

The installation of Cistercian nuns in Lorvão. Contours of a complex process, in a kingdom in turmoil

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Abstract: In a bull dated November 1210, Innocent III decreed that the monastery of Lorvão, which had been a house of Benedictine monks, should be transformed into a Cistercian nunnery. The history of the legal proceedings, the arguments presented by the parties, the various advances and setbacks experienced, and many indications suggesting the underlying reasons for such a radical change, are apparently very clearly set out in the bull. This article examines the context of this extraordinary conventual (re)foundation, which would have proved impossible had it not brought together a range of different interests, and revisits the process that led to the establishment of Cistercian nuns in Lorvão, which thus became the first nunnery of the Order in Portugal. In addition, there is a re-evaluation of the networks and concerns manifest in governmental and ecclesiastical circles that led to Lorvão's community of monks being (in fact for a second time) suspended and ousted, something that would have been neither legitimate nor legal had it lacked royal support, the consent of the bishop of Coimbra and, above all, the blessing of the pope.

Keywords: Lorvão Monastery (1190-1210); Political and ecclesiastical struggles; Cistercian nuns in Lorvão; Innocent III and the kings of Portugal; 12th-13th centuries.

La instalación de las monjas cistercienses en Lorvão. Contornos de un proceso complejo, en un reino en ebullición

Resumen: En una bula fechada en noviembre de 1210, Inocencio III decretó que el monasterio de Lorvão, que había sido casa de monjes benedictinos, se transformase en convento cisterciense. La historia del proceso judicial, los argumentos presentados por las partes, los diversos avances y retrocesos experimentados, así como numerosos indicios que sugieren las razones subyacentes a un cambio tan radical, se exponen con aparente gran claridad en la bula. Este artículo examina el contexto de esta extraordinaria (re)fundación conventual, que habría resultado imposible si no hubiera reunido intereses diversos, y repasa el proceso que condujo al establecimiento de monjas cistercienses en Lorvão, que se convirtió así en el primer convento femenino de la Orden en Portugal. Además, se reevalúan las redes y preocupaciones manifestadas en círculos gubernativos y eclesiásticos que condujeron a que la comunidad de monjes de Lorvão fuera (de hecho, por segunda vez) suspendida y expulsada, algo que no habría sido ni legítimo ni legal si no hubiera contado con el apoyo real, el consentimiento del obispo de Coimbra y, sobre todo, la bendición del Papa.

Palabras clave: Monasterio de Lorvão (1190-1210); luchas políticas y eclesiásticas; monjas cistercienses en Lorvão; Inocencio III y el rey de Portugal; siglos XII-XIII.

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1. The problem¹

It might be said that everything started with the marriage of Teresa Sanches, the eldest daughter of King Sancho I of Portugal to her cousin, Alfonso IX of León, in 1191. Or perhaps it would be better to say that it all really started when the dissolution of that union by papal command, forced the Queen of León to give up her status and return to her home country. Of course, as usual, that did not happen before the couple had produced, between 1191 and 1194, three royal offspring who were properly legitimated by Pope Celestine III, on the grounds that the children were not to blame for their parents' sins.²

The most traditional version of events that led to the installation of Cistercian nuns in Lorvão with Teresa at their head, proposes a well-nigh romanticized rendition, attributing the grant of the monastery to Queen Teresa as a gift to compensate her for her loss and to keep her busy.³

Yet reality, as usual, does not comply with such idealistic views. In this particular case, we know very little about how the rejected Queen of León occupied her time after returning to Portugal, but nothing in the interval of almost ten years that occurred between her return to Portugal and her reception of the monastery of Lorvão seems to indicate her being in need of something to keep her occupied.⁴ First there were the negotiations over the return of her "arras",⁵ and the question of where their three children were to live,⁶ then she settled herself in Coimbra and Montemor, and finally all the negotiations around the determination to establish a Cistercian female house in Lorvão, which would be the first female Cistercian foundation in Portugal.⁷ If the negotiations for the annulment of the marriage took more than three years, the negotiations to establish a female Cistercian community in Lorvão would take more than six, which speaks volumes in terms of the complexity of the process.

'But why Lorvão?' we may ask. What might have been the real reasons for entering into a process that was never going to be an easy one? If Teresa wanted to found a female Cistercian house, why not just choose some solitary place where she did not have to dislodge an entire community of monks of a different order with all the troubles that this process would necessarily entail? The community of monks in Lorvão would obviously have to be suspended and evicted from their house before the change of order and gender of the occupants could be achieved and that could not be accomplished without a good reason for doing so. Expelling the monks of Lorvão from their monastic house, for the second time during their existence, meant that, from the start, there were more interests at stake, than those that first meet the eye. The same questions arise again and again: why Lorvão?, and why at that particular time? This could never have been possible, legitimate, or legal, without the combination of interests of the King of Portugal and his daughter, to whose initiative the whole process has always been attributed, without the consent of the bishop of Coimbra, jurisdictionally responsible for the community of monks of Lorvão and, above all, without papal approval. Papal approval was predictably going to be difficult to achieve and would require an immense effort of resources, time, and legal argument. Except for

¹ Abbreviations used: ANTT = Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo; Bul = Costa, Avelino Jesus da and Maria Alegria Marques. 1989. *Bulário Português, Inocência III (1198-1216)*. INIC; doc. = document; DSI = Azevedo, Rui de, Avelino de Jesus da Costa, and Marcelino Pereira. 1979. *Documentos de D. Sancho I (1174-1211)*. Vol. I, Universidade de Coimbra; m. = maço; n. = number; OC = Ordem de Cister.

² As a first approach to the matrimony of Teresa and Alfonso IX, see the classical González (1944) and Bul, n. 61-69. For further details, Branco (1999, 287-291). Linehan (1993, 255-258) discusses the requests presented to the Papacy by the Iberian ecclesiastics over the illegitimacy of the marriages in forbidden degree and their virtues for keeping the peace and focusing on the fight against Islam instead.

³ Herculano (1980, 91-92) professes the true love between the spouses: "(...) não bastou isto para separar os dois esposos, os quais sinceramente se amavam (...)". Marques (1998a, 128-130) also gives us a poignant view of the repudiated Teresa.

⁴ In the documentation of León, she no longer appears with her husband from February 1, 1192 (Gonzalez 1944, II, 78-81); in the documentation of Sancho I, she only reappears on February 20, 1195, in a document in which her name is again added to the validation sign (DSI, n. 125). This is also the date now accepted by Marques (1998a, 129, n. 11) for her return to Portugal.

⁵ For the details and intricacies of such negotiations, see Calderón 2009a, 443-455.

⁶ It is not certain how many of the children came with their mother and how many stayed with Alfonso IX. At least the Infante Fernando, we know was raised in Portugal. In a donation by Sancho I to Martim Salvadores and wife Sancha Pires, to whom, in September 1207, the king granted Vila Meã, in the district of Viseu, it is said "pro bono seruitio quod nobis semper fecistis et pro infante filio regis Legionis et regine domne Tharasie quem ab infancia nutriuistis" (cf. DSI, n. 261). In his second will, Sancho I mentions: "infanti domne Dulcie nepti mee quam nutriuim in domo mea" and "infanti domne Sencie nepti mee que est in Castella" (DSI, n. 298). But these clues do not help to specify if at the time of the separation they all came or if there was already a separation of the infants. Nor does it help to clarify for how long they stayed in each of the two realms. Julio González (1944, 310) thinks that only Dulce came to Portugal with her mother, but the documents mentioned above seem to contradict him. That at least Fernando went back to León while still young is very probable, since from 1203 he appears alongside his father confirming his documentation in León (Lucas Álvarez 1993, 541).

⁷ For a detailed account of the process, and of the reasons for the daughters of Sancho I to have adhered in such enthusiastic way to the Cistercian movement, see *maxime* Répas (2021, 55-58).

the monks themselves, all the remaining actors involved seem to have been more than willing to comply with such demands, and, as we shall see, Teresa herself assumed the expenses of the lengthy and complex litigation, which reveals a lot about the strength of interest in expelling of the monks of Lorvão.

After many detailed studies of the case and its *minutiae*, there is still no clear answer. The aim of this work is to attempt to shed some light on certain aspects of the process which have been less studied, namely the political motivations of the King, the bishop of Coimbra, and Teresa herself, and the role of all those involved in the diplomatic and ecclesiastic negotiations, in order to try and reconstitute events in the light of the networks of people concerned and their considerably more immediate motives.

The contours of the transfer of the monastery of Lorvão into the hands of Infanta Teresa has captured the historian's attention for many years—principally the historians of the Cistercian Order in the Iberian Peninsula. Yet it would only be in 1980 that Maria Alegria Marques (1980, 231-279) published an article where all the existing documentation was compiled, systematized, and largely published. Almost 20 years later the same author (1998a, 127-180) introduced new elements concerning the Infanta Teresa and her daughters which help to clarify some less studied aspects of Teresa's life. These two works by Maria Alegria Marques refute on solid grounds some of the ideas previously put forward by those who had looked at this case in a more superficial way,⁸ overlooking the importance of the documentation preserved in the archive of Lorvão. In those two articles, Marques establishes an accurate chronology of events and reformulates the question of the motivations of Teresa in acting as she did.

By focusing on this important issue, what is intended here is not to duplicate the work already carried out by Maria Alegria Marques, or to question her periodization and the establishment of the order of events, which I fully accept, but, as previously mentioned, to study to what extent this case reflects models of interrelationship between the king and the bishop and how sensitive this issue was with both the king and the papacy. We also intend to scrutinise those agents behind this dispute and discover its consequences at a political level, aspects that the previous author did not contemplate in her study, which was more focused on defining the stages of the process and confirming the allegations and motivations presented than on studying the actors from the perspective of their consequent activity in the political framework. Luís Rêpas brought new light and refreshing approaches to the female Cistercian world for Portugal and in this case, emphasizes the role that the King played in the process, which is very much in accordance with my own view.⁹

2. Early days...

The political situation was one of great turmoil. The relationships between the kings of Portugal, León and Castile were somewhat strained and shifting in a manner that left no doubt as to how frail the political balances and political alliances were throughout the 1190s, and which would continue during the first decades of the thirteenth century.¹⁰ They were marked by the continuous threat that came from the Almohads who sought to overturn the previous situation¹¹ leaving the Christian kings in a precarious position facing each other's ambitions and emphasising the need to unite against the common threat they faced. The Pope was continuously urging the Christian kings of Iberia to stop fighting each other and to focus on fighting the danger coming from their common enemies.¹² Each of the rulers of the most western Iberian Kingdoms chose their different tactics against the Almohad threat, but in that pursuit, they actually never backed away from their desires to prevail over one another. None, however, had been as seriously struck by the Almohad advances as Sancho I who, in

⁸ Namely, Cocheril 1976, 33-49, and Yáñez Neira 1991, 93-125.

⁹ Luís Rêpas (2021, 58-62) is responsible for the most updated synthesis on the foundation of the Cistercian house as well as on the standing of Teresa in the court and in the political environment which was hers.

¹⁰ Calderón 2009b, by listing all the treaties from 1191 to 1219 provides an eloquent example of precisely that instability. For an overview of the political situation in Portugal immediately after the treaty of resolution of the "arras" of Teresa, the treaty of Tordehumos and the Battle of Alarcos, with the reorganization of alliances and powers in the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the continuous shifts in alliances between the Christian kings, see Branco 2006, 152-160.

¹¹ It should not be forgotten that in the campaigns of 1190-1191, the Almohads regained all the territory between the coast of the Algarve and the river Tagus, with some significant victories in Alcácer do Sal, Palmela and Coima and threats to Santarém, Tomar and even Coimbra, had the King fearing he would lose everything to the forces of Yacub al Mansur. Indeed, he was to lose all the South, except for Évora and some satellite regions (Branco 2006, 141-148).

¹² Especially Innocent III, who, from 1210 onwards started to reinforce the message that all quarrels, ecclesiastic and between the rulers of Hispania, should give way to the more important effort of fighting the infidels (Bul, n. 305).

just two years (1190-1191), had lost almost half of the territory he had inherited from his father and enlarged with his conquest of Silves (1189).

In such a political atmosphere, the two marriages of Alfonso IX of León, the first to the daughter of the King of Portugal and the second to the daughter of the King of Castile were obvious political moves aimed at resolving problems derived from the political situation of the day. Surely, considering the advantages of a peace sealed by matrimony and the resulting production of heirs who would guarantee peace between the monarchs, was always going to be stronger than the fear of papal reprobation. Yet, as we now know with hindsight, the matrimonial alliances did not work very well in the design of maintaining political stability. In both cases, the marriages had almost the opposite effect as the consequent change of sides apparent in all the pacts, truces and wars in which all the Iberian kings were involved against each other during the last decade of the twelfth century appear to show with little room for doubt. Indeed, after the peace of Tordehumos, and in fulfilment of the promise made even before marrying Teresa, at Carrión, Alfonso IX married Berenguela in 1194, only to have Innocent III threaten him with a new interdict and excommunication if the marriage was not dissolved as soon as April 1198. In a very interesting almost specular process, Sancho I was the one denouncing the irregularity of the marriage of Alfonso IX to Berenguela, just as it had been Alfonso VIII of Castile who denounced the incestuous nature of the matrimonial alliance between Alfonso IX and Teresa Sanches in 1191.¹³ The separation of Alfonso IX and Berenguela would be a more difficult process than that from Teresa, but the alliances of Alfonso IX with the Almohads and the lack of belligerent solidarity towards his fellow Christian kings would bring about a very serious state of affairs for the King who had children by both his wives and, later in life, he would try to promote the future of his offspring with Teresa over his progeny with Berenguela.¹⁴ As is well known, the manoeuvres of Berenguela would succeed in guaranteeing for her son Fernando the reunified kingdom of Castile and Leon in 1230. But those specific events lay in the future. In 1194, when Teresa returned to Portugal, having given birth to her three children during the three years that she was married to Alfonso IX, none of these cards were on the table.

So let us refocus on what was happening to the monastery of Lorvão during the same period (1190-1210) when Teresa returned to Portugal and Lorvão entered the process that would end in its changing into a Cistercian female house.

As previously stated, it is often assumed that Teresa received the monastery of Lorvão as compensation for the failure of her marriage, just as it is often assumed that the Lorvão problem began at exactly that moment. But, in fact, neither did Teresa receive the monastery straight away, nor are the issues with Lorvão reducible to this aspect alone.

It is not before October 1206 that we learn about what had happened during the years when the problems began. As usual, this comes by way of a papal letter describing all the previous phases of the issue it seeks to solve.

In that October 1206, Innocent III commissions the judges delegate who were chosen to remedy this problem—the bishop and dean of Zamora and the abbot of Moreruela—to compel King Sancho I to return the monastery to its legitimate occupiers, the male Benedictine community who had been expelled by force from their house. In this bull, the Pope mentioned the complaint filed in the Curia by some of the monks of Lorvão, who claimed that their abbot had delivered the monastery into the hands of the King without the consent of the remaining monastic community, and that the King had violently expelled them in order to grant the *coenobium* to his daughter Teresa and to install there a community of nuns.¹⁵

Innocent III must have thought that he was facing just another example of the abuse of ecclesiastical liberties to which Sancho I had already accustomed him. The tone of the reply, and of the letter of commission

¹³ For an overview of the political situation in Portugal in what concerns the negotiations for the dissolution of the marriage of Teresa, and after the treaty of resolution of the “arras” of Teresa, the Treaty of Tordehumos and the Battle of Alarcos in 1195, with the reorganization of alliances and powers in the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the continuous shifts of alliances between the Christian Kings, see Branco 2006, 152-160.

¹⁴ Indeed, Innocent III refused to legitimize the children of the incestuous couple and it would not be until 1218 with Honorius III that such grace would be granted to Alfonso IX and Berenguela, by the bull *Regie Dignitatis*, issued on the 10th July of that year (Mansilla 1965, 141-142). Alfonso VIII has died in 1214 and his son and heir Henrique I was to die in 1217, swapping the succession to the line of Berenguela who opted for choosing her son Fernando as heir. Therefore, the danger of succession to the throne falling to the children that Alfonso IX had had by Teresa and the spectre of the assimilation of Castile by León would have been very real for Berenguela in those days of uncertainty.

¹⁵ *Si karissimus in Christo*, de 24 de Outubro de 1206 (Bul, n. 236-237).

to the judges delegate which were to be in charge of this cause in this first instance,¹⁶ is very typical of the tone that Innocent III used when addressing Sancho I: somewhat violent, assertive, and very graphic.

This letter of commission to the judges delegate is very significant, as it contains several important concepts. The Pontiff begins with a long digression on how the king should not interfere in the affairs of the Church nor should he exceed the powers entrusted to him, especially when what was at stake was abuse of his power in disposing of the churches of his kingdom according to his own will. To reinforce the point, the Pope invokes, for the first time in his correspondence with Sancho I, the examples of Oza and Ozias, explaining how one was killed by the Lord for touching the Ark and the other was punished with leprosy for having usurped the priestly office.¹⁷ He then proceeds to describe the actions of which Sancho was accused in a manner that implies that they caused him no surprise. The Pope was used to being told of similar acts perpetrated by Sancho I: “(...) sepiissime nobis de prefato rege talia referantur (...)”¹⁸ And he distrusted the means used by the King, to the point of warning the judges delegate that, if the King presented them with documents proving his entitlement to dispose of the monastery, they should not take them into consideration because they were forgeries.

When the Pope recommended to his judges that, in their future assessment of the case, they should not take into account any letters that the King’s lawyers might present to them, he seems to be perfectly aware that this litigation was more nebulous than it might seem at first sight, and that it was being conducted in a disingenuous manner to the point of resorting to the falsification of documents in the attempt to legitimize the actions of both the King and the bishop of Coimbra.

3. The king, the bishop, the repudiated Queen Teresa, the monks and the pope: a tight web of interwoven interests

In the specific case of Lorrvão, there was nothing new about the King wanting to dispose of its assets, nor was it only to the King that widening the dominion over Lorrvão’s ecclesiastical domain and wealth seemed an interesting prospect. The bishop of Coimbra, Pedro Soares who had previously been an outspoken and overt opponent of the monarch, in this instance acted totally on the King’s behalf. He certainly had more than one interest in taking this stance.

Since 1199, Pedro Soares had been presenting an array of complaints to the Papal Curia against the abbot and monks of Lorrvão.¹⁹ He alleged that the monastery did not pay him the tithes from some churches that they were obliged to pay, and refused to pay procuration to him, even when they had no special privileges from the Pope that would entitle them to such exemption. The abbots of Lorrvão responded in a similar way, appealing to Rome, claiming that the bishop wanted to collect taxes from them which had never been collected before.²⁰ They would also write at least one list of grievances, in which they set out most of their complaints against all the bishops of Coimbra who had aggravated them in a long enumeration of their abuses ranging from bishop Gonçalo (1109-1127) to Pedro Soares (1192-1232) their contemporary.²¹

We could say that in 1205-1206 we were simply witnessing a replay of a scene already well-rehearsed. This was not the first episode of conflict between Lorrvão and the powers that ruled Coimbra. In 1109, Count Henry had already expelled the monks from Lorrvão —as if it were his own property— and given the monastic house to the “reformist” bishop Gonçalo of Coimbra, at the peak of the Mozarabic crisis in Coimbra of 1109-1111.²² When the unrest was finally suppressed, bishop Gonçalo reinstated the monks in their monastery in

¹⁶ Martin of Zamora, the dean John of Zamora and Herbert, abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Moreruela (Bul, n. 236-237).

¹⁷ “(...) Utinam ad memoriam revocasset quod cum Oza nutantem archam Domini tetigisset percussus interuit ab eodem et Ozias rex, cum presumpsisset sacerdotale officium usurpare, lepre macula est respersus, quia forsitan precavisset se (...)” (Bul, n. 237). The source for this is obviously 1 *Chron.* 13. 9-10 e 2 *Chron.* 26.18-21.

¹⁸ Bul, n. 237.

¹⁹ Bul, n. 110-111 refers to such complaints, in a papal letter issued on the 16th November 1199. A posterior set of complaints (Bul, n. 195-196) would mark the beginning of the questions that lead to the change of monastic communities in Lorrvão.

²⁰ Bul, n. 161.

²¹ Published by Azevedo 1933, 60-61. This non dated pamphlet, when submitted to textual and diplomatic criticism revealed that this specific document must have been written somewhere between 1192 and 1200.

²² On the misadventures of Lorrvão, during this period, see Azevedo 1933, 34-35; Branco 2008, 29-31, 44-47; Nascimento 2008, 81-94; and Marques 1998a; for the publication of the document by which Count D. Henrique granted the monastery to the reformist bishop Gonçalo Pais de Paiva (in 1109), see Azevedo 1933, 51-52. On the famous Mozarabic crisis in the Coimbra of bishop Gonçalo and Martim Moniz, son-in-law of Sesnando, and one of the leaders of the Coimbra rebellion, cf. Gérard Pradalié 1974, 77-98, and Ventura 2006, 37-52.

1116, but on his own terms, i.e., not giving back to Lorrvão all the property he had taken from them and placing the coenobium under his jurisdiction.²³ In the document of reinstatement, it was made clear that the monastery belonged to the bishop of the diocese to whom they owed obedience and who, if the monks acted in an incorrect manner once more, could expel them at his will.²⁴

This seems to be exactly what Pedro Soares did in 1205-1206 when he granted the monastery to Teresa, alleging bad management by the abbot and his monks and in order to put an end to the iniquities purportedly being committed there. In those documents, the bishop never once explains in any detail what such iniquities might have been.

Maria Alegria Marques has published the letters from the bishop to Teresa which are preserved in the *fundo* (archive) of Lorrvão, crucially dated from February/March 1205 to September 1206.²⁵ We possess three documents concerning this grant. Two of these are addressed by Pedro Soares to Queen Teresa and in them, the bishop of Coimbra actually gives Lorrvão to Queen Teresa without any restrictions, expressly declaring that she can install there whichever religious order she considers the most adequate, and also explicitly stating that the monastery was in such a financial state that it might be beyond repair, damaging very seriously the revenues of the bishopric to which it belonged. The third document mentioning this grant from the bishop of Coimbra to Teresa is a letter directly addressed to the faithful in general, in which the bishop communicates to the congregation that the abbot and monks of Lorrvão had spontaneously renounced the coenobium, had all moved into the monastery of Pedroso, and that, as a result of this conduct, he had proceeded to grant the monastery to Teresa, so that she could then install there a convent of professed nuns.²⁶ This last document, traditionally ascribed to this first phase of the process, should be placed some years later, at least after Innocent III's bull of 1210. It mentions the expulsion of the monks as a voluntary move and it refers to events that can only have happened after the years 1205-1210, during which the case was not at all concluded. All the evidence indicates a shadowy and somewhat manipulated reality pertaining to all the parties involved.

In a first instance, the Pope did not accept the position of the bishop and contested its legality. As we saw, he nominated judges delegate to reinstall the monks in the monastery, which means that as early as 1206 they had actually been expelled immediately after the grant of Pedro Soares to the daughter of Sancho I, in 1205-06.

It would only be after several attempts at discovering what actually happened, with reports by judges delegate, hearings, and witness enquiries—and surely much pressure both from the men of the bishop, the King's lawyers at the papal court, and the envoys of the abbot of Lorrvão—that Innocent III pronounced a final sentence against the monks and abbot. His first letters were in favour of the community and against the bishop's will. Therefore, this reversal did not happen immediately after the abusive grant of the bishop of Coimbra to Teresa, but only after a lengthy process of commissioning judges delegate, hearings, collecting evidence, interrogating witnesses and finally receiving a judgement on the matter.

As mentioned above, the first reaction from the Pope was not favourable to the bishop's intents. On the contrary, the argument came up once more that this was all being done under royal pressure and that the King was again abusing his power and disposing of religious houses as if they were his own.

Innocent III first admonishes Sancho I as if he had been depriving the bishop of Coimbra of his legitimate rights over the monastery only to grant it to a lay person, i.e., his own daughter. In the Pope's own words, "monachas introduxit quas tamquam propriam familiam ibi continet et gubernat."²⁷

As we have seen, the process had not been solely a case of royal abuse, as the Pope seemed to have believed. Indeed, the documentation we possess systematically ignores the role played by the bishop and his

²³ Azevedo 1933, 54-56.

²⁴ "Et quicquid deinceps augmentare uel adquirere potuerint licentiam habeant possidendi et ut ipse abbas cum omni suo conuentu sit subditus episcopo et canonicis prefate sedis et sine eorum consilio isto defuncto nullatenus aliter eligatur" or, further ahead: "Sciendum est igitur quod si ille abbas qualicumque ingeniose calliditatis hoc quod supratatum est alienare seu auertere a iudicio et a potestate colimbiensis pontificis et canonicorum eiusdem et hoc probatum uero iudicio fuerit tam ille abbas quicumque fuerit et monachos eius careant omnibus que suprascripta sunt et honore et licentia sit pro nominato pontifici et eius canonicis cuncta disponere ut statuerint." Azevedo 1933, 55-56.

²⁵ Marques 1980, 263-264, publishes the documents from the Lorrvão fund patent in ANTT, OC, Mosteiro de Lorrvão, Antiga Coleção Especial, m. 10, doc. 26; m. 7, doc. 36.

²⁶ The document addressed to the faithful in general was published by Pereira 1955, 379-381. This last document, that has been dated from before Innocent III's bull of 1206, in which the Pope commands that the monastery be given back to the abbot and monks, should probably be ascribed to a later date, perhaps after the bull of 1210 in which the Pope considers the monks guilty of the "sins" of which they were accused.

²⁷ Bul, n. 286.

responsibility in the initial stages of the quarrel and never mentions him as involved in the question, at all. The whole question started with a grant from the bishop of Coimbra to Teresa, invoking the lack of honesty and purity of the monks and claiming that he was acting in that manner so that he could restore the monastery to its prime state and so that the institution could be saved from the bad practices that had been afflicting its destiny. Strangely enough, in his letters on the matter, the Pope chose to diminish the importance of the episcopal grant, rarely mentioning Pedro Soare's donation, or substantially minimizing it.²⁸

During the first phase of the conflict, papal confidence in the abbot of Lorvão never seems to have been an issue. All the markers of a normal continuity in the life of the monastic community are unchanged, economically and culturally.²⁹

Furthermore, why would the papal curia appoint the abbot of Lorvão as judge delegate in the quarrel between the bishop of Lisbon and the regular canons of S. Vicente of Lisbon exactly in the year 1205 when Teresa was supposed to have taken charge of Lorvão to save it from all the crimes the monks had been accused of before? It does not seem logical to go on appointing to such important cases, an abbot upon whom such depraved accusations had been cast.

What is revealing is that in the two letters deriving from the work of the commission issued by Rome to its three judges delegate who were to deal with the problem between the bishop of Lisbon and the regular canons of St. Vincent (respectively issued in April 1205 and in April 1206), the abbot of Lorvão ended up by not showing up. The two other judges delegate—the prior and cantor of Alcobaça—mention, in both instances, that he had excused himself from such task on legitimate grounds.³⁰ We can only speculate that he must have excused himself because he was busy fighting the predatory ambitions of the King and the bishop of Coimbra over his community.

In his grant to Teresa, in 1205-06,³¹ the bishop of Coimbra explicitly and cautiously mentions that whichever religious order she would choose to install there, the convent would never be exempt from paying the due episcopal taxes.³² He probably knew already which order Teresa intended to settle there. In that specific time period, and for someone who had lived some years in León in an era when such houses were multiplying, both in León and in Portugal—and whilst the mendicant orders were still not an option and the Benedictine order was very much falling from grace with the rulers of Iberian kingdoms—³³ the bishop must have thought it necessary to emphasise the obligation of paying obedience and taxes to his own ecclesiastical see.

He obviously did not want to risk losing the rights over Lorvão upon which he was so zealous, especially since he knew, as everyone else knew at the time, that the Cistercians had been declared exempt from paying any episcopal dues. This stratagem was Pedro Soares's way of trying to maintain his rights with a ruse such as the phrase he had added to his donation to Teresa.³⁴

Once the danger of losing jurisdiction and income over the monastery had been removed by this device, the possibility of the establishment of a Cistercian nucleus in Lorvão would surely have pleased Pedro Soares who, it seems, had privileged relations in Cistercian circles.

One of the grounds for appeal that Santa Cruz lodged against the See of Coimbra in Rome around 1200, when the papal letters of commission of judges delegate arrived to Alcobaça, was precisely the fact that the chosen judges were biased in favour of the See of Coimbra. They were all Cistercians with connections to Alcobaça, so it is legitimate to infer a certain degree of proximity between the Chapter of Coimbra and the Cistercian

²⁸ Marques 1980, 1998a.

²⁹ Marques 1980, 233-240, 246-252, through an exhaustive study of the documentation preserved in the monastery's archive, was able to prove beyond any doubt that the monastery was neither badly run nor did it show any signs of intellectual or cultural decadence. On the contrary, economically sound, the monastery kept on producing documentation and feeding its library in a very wealthy form.

³⁰ "(...) abbate de Lorbano nostro coniudivice se legitime excusante (...)" (Bul, n. 219 and 231).

³¹ The critical date was between February 1205 and September 1206. See Marques 1980, 262-264.

³² Already in 1199, in the first complaints about Lorvão that Pedro Soares had presented in the Roman Curia, he mentioned that the monastery refused to pay the obedience to which it was obliged since "cum monasterium (...) fundatum a iurisdictione ipsius nullo Sedis Apostolice privilegio sit exemptum immo Colimbriensi ecclesie consueverit respondere (...)" (Bul, n. 110-111). In his grant of 1205, he stresses: "concessimus vobis memorato monasterio saluo iure in omnibus sedis episcopalis." (Marques 1980, 264).

³³ On the first Cistercian houses in Portugal, see Marques 1998b, 29-73; Masoliver 1987, 517-555. On the female houses of the Cistercian Order, see Rêpas 2021. For the remaining Hispanic panorama, see Álvarez Palenzuela 1978; Valle Pérez 1991, and Portela Silva 1991.

³⁴ Marques (1998a, 132-133) also noted that this convent was not exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, attributing the fact to the same reasons that I advance. The situation would not however remain the same. In the fourteenth century the monastery would receive its privilege of exemption (Santos 2001).

milieu. Such a liaison would no doubt mean the functioning of this influential group representing identical interests both vis-a-vis the Papacy and vis-a-vis the King, as it necessarily would vis-à-vis the bishop himself.

As mentioned above, in 1206, Innocent III warned his judges delegate over the possibility of there being forged letters presented in the litigation according to the accusations taken to Rome by the lawyers of Lorvão. The reference made does not explain what kind of forged letters they were talking about. It might refer to the very unusual grant of the bishop of Coimbra to Teresa, transferring the possession and ownership of the monastic house and granting her authority to enter and occupy the Benedictine monastery. But later in the same document we are led to understand, from the analysis to which they were subjected by the judges,³⁵ that the false documents the Pontiff was referring to were in fact the witness inquiries made by the bishops of Porto and Lisbon in which the monks questioned had sworn that there had never been any violence in the process, and also the document of renunciation that the abbot of Lorvão was said to have issued under coercion and against the will of the rest of the monks.³⁶ Once again, any participation of the bishop of Coimbra in the litigation is omitted.

The expert examination of these documents by the pontifical judges caused them to conclude that they were legal and authentic even if, in one of the cases scrutinised, the report mentioned that the abbot's seal showed a considerably different shape from the one he normally used which they justified as having been modified at the request of the abbot himself. This statement is very suspicious, to say the least, since the seal they found on the document they examined corresponded exactly to the description that the monks of Lorvão had provided in their complaint.³⁷

The witness enquiry mentioned here is only one piece of evidence in a case where, unfortunately, we only possess an extremely scarce record. It hardly serves any purpose other than to attest that the matter had complied with the normal nonviolent consensual form of solving conflicts and therefore was completely legitimate and legal.³⁸

And, as usual, in the meanderings of such schemes, it is extremely difficult to determine who was telling the truth and who was acting in bad faith. The purpose of the documentation produced is exactly to camouflage the illicitness of the case, and the pieces of the process that we possess today do not help in clarifying any of the more profound motives for the ignition of such confusing and complicated dealings. On the one hand it is easy to agree with Marques (1980, 255-257) that if we just look to the current affairs documentary evidence of the monastery of Lorvão, the whole case made against its abbot and monks seems to suggest the contours of what we would nowadays classify as a "*conspiracy*" to expel the monks from their house and install Teresa and her nuns in it. However, it is rather more difficult to understand the reasons for the choice of Lorvão as opposed to any other monastery in the region.

Teresa did not have any previous known connections to Lorvão. Although she possessed land and other wealth in the region adjacent to areas where the monastery also had its own property, that is not reason enough to justify such a choice.

The theory that the royal choice fell on Lorvão, because geographically it was very close to Coimbra and near to the place where the royal court spent the majority of its time, seems to be based on an anachronistic approach to distances and of concepts of centrality which are especially difficult to justify in the light of the end of the twelfth century. There can be no doubt that an estate such as that of Lorvão was no small thing, even for a princess as powerful as Teresa. But why this particular monastery and not some other powerful house, remains a mystery.

It is, of course, tempting to entertain the idea that it might have been the bishop of Coimbra who was manipulating everything. Having a real personal interest in annulling the influence of those cantankerous monks of Lorvão, he could also add to the triumph of their extinction the extra benefit of falling back within the King's good graces.

The relationship between Sancho I and the bishop of Coimbra had been severely eroded by the still recent quarrels between the See of Coimbra and the regular canons of Santa Cruz, another long-lasting process which involved serious violence on the part of Sancho I or his officers done to the bishop and his family. As late as

³⁵ Dated Zamora, 1200, July (Bul, n. 262).

³⁶ Dated from Coimbra in 1206, December 28 (Bul, n. 242).

³⁷ "(...) sigillum quod in forma dissimili apparebat de mandato ejusdem abbatis fabricatum fuisse et in litteris abrenuntiationis impressum (...)" (Bul, n. 262).

³⁸ Critically dated from 1206 September to December 1207, published by Marques 1980, 266-267, it is also only extant in the documentation of the monastery of Lorvão (ANTT, OC, Mosteiro de Lorvão, Antiga Coleção Especial, m. 10, doc. 29).

1198, the bishop of Coimbra was still at the Papal Curia complaining about how the King did not respect any of his interdicts or excommunications, and how, because of this, he had been expelled from Coimbra, deprived of all his wealth, whilst all the canons that followed his orders were also deprived of their wealth.³⁹

And so Lorvão could provide both King and bishop with the possibility of settling a real peace within the framework of a common interest. The bishop would regain the jurisdictional sovereignty over an institution that stubbornly opposed him along with the good graces of his King—and as for Lorvão, a female community would always be more dependent and obedient to the bishop than a male one, thus bringing an undeniable added value to the bishop's power and to his ascendancy over the King and the community in Lorvão.

Yet however enticing and probable this hypothesis may be, we lack the links to prove it conclusively.

What does seem to leave no room for doubt is that the direction of Innocent III's judgements changed halfway through the process. It is interesting to note that, although the whole affair may be rooted in the donation the bishop of Coimbra made to the royal infanta, it was not Pedro Soares who had to finance the litigation of the case and the costs of indemnifying the monks, but Teresa herself. The bishop's role was never questioned during the whole process and Pedro Soares remained almost always in the shadows, without his actions being qualified as uncanonical at any moment, or even being mentioned at length in the papal documentation that describes the matter. We only know of his participation during the course of events through fleeting allusions in papal letters and by his private letters to the Infanta that are kept in the archive of the monastery. And even if the legitimizing basis for the case is to be found precisely in his letters of concession to Teresa, since it is in those grants that the reasons for such a concession are to be found (the decadence and the decay of the coenobium—the “spontaneous”⁴⁰ renunciation by the abbot and the transfer of the monks, taking place under the notion that since they were under the jurisdiction of the bishop they needed to obey him) responsibility for the conflict is never imputed to Pedro Soares, nor does it seem to have been a problem at all. The narrative created and fed by everyone is that this process revolves around the question of “royal abuse” of authority, by the King or by his daughter. This time around we do possess the letters of the bishop, authenticated by beautiful and well-preserved seals of the prelate and the Infanta that endure to this day, ordering and authorising the King's daughter to commit such an “abuse”.

As for the papal letters, there can be no doubt about the ‘U-turn’ between the first letter commissioning the judges delegate in which the Pope simply ordered the monks to be reinstated and the royal abuse ended, and the intermediate and final judgments in which the Pope goes so far as to state, without revealing the slightest doubt, that the abbots of Lorvão had been iniquitous and had failed in their religious duties and that, therefore, the guardianship of the coenobium should be withdrawn from them.⁴¹

Although in his final judgement, the Pope determined that the monks should be compensated by the Infanta and restored to their monastery, as royal abuse had also been proven, it also determined that they should later be reinstated and relocated into other religious institutions as their sins had nevertheless been proved and the place needed to be reorganised and purified. It was therefore additionally ordered that, at the end of this tortuous procedure, the community of nuns should occupy the monastery and start building a holy community. Although this very un-Solomonic sentence is astonishing for its subtlety of procedure and its formal sinuosity, it leaves us in no doubt as to the latent awareness that a royal abuse was taking place. In its originality, however, the text of the judgement allowed the Pope to safeguard his position. Innocent III reaffirmed once more his sovereign rulership over ecclesiastic matters, he pleased the bishop of Coimbra and the King at the same time through a brilliant staging that created the illusion of proving the abbot and his monks right, while transferring to their shoulders the responsibility for their renunciation of the monastery by appealing to the notion of decadence and crimes *in spiritualibus et in temporalibus*.⁴² On the same occasion he took the opportunity to institutionalise the new Cistercian house of the King's daughter and to define the number of its occupants, legalising an otherwise abusive situation.

³⁹ Bul, n. 19.

⁴⁰ Marques (1980, 250) was the first to detect the subtleness of the introduction of the expression “spontaneously” when referring to the renunciation, an expression that was not present in the first letter of donation.

⁴¹ “(...) quia probatum est euidenter predictum monasterium per eosdem abbatem et monachos multis et magnis criminibus irretitos in spiritualibus et in temporalibus esse collapsum, ipsi de illo protinus excludantur et per monasteria que bene sint ordinanda singuli collocentur ut et locus inquinatus ab ipsis ab eorum spurcitiis emundetur et ipsi in locis aliis dignam agant penitentiam” (Bul, n. 287, *Causam que vertebatur*, November 1210).

⁴² Idem.

Who provided him with the information that the Pope echoes in his sentence of November 1210? Only the judges delegate, or were there some other interests at work in the Curia?

It is highly probable that the bishop of Coimbra himself was involved in this turnaround of pontifical judgement. In fact, the Pope had entrusted him with the task of implementing the sentences of territorial reparation for the *arras* of the kings of Castile and León, working together with the archbishops of Compostela and Toledo and with bishop Garcia de Tarazona⁴³ at a level that reveals a great familiarity with the Curia. Given the rank of the other judges of these cases, it is legitimate to wonder why the Archbishop of Braga was not chosen for this task instead of the bishop of Coimbra, since his other colleagues were the Archbishop of Compostela and the Archbishop of Toledo.

Perhaps it is not unreasonable to consider that Archbishop Martinho, who ruled the archdiocese until late 1209 and who had led the defence of Braga in Rome in 1199, had presented the King's cause there in too encomiastic terms and that the Pope wanted to moderate the balance of power within the episcopate by choosing a bishop whom he considered able to give him more guarantees of less commitment to temporal power than the Archbishop. This seems to have been the basis for the rulings of 1199 in the matter of the suffragans of the archdioceses of Braga and Compostela. Perhaps in this case we can contemplate the presence of a solution of a similar nature.⁴⁴

With the new Archbishop-elect of Braga, Pedro, who was to rule the archdiocese from the end of 1209, the issue is even more difficult, because Pedro Mendes, who before being elected to Braga had been bishop of Lamego, was undoubtedly a man of the King and, as such, could prove less worthy of the pontiff's confidence than the bishop of Coimbra, who had always been so faithful to the principles dictated by Rome.

However, in the specific case of Lervão, although for a short time, the bishop of Coimbra had also shown himself to be able to become a man of the King.

4. Mediators and results

The choice of judges delegate appointed to this matter reveals yet another facet of the affair, which confirms the orchestrated attempt to influence a papal judgement in favour of the King's and the bishop's cause. Once more, we see the use of ecclesiastics who were well acquainted with each other and well-informed about the cases with which they were entrusted.

In the case of Lervão against the bishop of Coimbra and the King, the bishop of Porto, the bishop of Lisbon, the bishop and dean of Zamora and the abbot of Moreuella were called upon, preferentially and alternately, to conduct the case and pass judgment.⁴⁵

However, when the complaints had been confined to presenting only the cases of non-compliance with the abbot's obligations towards the bishop or the bishop towards the monastery, the judges delegate chosen were more "domestic": the Archbishop of Braga, Martinho Pires, the dean of Viseu Mestre Soeiro, the abbot of Grijó, in 1199,⁴⁶ Paio, prior and P. canon of S. Vicente de Fora, Fernando, monk of Alcobaça in 1202,⁴⁷ bishop Martinho Rodrigues of Porto and the abbot of Maceira Dão in 1203.⁴⁸ It would have seemed quite sufficient to have resorted to these men to settle questions of the payment of tithes or non-attendance at diocesan synods or the appointment of parish priests without the bishop's consent. But when the issue went beyond this scope and became a case of royal interference in ecclesiastical liberties, it then seemed necessary to resort to more specialised help from outside the "Portuguese" dioceses or those of considerable renown. Such was the case with the use of the controversial but outstanding canonist Martin of Zamora, a man whom Innocent III, despite his admiration and respect, had already excommunicated for his excessive commitment to the interests of the King of Castile.⁴⁹ Pragmatic and erudite, by 1206, the turn-of-the-century misfortunes he had been involved in,

⁴³ Bul, n. 213, 230 and 293.

⁴⁴ For the argumentation of Martinho Rodrigues in Rome, and the difficult relationship with the Pope, see Branco 2018.

⁴⁵ Bul, n. 195-196, 236-237, 241-242, 258-262, 286-287.

⁴⁶ Bul, n. 110.

⁴⁷ Bul, n. 161.

⁴⁸ Bul, n. 195.

⁴⁹ Linehan (2006, 461-513) draws a detailed picture of the juridical culture of Zamora and of the very important role that the canons of that diocese were to play in Portuguese and Iberian judicial affairs.

which had earned him papal reprimands, had been almost forgotten. Since the peace of Cabrerros, the kings had returned to their “good Christian” behaviour, so the use of Martin Airas was once again acceptable.

Bishop Martin and his dean were not unknown in Portuguese circles, least of all to bishop Pedro Soares. It seems very unlikely that one of the judges who had dictated the harshest sentence ever handed down against the monastery of Santa Cruz, in 1201-1203,⁵⁰ did not enjoy the sympathy of the bishop who now wished to plead his cause once again. Nor should it be considered a coincidence that in 1204 it had been the same bishop who was called upon to give sentence on the issue that arose in the definition of the boundaries between Coimbra and Guarda, together with Martinho Rodrigues of Porto, a case that had also provided the setting for an abusive and violent intervention by the King’s officials in favour of the bishop of Guarda.⁵¹ He would also be the judge called upon to settle the question of Sancho I with the bishop of Porto⁵² and, later, of Afonso II with his sisters.⁵³

Such choice would have been very pleasing to the bishop, and as welcomed as that of dean João de Zamora, who had paired up with bishop Martin in all the above cases, and the Cistercian abbot of Moreruela, Herberto who, from this date until the death of Sancho I, would appear recurrently either in the cause of Teresa and Lorvão, or, in 1210, in the case which then saw King Sancho I opposing the bishop of Porto.⁵⁴ Perhaps his performance, and the concords which it was then possible to reach, justify the personal donation that this same king made to Herberto almost at the time of his death, in January 1211, of one of his *reguengos* in Miranda do Douro and 100 *aureos*, to institute an anniversary in honour of his soul in the monastery of Moreruela,⁵⁵ where Portuguese kings and nobles had many close connections.⁵⁶

In this specific case of Lorvão, we possess a valuable description of the trial of the case, in which we can follow the steps of the matter at the stage when it was being raised and discussed. We are thus allowed to “watch” the sessions in which the judgement of the dean of Zamora differed from that of his bishop and respective chapter. The same applies to the description of bishop Martin’s attempts to persuade his reluctant dean to accept his arguments in favour of the Queen, to whose claims the other was initially reluctant to accede. A brilliant argument by Martinho and the weakness of the evidence and contestations brought by the lawyers of Lorvão led the dean to agree with the sentence proposed by Martinho, favourable to Teresa and Sancho I.

There seems to be no doubt about the contours of the sentence to be given. Nor can there be any doubt about the length of this process and the very serious accusations that fell directly on the King and his daughter which are often confused throughout the narrative of the dispute, and the “subliminal” level at which the intervention of the bishop of Coimbra is systematically played out. It is also in this document that we are brought into contact with the lawyers of the monastery and of the King and his daughter in a legal procedure that we had already begun to encounter at the end of the previous century, but which from this moment on became almost a routine. Nothing can be done without resorting to the specialized services of the lawyers who present their legal arguments to the judges delegate. Even though the documentation now refers in less detail to Canon and Civil Law citations than at the end of the previous century, the legal procedure remains the same.

As for the other judges delegate chosen to deal with this matter, the choice of Martinho do Porto does not raise any suspicion, since his loyalty also seems to align at this time with the bishop of Coimbra. Besides the cases in which he had to share the responsibility with Martinho of Zamora⁵⁷—they knew each other well—he was often used to solve problems or implement sentences concerning the numerous questions raised by Pedro Soares in Rome, especially in the year 1203. His previous opinions and the execution of sentences he had carried out, had always favoured the prelate of Coimbra.⁵⁸

All of them seem to have been carefully chosen so that their contribution would not harm the interests of the bishop and the king. One might even wonder, according to the rule that, of the three chosen judges delegate, there should be one for each party and the third one should be neutral who could have represented the interests of Lorvão?

⁵⁰ So harsh that Innocent III would revoke it partially in his final judgment in his *Cum Olim*.

⁵¹ Bul, n. 216-218.

⁵² Bul, n. 279-284, 320-321.

⁵³ Bul, n. 159, 316-317.

⁵⁴ Bul, n. 236-237, 258-261, 278-280, 283-284.

⁵⁵ DSI, n. 312.

⁵⁶ Alfonso 1981, 149-161; Cocheril 1966; Mourinho 1964; Krus 1994, 83-85, where the connections between the Portuguese nobility and the monastery of Moreruela and the consequences of such proximity are very apparent and fruitful.

⁵⁷ In 1204 he was nominated to serve with Martinho of Zamora in the quarrel between Coimbra and Guarda (Bul, n. 216-218).

⁵⁸ Bul, n. 191-199.

Only one of the elected judges, the bishop of Lisbon, Soeiro I, might appear to have been a player whose alignment cannot be so clearly defined. Perhaps he was destined to represent the monastery of Lorvão rather than the King. Whatever the reason for his appointment to the college of judges, the truth is that his role was minimal since he even refused to perform the duties for which he had been appointed. We know that he was a regular canon and that he knew Pedro of Coimbra, since he had already shared the task of judging matrimonial cases with Pedro in 1199.⁵⁹ It was also Soeiro of Lisbon who had appealed against prior Gonçalo Dias of Santa Cruz and the usurpation that, with the support and promotion of the King, he had carried out in 1203.⁶⁰ He was also the one who, together with another Master Soeiro, bishop-elect of Évora, and Master Mendo, Archdeacon of Lisbon, and assisted by the King's arbiters, Julião Pais and João Fernandes, had helped Pedro Soares reach an agreement with the Templars, in April 1206.⁶¹ Yet this was also the same Soeiro who had maintained and would maintain in the future with Pedro Soares, an open conflict over parishes whose juridical subjection was not well determined, so it is not at all easy to define which interests he represented in this case.⁶²

The lawyers of the King and of the Infanta Teresa were men from the chapter of the See of Lisbon, or of Coimbra, and therefore in close relationship with their bishops, even if not necessarily a cordial relationship. The lawyers of the monastery of Lorvão are almost invariably regular canons from various Augustinian houses, from Grijó to Santa Cruz de Coimbra, with some contributions from S. Vicente de Fora of Lisbon.⁶³ The bishop of Lisbon would still sustain open quarrels with the monastery of S. Vicente de Fora for some years, and when, in 1205,⁶⁴ the abbot of Lorvão was called to be a judge delegate of the Pope, it was precisely to solve the issue of the bishop of Lisbon with the monastery of S. Vicente, a function he was appointed to perform together with the prior and cantor of Alcobaça, two Cistercians.⁶⁵ If we coordinate these confusing and sometimes almost contradictory elements, we seem to be totally enmeshed in a network of relationships whose connecting and logical thread almost completely escapes us, but which speaks eloquently of a world with a very close and interdependent interweaving of influences.

These men were well acquainted with one another as well as with their respective loyalties. But the available documentation does not allow us to understand them further.

There is one thing we cannot doubt, however: the connection between the monastery of Lorvão and the regular canons, from where they recruited their lawyers on an exclusive basis.⁶⁶

In those years, the king and the Infanta Teresa had appointed the cantor of Lisbon to act as their lawyer in the cause of Lorvão.⁶⁷ This was none other than Fernando Peres, the nephew of the royal chancellor, who had also been a notary at the curia, and who would later found another Cistercian house, S. Paulo de Almaziva, near Coimbra and Lorvão, and end his life as a Dominican.⁶⁸ The network tightens even more. He was undoubtedly an experienced lawyer and unquestionably a man of the King. Later, Alfonso II would also use his services as his father and his sister had done.⁶⁹

Despite the disturbing evidence of royal abuses, bishop Soeiro I of Lisbon nonetheless served the royal interests. The enquiry to which his seal was attached, the authenticity of which had been questioned by the lawyers of Lorvão, was the enquiry in which several monks of Lorvão had avowed that they had never been forced into any of the attitudes which their companions had claimed were the grounds for the illegitimacy of the royal

⁵⁹ Bul, n. 113-114.

⁶⁰ Branco 1999, II, 29-30.

⁶¹ Composition in April of 1206. ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1ª incorporação, m. 9, doc. 21.

⁶² Discussion over the parishes of Alpedriz, Pederneira and some non-identified others (Bul, n. 199).

⁶³ Their names show up in the report of the sessions sent by the bishop of Zamora to Innocent III on the 30th July 1208, explaining the different phases of the process (Bul, n. 258-261).

⁶⁴ Bul, n. 219 and 231. The other judges were Fernando, prior of Alcobaça and Paio, cantor of Alcobaça.

⁶⁵ Bul, n. 219 and 231.

⁶⁶ In the above-mentioned report of 1208 (Bul, n. 260) the account of all the lawyers of Lorvão is provided to us. They use the *prepositus* of Santa Cruz of Coimbra and the prior of Grijó. They resort to use the seal of S. Vicente de Fora of Lisbon, alleging that they do not have a seal of their own, which is very significant.

⁶⁷ Later on, to be given to the cantor of Coimbra, Master Martim Pais (Bul, n. 260).

⁶⁸ The full biography of this multifaceted cleric, for whose life we possess an unusual quantity of documentation, can be found in Santos 1998, 55-75.

⁶⁹ Note also how in 1206-1208 the archdeacon Mestre Vicente and the chanter Fernando Peres were already cohabiting in the chapter of Lisbon, thus enhancing another consistent series of interactions between men who are usually seen separately. Fernando Peres, nephew of the chancellor and cousin of the famous dean of Coimbra, Julião Juliães, once notary of the chancery, should be able to establish the proximity to the King. In the same years, it is possible to attest the activity in this same chapter of Mestre Soeiro Viegas, the dean since 1188, when he received a mule in the codicil to the first will of Sancho I (DSI, n. 50), and in January 1211 would be elected bishop of Lisbon. Both of them would later play an influential role in the quarrels between King Afonso II and his sisters, as is well known.

proceedings and where they swore that the renunciation had been made of their own free will. The report of the enquiry that was set up to find out the truth of the accusations made by the monks of Lorvão concerning the forgery of the documents in question, although it recognized that there were formal differences between the seals, found and decreed that the documents had not been forged because the abbot's seal and that of the bishop of Lisbon had been placed there by the will of those involved, as the lawyers acting on behalf of Teresa had proven.

The question of the monastery of Lorvão would not be definitively solved during the lifetime of Sancho I, but the way the whole process was carried out and especially the important episodes of 1208 were a decisive step in that process and elucidate considerably the entire affair.

In the years between the granting of the *Cum Olim* by Innocent III passing sentence on the conflict between Santa Cruz and Santa Maria de Coimbra⁷⁰ and the violent bulls reprimanding the King over questions against the bishop of Porto and their aftermath,⁷¹ a new factor seems to have emerged: an atmosphere appearing to exude harmony and signs of good understanding between the bishop of Coimbra and the king. The agreement that may be detected between Sancho I and Pedro Soares over the policies to adopt towards Lorvão during the central years of the quarrel seems to mark the end of a brief phase of truces that had already lasted for some time and that seems to have solidified after the resolution of the quarrels between the See of Coimbra and the Monastery of Santa Cruz of Coimbra. The years 1204-1208 seem to have been years of calm and peace between Sancho I and his prelates, especially with the bishop with whom he always seems to have had more difficulties, Pedro Soares of Coimbra.

During that time we can attest to a very active Pedro Soares, whether he was trying to implement the papal resolutions concerning the separation of Alfonso IX and Berengaria, granting Lorvão to the Infanta Teresa or promoting the administration of his diocese and its heritage, by granting charters, buying, and selling properties, or authorizing laymen to build churches.⁷²

Another person that seems to have been in peace with the King is his chancellor, Julião: not only was he called upon to act as arbitrator in the conciliation between the prelate and the Temple, upholding the bishop's rights in his judgement,⁷³ but it was also in the year of 1206 that Julião made an important donation *pro anima*—(his) and that of his brother, the former dean Gonçalo Dias—to the cathedral of Coimbra, establishing his tomb there.⁷⁴ The year before, his son, Julião Juliães, had been elected dean of the Cathedral, and sometime between 1207 and 1208 his nephew Fernando Peres, the cantor of Lisbon, was fighting for the cause of the Infanta Teresa, alongside the King and the bishop of Coimbra. These are all signs of calm and peace, but also of consolidation of networks of influential men in the King's Curia.

However, this was also the ideal moment for Sancho I to move forward in the implementation of the model of interventionism that he had inaugurated with his intromissions in the quarrels of the regular canons of Santa Cruz, both in the dispute with the bishop and in the abusive nomination of the new prior of Santa Cruz, Gonçalo Dias, in 1203. Much freer from the military pressures that had conditioned his position at the end of the previous century, and with the tension caused by bad agricultural years, disease, and famine somewhat relieved, he would now cast his image as the king who moderated conflicts and interfered in ecclesiastical affairs beyond what should have been his reserve, despite doing so under the guise of ensuring harmony between the parts of the body over which he presided, the Kingdom. While on the one hand, under the cover of that persona, he promoted various concords between the bishop of Coimbra and his traditional opponents, as happened in 1205-1206 with the Templars⁷⁵ and the prior João César de Santa Cruz,⁷⁶ ordered the demarcation of the Almalaguês estate for the benefit of the monastery of St Jorge of Coimbra,⁷⁷ and donated goods to the bishop of Lamego⁷⁸ and other religious institutions, on the other hand, the King was making his presence in these agreements almost indispensable.

And so, we return to the idea of royal abuse, this time of abuse that is recurrently reported in descriptions where the King's officials exercise violence and non-compliance to any provision that might go against the affirmation of the sovereignty of the King's power over all others.

⁷⁰ Issued on the 26th June 1203 (Bul, n. 184-195).

⁷¹ Issued on the 23rd February 1211 (Bul, n. 295-297).

⁷² ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1ª incorporação, m. 9, docs. 20, 29 and 31.

⁷³ ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1ª incorporação, m. 9, doc. 21.

⁷⁴ ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1ª incorporação, m. 9, doc. 19.

⁷⁵ ANTT, Cabido da Sé de Coimbra, 1ª incorporação, m. 9, doc. 21.

⁷⁶ DSI, n. 255-257.

⁷⁷ ANTT, S. Jorge de Coimbra, m. 5, doc. 4.

⁷⁸ DSI, n. 254-246.

The signs of appeasement and good understanding between the King and the ecclesiastics carried in themselves well-marked indicators of an unavoidable growth in royal power and of the King's capacity and will to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs, and of his assertion as a power that was, in its very nature, superior to all others. In 1209, whilst trying to regulate the issues that arose against the bishop of Porto, the King took the opportunity to affirm his ability to define the relationships between the various strata of power, councils, ecclesiastical lords and lay lords. At the same time, he once again had the prelate and the members of his chapter imprisoned, expelled and deprived of their property, as he had allegedly already done in Coimbra in the years preceding the turn of the century.

Good relations between the King and his prelates were bound to turn sour, and Innocent III's invective, recalling the paradigmatic example of Ozias, would quickly increase in intensity and pace. In the end, the years 1204-1208 seem only to have been the calm before the storm.

Rome always maintained a cautious attitude when addressing the Portuguese king. In papal missives, the tone never really leaves the emphasis on systematic suspicion as regards the King's true intentions, even if for a brief episode, as in the case of Lorrvão, the Pope seems to accede to the King's ambitions. However, and even though the coenobium was essentially given to Teresa, the affirmation that there had been an abuse of authority by the King and his daughter was never withdrawn, and the Infanta Teresa would be obliged to pay the costs of the lawsuit and of the reparations to the monks of Lorrvão. The responsibility of someone we see working in the shadows, the bishop of Coimbra, and of the group of judges delegate and the network of ecclesiastics that favoured the bishop's ambition to reaffirm his power over the monastery of Lorrvão in full, were almost completely washed out from the narrative lead by the Papacy.

5. Closure

Despite the calm, the Papacy did not lose heart, and at every available opportunity it reaffirmed the need for the separation of powers and defined how Sancho I had no right to exaggerate his powers. This happened in 1203 and 1204, when the question of the abusive nomination of the prior of Santa Cruz arose, in the case of the delimitation of the dioceses of Guarda and Coimbra, with Lorrvão in 1205-1208, and in every missive addressed by the Pope to the King, or to the judges delegate charged with solving the case of Lorrvão, as we have seen.

Despite the fact that the grant of Lorrvão to Teresa had been effectively made by bishop Pedro Soares, and that the subsequent conflict and negotiations had obviously his fingerprints all over them, leading us to recognise a well-orchestrated manoeuvring of the bishop of Coimbra and of his clientele (or at least of the people he knew and trusted to act on his behalf) which was aimed at neutralizing the Benedictine community of Lorrvão, his figure hardly ever appears in official papal letters.

In the papal narrative of events, what is highlighted is the ambition of the King and by his daughter, the abuses that they might be ready to impose on the Church and the need to keep them under control vis a vis the potential danger that their burgeoning power posed for the ecclesiastics.

Lorrvão would finally be granted to Teresa so that she might reform it and transform it into a female Cistercian house and then slowly disappear as a main actor in the course of events.

The goals of Pedro Soares, bishop of Coimbra, were totally achieved. Lorrvão would become a very important Cistercian house, attracting not only some female close relatives of the canons of the See of Coimbra⁷⁹ but also, shortly thereafter, female members of the most distinguished noble families of the Kingdom. Indeed, thriving in wealth and prestige due surely to the influence of Teresa as its patron, Lorrvão never again posed any threat or caused any serious problem whatsoever to the episcopate of Coimbra, as had so often been the case under its previous regime.

The Cistercian female community of Lorrvão would slide slowly into oblivion as a political actor and as a cultural magnet. The influence of its community would never again equal that of its male predecessors.

As for bishop Pedro Soares, before he himself fell into political and personal disgrace, once more, he must have been proud of himself for the shrewdness he displayed in this very complex process.

⁷⁹ Luís Rêpas (2021, I, 275) mentions the example of a nun called Boa and an abbess called Goda who were nieces of two canons of the See of Coimbra. I thank the author for this very interesting information.

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