpses to the daily life of his household, material culture and gender differences. Also, the information it includes on his private chambers and stables can provide some clues about the chivalric model of late medieval aristocracy, that can be found in a wide range of European monarchies of Christendom.