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Introduction

This article explores the ways in which gender was used in order to transform an exiled and uneducated illegitimate child into a prince. Our study revolves around a member of the Portuguese royal family, Afonso (c.1480–1504), who was politically exiled during the reign of King João II (r.1481–1495), and later brought to the court after João's passing. His exile took a peculiar form: he was to grow up in hiding with peasants, only to learn his true genealogical identity when he was about fourteen years old. We will argue that there were two key aspects to this process of restoration. On one hand, family politics of different configurations had a major impact on his return. Although an illegitimate child, Afonso was a member of the royal family and political needs of the house Avis-Beja impelled King Manuel I (r.1495–1521) to rehabilitate him, thus acting like a parental figure in the absence of his biological father (Diogo, deceased in 1484). On the other, the introduction to his new status had to conform to a court environment where the ideals of chivalry formed part of an archetype of the expression of manhood. Both factors were linked in his transition to a new identity: leaving the peasantry and assuming a position where knightly masculinity was crucial to his political survival. All of this occurred in an atmosphere where confrontation between different forms of masculinity was frequent and the strict courtly hierarchy forced him to defer to his superiors in several ways; not only to King Manuel I, but also to his brother-in-law Fernando de Meneses (b.1463), the marquis of Vila Real, one of the most powerful courtiers of the time.

It is impossible not to evoke R. W. Connell's pioneering concept of hegemonic masculinity with regard to the monarch's authority, submissive masculinities, and the power relations of the late medieval and the early modern court.¹ Within the context of this article, King Manuel I and his close counterparts enacted the model of hegemonic

¹ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press and Blackwell, 1987), pp. 183–8.

masculinity, therefore assuming a dominant position towards other groups. Afonso's restoration came with a specific agenda. He had to redefine himself and assume new gender practices in order to embody the hegemonic model. While embracing virtues associated with knightly masculinity – such as physical prowess, honour, love, and piety – he also had to play a subordinate role towards the monarch. However, the equilibrium between the duties and obligations of his multiple identities as knight, courtier, father and family subordinate member was certainly not easy to achieve, especially taking into account his upbringing, as he transformed from boyhood into being a young married prince. By acquiring and enacting knightly masculinity, Afonso was also positioning himself in a favourable situation to marry and, eventually, generate progeny.² Yet, the lack of a formal education as a young nobleman could potentially pose problems for a future leader. Not having benefited from a proper education may have caused him increased anxiety in his new situation as an adult.³ Furthermore, Afonso was not raised in court with an elder prince and thus did not enjoy the benefits of *criação*, which created strong emotional ties among its participants, precisely because those developed over large spans of time, establishing enduring relationships.⁴

Much has been written in the past decades about chivalry and the expression of knightly masculinity, often through the use of violence. The majority of these works have drawn from North and Central Europe, relegating masculinity in the Iberian Peninsula to the backstage.⁵ Moreover, the tendency to treat late medieval Iberia as a single unit also has its shortcomings. While the kingdoms of Castile and Navarre have received some attention from historians, the same cannot be said of Portugal, where studies on masculinity during the pre-modern period are still at an initial stage.⁶ Due to this disproportion, masculinity in Portugal is a topic worthy of exploration and this

² Marriage was not a vehicle to enact knightly masculinity, but instead an eventual goal. See Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 56–7.

³ On this subject, see Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1–34 (4–6).

⁴ Rita Costa Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society. Kings and Nobles in Late Medieval Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 204–290 (207).

⁵ Karras, *From Boys to Men*, pp. 19–66 (22); Marianna G. Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo, 'Why and How Gender Matters?', in Marianna G. Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo (eds), *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1–19; Megan Elizabeth Harvard, 'Representations of Elite Masculinity in Medieval Castilian Narrative', (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St Louis, 2014), pp. 1–16 (3–4).

⁶ Manuela Santos Silva and Ana Maria S.A. Rodrigues, 'Women's and Gender History', in José Mattoso (dir.), Maria de Lurdes Rosa, Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa and Maria João Branco (eds), *The Historiography of Medieval Portugal c. 1950–2010* (Lisbon: IEM–FCSH/UNL, 2011), pp. 483–97.

particular case study will contribute to an eventual comparison between ways of expressing masculinity in Iberia (in this case, Portugal) and other European regions.

Discussions about whether chivalric codes affected the knight's everyday life have been intense. There is some agreement that these highly ceremonial sets of standards had implications on the behavioural patterns of late medieval and even early modern nobility. Disagreement among scholars usually starts when the aim is to learn about the exact extent of these phenomena. It is legitimate to say that in times of conflict, such as the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), this tendency to rely on chivalric codes was reinforced. The embodiment of this ethos occurred even within those who did not participate directly in the war. Many of these chivalric features (valour, physical prowess, piety, etc), were present during typical aristocratic games, such as tournaments, jousts and hunting, where political communication took place. During approximately one century (1481–1580), Portugal experienced a period of peace within its continental frontiers, but chivalric ethos prevailed, while not exclusively, as an inspiration to court behaviour. Furthermore, the creation of military orders and confraternities exclusively formed by knights propitiated the transmission of chivalric ideals, while providing their members with a sense of belonging.⁷

It is true that a large proportion of the work on this subject has given emphasis to the implications of chivalric codes on the expression of manhood. As a result, medieval and early modern studies that research the processes in which the monarchy used knightly masculinity as a tool of social control and maintenance of a strictly defined hierarchy have only begun to appear in recent years.⁸ This topic is especially relevant since the crown's courtly festivities – including tournaments, jousting, and the so-called *jogo de canas* (game of canes) – constitute a perfect basis for observation, because they require objects arranged in a particular order to promote a constructed image of the self. Thus, attention shall be paid to Afonso's physical display during such spectacles.

Material culture and visual representation have both been the subject of study among historians with an interest in the fashioning of the self-image. Despite this fact, few studies by Iberian historians have seized on the opportunity of what objects and

⁷ Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 1–17; Richard Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 30–3; Jesus D. Rodríguez-Velasco, *Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp. 15–45.

⁸ See, for instance, Katherine Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 17–45.

physical appearance represent when studying the construction of gender.⁹ With reference to this article, it is wise to remember that the multicultural Iberian environment is relevant to such studies. The presence of the Islamic civilisation over many centuries in late medieval and early modern Iberia constitutes a relevant topic in our approach. Scholars have argued that during the period of the *Reconquista*, Castilian propaganda relied on diminishing Muslim manliness by representing Muslim men as docile and defeated individuals. Sexual and behavioural characteristics attributed to them also enhanced the process of their feminisation. By contrast, Christian men were depicted as extremely manly and responsible for expelling the former from the Iberian Peninsula through physical prowess and military achievement.¹⁰ Even if Portugal's acquisition of territory from the Muslims was complete by the mid-thirteenth century, many features of Islamic culture were still in evidence in Portugal. Those contacts were reinforced by interactions with Muslims in Morocco during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, therefore influencing a man's self-representation according to the binomial attraction/repulse. Societies tend to test their men by forcing them into conflict with one another, either friends or foes, so that the individual will highlight himself and reassure his manliness vis-à-vis a wider audience.¹¹ Thus, we are particularly interested in exploring the material impact of Muslim features in men's attire and techniques of the body with regard to dress and public games.¹² In short, material culture played a key role because it gave the prince all the visual attributes of his new status, as well as the means to create a new self.

We shall briefly introduce Afonso and his family context, in order to give an idea of his life in relation to the changing political and dynastic contexts. Then, we will analyse the expression of masculinity in the Portuguese court, using the court spectacle as a basis for observation, thus relating gender with material culture in a courtly environment. This procedure is possible by analysing a rare receipt book (1500–1502)

⁹ Globally speaking, there is already substantial scholarship on the subject. See, for instance, Carolyn Springer, *Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) and Will Fischer, 'The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (1) (2001), pp. 155–87.

¹⁰ Louise Mirrer, 'Representing "Other" Men. Muslims, Jews, and Masculine Ideals in Medieval Castilian Epic and Ballad', in Clare A. Lees, Thelma S. Fenster and Jo Ann McNamara (eds), *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 169–86.

¹¹ David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 12–4.

¹² We have used the concept of techniques of the body as defined by Marcel Mauss, 'Techniques of the Body (1935)', in Marcel Mauss and Nathan Schlanger (eds), *Techniques, Technology and Civilization* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 77–95.

from Afonso's household, containing records of objects such as clothes, military gear and horse equipment.¹³ As the ledger is truncated and supplementary sources are thin, we must stress the speculative nature of this article.

Character and Context: Constable Afonso (c.1480–1504)

Constable Afonso was the illegitimate son of Diogo, duke of Viseu-Beja (d. 1483), and Leonor de Sottomayor y Portugal (d. 1522), and was conceived while his father was being held hostage in the court of the Catholic Monarchs during the so-called *terçarias de Moura*, an agreement which ended the war of succession between Queen Isabel of Castile and her half-niece Juana (1462–1530).¹⁴ Both sides of the conflict ensured peace through detaining children from the opposite party: the Castilians would hold Diogo, the duke of Beja–Viseu, and the Portuguese king would keep his only son and heir Afonso (1475–1491), together with the eldest daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, Princess Isabel.¹⁵ Afonso's mother, Leonor, was married to the much older Alfonso of Aragon, the master of the Order of Calatrava and duke of Villahermosa.¹⁶ This duke was the illegitimate son of King Juan II of Aragon and thus half-brother to the king of Aragon, Fernando *el Católico*. Leonor de Sottomayor y Portugal was one of the ladies-in-waiting to the queen of Castile Isabel *la Católica* and the daughter of Juan de Sottomayor and Isabel of Portugal. Thus, she was also the great-granddaughter of Prince João, son of Pedro I, King of Portugal (r.1357–1367).¹⁷ As to constable Afonso, although dying very young, he had a daughter, Brites (Beatriz) de Lara (b.1502), who later married Pedro de Meneses (b. 1487), 3rd Marquis of Vila Real (firstborn of Fernando de Meneses).

¹³ DGRQ/TT, *Contos do Reino e Casa*, Núcleo Antigo, liv. 798. In spite of its fragmentary character, the source is almost unique among Portuguese early-sixteenth century collections.

¹⁴ Most primary sources concerning the *terçarias* can be read in Antonio de la Torre and Luis Suárez Fernández (eds), *Documentos referentes a las relaciones con Portugal durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos* (Valladolid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1958–1963) vol. 1, pp. 179–239, vol. 2, pp. 100–267. See also Luís A. Fonseca, *D. João II* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2005), pp. 50–9; João Paulo Costa, *D. Manuel I 1469–1521: um príncipe do Renascimento* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2005), pp. 51–4; Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *De princesa a rainha-velha: Leonor de Lencastre* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2011), pp. 61–71; Isabel dos Guimarães Sá and Michel Combet, *Rainhas Consortes de D. Manuel I* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2012), pp. 34–43.

¹⁵ Saul António Gomes, *D. Afonso V* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 2006), pp. 198–241; Tarsicio de Azcona, *Juana de Castilla, mal llamada la Beltraneja* (Madrid: Esfera de los Libros, 2007), pp. 174–204; Joseph Pérez, *Isabel y Fernando Los Reyes Católicos* (San Sebastián: Nerea, 1988), pp. 60–73.

¹⁶ José Navarro la Torre, 'Don Alonso de Aragón, la «espada» o «lanza» de Juan II', *Revista de Historia Jerónimo Zurita* 41–42 (1982), pp. 159–204; Sophia Menache, 'Una personificación del ideal caballeresco en el medievo tardío: Don Alonso de Aragón', *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia Medieval* 6 (1987), pp. 9–29.

¹⁷ António Caetano de Sousa, *História Genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa* (Coimbra: Atlântida, 1946) vol. 11, p. 387; Manuel José da Costa Felgueiras Gayo, *Nobiliário de Famílias de Portugal* (Braga: Carvalhos de Basto, 1989) vol. 5, p. 35.

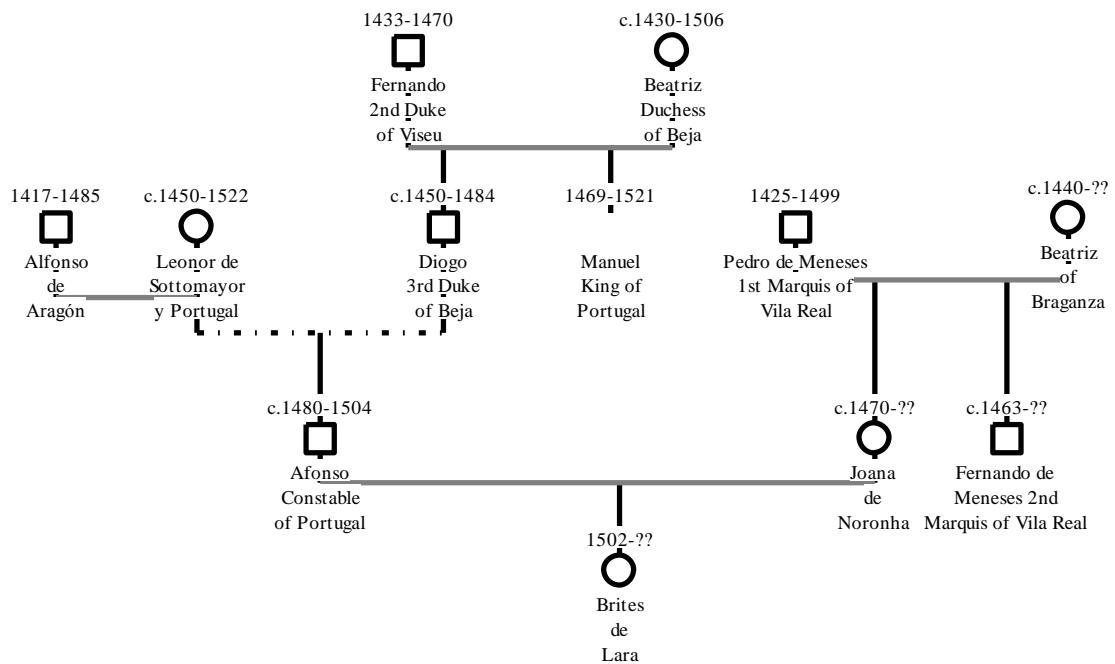


Fig. 1: Genealogy of Constable Afonso, c.1480–1504 (simplified)

As was the case with many illegitimate children whose fathers admitted paternity, Afonso was taken from his mother and entrusted to his paternal family. However, the duke of Viséu–Beja’s involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow his first cousin and brother-in-law, King João II of Portugal, led to his sudden death as a traitor, stabbed repeatedly by the monarch himself in July 1484. Therefore, Afonso was left entirely in the care of his paternal grandmother (Beatriz, duchess of Beja, also the mother-in-law to João II) and entrusted to farmers who raised him in secret. In 1496, when he was between fourteen and sixteen years old, his uncle (the new monarch and brother of the deceased Duke Diogo), Manuel I (r. 1495–1521) reincorporated him. By 1500, Manuel had nominated his nephew constable, the *condestável do reino* (chief of the army), providing him with a bride at the same time. The post was deemed adequate for someone so closely related to the king by blood and it was probably more suitable to ascribe this role to a young man whose education might not have been very sophisticated insofar as literacy was concerned and who also lacked behavioural skills.¹⁸ The role surely increased Afonso’s capacity to obtain sumptuous personal property,

¹⁸ Such was not the case with either his father or his uncles, whom we know to have been carefully educated by private tutors. See Isabel dos Guimarães Sá and Hélder Carvalho, ‘The World of Constable D. Afonso (c.1480–1504): Glimpses of Portuguese Dynastic Politics, Noble Household and Material Culture’, *Portuguese Studies Review* 21 (2013), pp. 153–71.

thereby reinforcing his image as a chivalric warrior, which he could exhibit in hunting as well as Iberian courtly games (jousting, mummeries performed during royal feasts and the game of canes).¹⁹

Afonso's case illustrates one particular moment: the coming of age, a complete assuming of manhood and the transitioning from dependent nobleman into marriage and becoming the head of household. Whilst he must have been retrieved from his peasant foster parents between fourteen and sixteen years of age, at a point marking the transition into adulthood, his marriage was a further step towards autonomy.

Although in possession of his new status as head of household, one can imagine that Afonso would have been present at the royal court, just like his grandmother Beatriz, if she was not at her own home in Beja (province of Alentejo). Thus, it is possible that he would have had to compete with other males for political legitimation in living the highly mobile life of courtiers. Despite this, he spent large periods of time in Beja, where he is known to have died in 1504. We might even hypothesise that he considered this town his home, near to his grandmother who had taken over responsibility for him during his early life in clandestinity. It is worth repeating that his childhood, an undercover existence, was not favourable for him to receive instruction that was usually given to young noblemen.²⁰ Still, his new situation as constable and his marriage to a member of the house of Vila Real granted him a privileged position to develop features associated with his status in the highest ranks of the royal court.

Shifting Contexts: Family, Gender and Political Power

A period of conspiracies against João II followed the end of the *terçarias* in 1483, beginning with the annihilation of the duchy of Braganza, the duke being tried and executed and his children escaping to the Castilian court. The following year, the king's suspicions about a second conspiracy in which the main perpetrator would have been Diogo, the constable's father, resulted in his murder at João's own hands.²¹ Diogo's successor, as the next in line, was to be his brother Manuel, who was given one of his titles thereby becoming the duke of Beja.

¹⁹ Whilst jousting involved two men on horseback, cane games were held in teams of six individuals who threw canes at their opponent: see Noel Fallows, *Jousting in Medieval and Renaissance Iberia* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 267–304.

²⁰ Karras, *From Boys*, pp. 28–33.

²¹ Garcia de Resende, *Crónica de D. João II e Miscelânea* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 1973), p. 80.

The new duke became king of Portugal in unpredictable circumstances. João II only had one legitimate heir to the throne, Afonso, who died in a horse accident in July 1491 and as a result of this, he designated Manuel, duke of Beja, as his heir in his last will (1495). As king, Manuel would rehabilitate the duchy of Braganza and place his own family in power.

As an illegitimate child, Afonso's future possibilities had been limited and he probably would have remained a peasant had his uncle not succeeded to the throne and promoted him to be constable of the kingdom. In addition to this, Manuel was not married at the time and the scarcity of heirs to the throne compelled him to position his potential successors through marriage. Only after the king's second marriage, to Maria, a daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, did Manuel start to produce progeny.²² During the period from 1495 until 1502, where there existed a lack of potential heirs to the throne, three individuals had been well placed to succeed: Jorge, the illegitimate son of Manuel's predecessor, João II (who favoured Jorge to succeed); Jaime, who was the new duke of Braganza; and Afonso. All three married in the course of 1500, shortly before the king's second marriage. Of the three, Jaime of Braganza was undoubtedly the most likely to succeed, as the king designated him as heir during his trip to Castile and Aragon in 1498.²³

It is difficult to imagine the personality of Afonso and how he fared in society since the sources do not document this information. Neither is there sufficient iconographic and pictorial information. Until the mid-sixteenth century when painters such as Antonio Moro and Alonso Sanchez Coelho depicted the Portuguese royal family, portraits of monarchs and their relatives are rare and the few that exist are imprecise about the identity of the persons portrayed.²⁴ Hence, information about bodies, faces and beards are conspicuously absent for Portugal, compelling researchers working from the perspective of material culture to use alternative ways of obtaining a coherent set of data. Visions of gender must have played an important part. All the possessions (material and symbolic) bestowed upon Afonso after his return from exile are not only related to power and status. His promotion to constable and subsequent marriage, the equipment for his horses, his armour and clothing – would have all been

²² Excluding his first son, Miguel da Paz (d.1500), from his first marriage with Isabel of Castile and Aragon (1470–1498).

²³ His absence from Portugal lasted from 29 March to 9 October 1498.

²⁴ Annemarie Jordan, *Retrato de Corte em Portugal: o legado de António Moro (1552–1572)* (Lisbon: Quetzal, 1994).

necessary for him to build a new identity which would have allowed him to assert his acquired masculinity. The chivalric ethos played a relevant part in this prospective construction. As Daniel Miller has stated, ‘things [...] come not to represent people, but to actually constitute who they are’.²⁵ Several elements confirm the existence of this construction from the material point of view.

The constable was in possession of a version of the romance *Amadís of Gaul* (*Amadis de Gaula*), although it is not stated whether this copy was manuscript or printed. Afonso commissioned a book cover for it. From a gender perspective, the similarities between the life of the main character of the story, Amadís, and constable Afonso are evident. Both share common identity features: they were born as illegitimate members of royal families, both being the fruit of a forbidden love; they were raised far away from their parents; and there is a definite similarity in their inherent warlike ethos. Afonso could easily have identified with Amadís as a role model. As Fallows has put it, chivalric heroes were to function as alter egos.²⁶ Chivalric romances were within the reach of Afonso, whose intellectual standard was probably modest, much in the same way that many illiterate people would hear the same stories being read to them over and over again.

The constable did not spare expenses when it came to dressing his horses. He did so according to his post and status, either for cane games (see below) or for any other occasion that required an exhibition of status. The metal components of his horses’ harnesses were made of silver and on occasion would be plated or gilded. The haberdashery was invariably of expensive silk; on these occasions, the constable would invariably wear red or crimson, to reflect power and military valour.²⁷

As a newlywed and head of household, the constable took possession of his wife’s dowry from her brother Fernando de Meneses, marquis of Vila Real. The marquis had replaced his recently deceased father (Pedro de Meneses, d. 1499) as head of his household. The dowry included a vast sum of money and a lavish trousseau, which, as usual at court, was directly arranged by the monarch. It increased the wealth of his nephew Afonso, thus contributing to his promotion. However, at the same time it

²⁵ Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2011), p. 23.

²⁶ Noel Fallows, ‘Introduction’, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, tr. Noel Fallows, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), Kindle edition, position 245; see also Michael Harney, ‘Ludology, Self-Fashioning, and Entrepreneurial Masculinity in Iberian Novels of Chivalry’, in Laura Delbrugge (ed.), *Self-Fashioning and Assumptions of Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (New York: Brill, 2015), pp. 144–66.

²⁷ Amy Butler Greenfield, *A Perfect Red. Empire, Espionage and the Quest for the Colour of Desire* (London: Black Swan Books, 2005), p. 39.

promoted the groom's dependence on his brother-in-law. This dynamic resembles what Harney points out as the chivalric need to rely upon marriage so as to increase the status of second sons.²⁸ The importance of the dowry given by Fernando to his sister transformed him into a third party in the family equation. The marquis was a titled nobleman, whilst his brother-in-law, Afonso, was not, in spite of being constable of the kingdom. This might imply that Fernando had prominence over Afonso in terms of authority, although the latter was also a husband and a father (Afonso was younger than Fernando, who was in his forties) and was, in practice, his son-in-law. Also, the marquis ruled over extensive lands, whilst Afonso had only a few that were irrelevant territorially and in the jurisdictional power they afforded him. As such, this case illustrates the limits of basing one's status on masculinity alone, Afonso being overpowered by older men, social hierarchy and the legitimate status of others. In what concerns family relations, another hypothesis could be explored: the two men eventually entering into competition. Despite the fact that Afonso was illegitimate, his proximity to royal blood as the king's nephew might have displaced the lineage of the marquis, the latter's legitimacy notwithstanding. The relationship between the two might have been conflictive, thus giving way to a situation where authority could be contested within hegemonic masculinity.²⁹

Another angle worth exploring is the issue of fatherhood, regarding the role model Afonso would need to adopt. His uncle, King Manuel I, and his brother-in-law, Fernando, contributed to his return to the royal family, even though it was the monarch who was primarily responsible for this return. Manuel I was the father of Miguel da Paz (1498–1500), although the child, from his first marriage with Isabel of Aragon (1470–1498), had been raised by his maternal grandparents Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile and died in his early infancy. He was thus practically childless at the moment of Afonso's rehabilitation; also, as a ruler, Manuel had to play the role of a father figure. If we focus on the process from the perspective of lineage, it becomes clear that deceased relatives had to be honoured. The chronicle tradition of the Avis rulers (of which Manuel was one) acknowledged and promoted the idea of dynasty by depicting kings as good husbands, rulers and fathers. In addition, the consistent offers of financial help from the marquis, along with other evidence, could indicate that he felt a degree of

²⁸ Harney, 'Ludology...', p. 159.

²⁹ R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender & Society* 19 (6) (2005), pp. 829–59 (833).

responsibility towards Afonso. Fernando was known for being ‘light-headed’ when dealing with money, often spending a lot more than he should.³⁰ Sumptuary expense as a way to show magnificence and honour (even at the peril of family resources) was part of Iberian aristocratic ethos, which appears in contrast with the restraint claimed for the figure of the *pater familias* in Protestant contexts such as early modern England.³¹ It can be noted that the proximity between the two men had granted Fernando the opportunity to occupy the position of constable in the crown’s hierarchy and ceremonies after Afonso’s death, even if only symbolically as the king did not formally bestow him the post. We cannot tell if Fernando was particularly interested in the office. It is certain, though, that the position of constable had been disputed several times in the past due to its symbolic status and privileges. Therefore, it is correct to assume that he would have welcomed such promotion. Bearing these points in mind, it can only be inferred that, if Manuel I represented a father figure, the marquis could have stood as an elder brother with whom Afonso might compete.

It could be expected that the trousseau of Afonso’s wife consisted mainly of domestic items such as mattresses, sheets and pillows and tableware (salt-cellars, containers for sweets, cutlery, fans, and so on).³² However, another category of objects consisted of tapestries, a group of items where a preference for war motives can be detected. This conforms to Afonso’s position as constable and the construction of identity according to the chivalric ethos of late medieval times. One door hanging (*guarda-portas*) depicted heroes from Greek–Roman mythology, namely Hercules, a character often represented in Portuguese tapestries up until the seventeenth century. An adjoining door hanging included a dragon, probably the one defeated by the Greek hero. Thus, physical prowess and valour were virtues depicted in the interior decoration of his house, namely in decorative textile panels. Another door hanging portrayed page-boys kneeling before the king in front of other figures, suggesting allegiance to the monarch in the presence of an audience. This image might have reminded Afonso of his subaltern

³⁰ Lunardo Cá Masser’s description of Portugal (1504–6) in D. S. Chambers, ‘Venetian Perceptions of Portugal c. 1500’, in Kate J. Lowe (ed.), *Cultural Links between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 19–43 (40).

³¹ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1–3.

³² In Portuguese renaissance court banquets, pages used horizontal fans to drive off insects from distinguished diners: Hugo Miguel Crespo, ‘O processo da Inquisição de Lisboa contra Duarte Gomes *alias* Salomão Usque: móveis, têxteis e livros na reconstituição da casa de um humanista (1542–1544). Em torno do guarda-roupa, livraria e mantearia do rei’, *Caderno de Estudos Sefarditas* 10–11 (2011), pp. 617–25.

status in spite of his recent good fortune. The implication would be that he would have to keep his oath and never forget his position.

Clothes were of course a crucial component of Afonso's new identity. He possessed numerous doublets, as well as mantles in red crimson and black velvet. His helmet and bever were also lined in crimson velvet to reinforce the visual effect of a homogenous set of colours and textures.³³ Black and red were the main colours in his wardrobe; however lavish, his wife's clothes were almost never red.

Court Games: Performance and Politics

If appearance was important, Afonso's sense of display in the public sphere was no less crucial. As in other European kingdoms, Iberian chivalric ceremonies were composite events that were incorporated into rites of passage such as royal weddings and baptisms; but also into *tableaux vivants*, banquets, jousts, tournaments, and theatrical performances that reflect a Burgundian influence.³⁴ Public games and jousting have been described as occasions for the affirmation of the self.³⁵ Recently, some scholars have emphasised the advantages, in the perspective of kings, of using a uniform model of masculinity in order to promote their political supremacy, which was often under scrutiny.³⁶ Thus, gender order was at stake during these courtly spectacles. Our analysis shall now focus on three distinct types: cane games, mummeries and jousting.

Long after the constable's death in 1504, Baldassare Castiglione would acknowledge the existence of different court cultures in Europe in his *Book of the Courtier* (1528), also commenting on the specificity of cane games to Iberia.

So I would have this Courtier of ours excel all others, and each in that which is most their profession. And as it is the especial pride of the Italians to ride well with the rein, to govern wild horses with consummate skill, and to play at tilting

³³ Michel Stanesco, *Jeux d'errance du chevalier medieval. Aspects ludiques de la fonction guerrière dans la littérature du Moyen Age Flamboyant* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 173–82.

³⁴ Veronica Sandbichler, 'Torneos y fiestas de cortes de los Habsburgo en los siglos XV y XVI', in Krista de Jonge, Bernardo García García, Alicia Esteban Estringana (eds), *El Legado de Borgoña. Fiesta y Cerimonia Cortesana en la Europa de los Austrias (1454–1648)* (Madrid: Fundación Carlos Amberes – Marcial Pons, 2010), pp. 607–24; Eric Bousmar, 'Pasos de armas, justas y torneos en la corte de Borgoña (siglo XV y principios del XVI). Imaginario caballeresco, rituales y implicaciones socio-políticas', in *El Legado de Borgoña...*, pp. 561–606.

³⁵ Karras, *From Boys*, pp. 47–57.

³⁶ John Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender', in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh (eds.), *Masculinities in Power and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 41–58 (53–55); Katherine Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity...*, pp. 3–10.

and jousting — in these things let him be among the best of the Italians. In tournaments and in the art of defence and attack, let him shine among the best in France. In stick-throwing [game of canes], bull-fighting, and in casting spears and darts, let him excel among the Spaniards.³⁷

The Portuguese shared with the Spaniards the taste for cane games, staging them at most local festivities, namely those organised by municipal councils; also, most festive occasions in the royal court did not dispense with them. Damião de Góis writes that king Manuel I enjoyed the game and preferred to pay for it in order to prevent his courtiers from contracting debts. He might also have lent his courtiers additional Moorish vestments, so that they would avoid that expense.³⁸ Portuguese court culture, however, must have been very different from the ethos of the courtier as Castiglione proposed it. Values such as countenance, the discretionary use of violence and good manners were behaviors that the court might have adopted at a slow pace. The right to revenge is an example. The *Cancioneiro Geral* (a compilation of courtly poetry gathered by the royal chronicler Garcia de Resende and published in 1516), includes several poems whose authors were in favour of violent revenge against women by the men rejected. Other authors commented on the best strategies to win a street fight and we can even find a satire of delicate manners, suggesting that courtly behaviour was in opposition to true manhood, because it might imply such things as lying, refusing a fight and restraining one's words.³⁹ However, courtly ethos was inherently paradoxical, full of tensions and contradictions – as was chivalric culture itself. The concept of *mesura*, the right measure in all things, opposed the exercise of physical and verbal violence and pervades troubadour culture, as well as being one of the aspects that King Duarte was prepared to give advice on in his *Leal Conselheiro*.⁴⁰ This environment, embodied with an intricate conception of courtly masculinity, could pose some problems for a newcomer such as Afonso to affirm himself. He would have to adjust to

³⁷ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), p. 30.

³⁸ Damião de Góis, *Crónica do Felicíssimo Rei D. Manuel* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1949), vol. 4, p. 226.

³⁹ Garcia de Resende, *Cancioneiro Geral* [1516], intr. Andrée Crabée Rocha (Lisbon: Centro do Livro Brasileiro, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 172–9.

⁴⁰ Segismundo Spina, *A Lírica Trovadoresca* (São Paulo: EdUSC, 1991), pp. 392–3; Manuel Rodrigues Lapa (ed.), *Cantigas d'escarnho e de mal dizer dos cancioneiros medievais galego-portugueses* (Vigo: Editorial Galaxia, 1965), pp. 338, 359, 415, 609; for a definition of *mesura*, see p. 62. King Duarte also uses the concept in his *Leal Conselheiro*, ed. João Morais Barbosa (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1982), p. 421.

this paradoxical context while shifting from his peasant identity into a more dominant one. This new identity had then to promote a self-representation according to a new pattern of masculinity.

Cane games were one of the best occasions for competition among noblemen in Iberia from the middle ages up to the eighteenth century. These games consisted of several teams of six men on horseback, armed with cane sticks that were thrown at one another.⁴¹ The court festivities, such as marriages, baptisms and receptions made to foreign ambassadors which appeared in several chronicles, often included cane games.⁴² The players paraded before starting the game in order to be fully appreciated by the audience. One manual of chivalry advised that the soil should be watered during dry weather because dust diminished visibility, making the game more dangerous and also preventing the ladies from appreciating the players' performances.⁴³ As Karras has already noted, part of the model of knightly masculinity relied on the relation to women as a means to impress other men.⁴⁴

There is evidence that Afonso's household participated in one such game, as he and five men in his household received *marlotas* (Muslim tunic) and *capilhares* (hooded mantle, cut in a semi-circle and worn over the *marlota*), although the constable's clothing was more luxurious, in order to enhance his bearing.⁴⁵ Afonso's horse equipment came in two versions, each fitted to a different form of horse riding: jennet (*à gineta*) or bridle (*estardiota*) style. In jennet riding the horseman bent his legs, pushing his body weight down to the knees and feet. The equipment required was also specific, and saddles, stirrups, and, above all, harnesses, were different from those used in bridle riding. Jennet riding was initially used in raiding operations and thus the rapidity with which horses responded to the horseman's orders was crucial. The requirement to stage two teams who represented enemies in real life – Christian versus Moors – reinforced the crusade ideal. At the same time, Moorish attire in the cane games documented the ambiguous fascination Christians felt for their enemy. Some of

⁴¹ The game was already referred to by King Duarte in Joseph M. Piel (ed.), *Livro da ensinança de bem cavalgar toda sela que fez El-Rey Dom Eduarte de Portugal e do Algarve e Senhor de Ceuta* [1434] (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 1986), p. 6.

⁴² Pina, *Crónica*, p. 54; Resende, *Crónica*, p. 340.

⁴³ Francisco Chacón, *Tractado de la cavalleria de la gineta...*, XII (Sevilla: Christoual Alluarez, 1551), 'De como se ha de jugar a las cañas', page not numbered. For an English version, see Hernán Chacón, *Tractado de la cauallería de la gineta*, Noel Fallows (ed.) (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1999), pp. 35-8.

⁴⁴ Karras, *From Boys*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Carmen Bernis, *Trajes y modas en la España de los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: Instituto Diego Velásquez, CSIC, 1979), vol. 2, p. 68.

the equipment used in these games, as Afonso's case reveals, was typically Moorish, such as the case of his *adarga* (a shield with a distinctive bivalve shape used both as an offensive and defensive weapon).⁴⁶

It was also an occasion for Afonso to exhibit his most valiant men and to appear as their lord and team captain. This enhanced Afonso's masculinity and showed him as master in his household. Northern European historiography has already discussed the figure of the patriarch and his responsibility towards household government and family stability.⁴⁷ Regarding South Europe, we should note the influence of classic culture on the model of *paterfamilias* during the Renaissance period.⁴⁸ It was important for the constable in his role as head of household to be able to express authority over his subordinates.⁴⁹ At least in public, Afonso had to appear as the man in charge, even if this might not have been the case. As a newlywed man and the father of a baby girl, Beatriz de Lara, Afonso had to acknowledge this new role publicly. Public appearances such as those mentioned would serve as opportunities to demonstrate his capacity as *paterfamilias*. The cane games represented a chance to display authority over the subordinate men of his household. They might otherwise be occasions to socialise with other noblemen through teamwork, thus creating a sense of belonging to the court community. However, the socialisation that cane games allowed for also demonstrated the gender hierarchies among the players involved. If the king was a player, he must be the granted victor; on the contrary, if the king was absent from the game or present in the audience, the game was an occasion for Afonso to promote himself. We do not know how well he performed in those spectacles, but it is clear that such opportunities were granted him, as well as the equipment and means necessary.

Although they cannot be restricted to the Iberian Peninsula, mummeries were also a very popular court entertainment.⁵⁰ These were theatrical performances in which courtiers disguised themselves as mythical figures, sometimes drawing on chivalric romances and even classical mythology. The influence of written culture was pervasive,

⁴⁶ Helmut Nickel. 'About the Adarga, A Shield of Two Faiths, Three Continents, Four Cultures and Seven Centuries', in Donald J. La Rocca (ed.), *The Armorer's Art. Essays in Honor of Stuart Pyhrr* (Woonsocket: Mowbray Publishing, 2014), pp. 13–24.

⁴⁷ Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent, 'Introduction', in Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline van Gent (eds.), *Govern Masculinities in the Early Modern Period* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1–22 (5).

⁴⁸ Daniela Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia: governo della casa e governo civile nella tradizione dell' "economica" tra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1985).

⁴⁹ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1–3; Broomhall and van Gent, 'Introduction', pp. 1–22 (13–6).

⁵⁰ Luciana Stegagno Picchio, *História do Teatro Português* (Lisbon: Portugália Editora, 1969), p. 34.

as participants exchanged love notes between them.⁵¹ Mummeries were staged by courtiers wearing, on their shoulders, huge masks which made them unrecognisable to the audience; plots were inspired by chivalric romances, with courtly love scenes and mythological episodes. As such, mummeries could be considered mock versions of military games and certainly a form of staging ideal love scenes directly inspired by chivalric romances and classical episodes. One example can be found in the festivities which occurred during the marriage, in 1451, of Leonor of Portugal and Frederick III, king of the Romans, where a staged performance with a vast entourage included fictional characters like Priam, Hector and Ajax. They proclaimed themselves heroes in the Trojan War, thus defying every man who took up the challenge and thereby ‘forcing’ Afonso V, King of Portugal, and his men to hold a tournament. At the end of the day, the victor would receive a gold ring from the hand of the bride, Leonor.⁵² Nearly fifty years later, on Christmas Eve 1500 and after his recent marriage to Maria of Castile and Aragon, King Manuel I courted his new wife at a spectacle attended by all her damsels. The purpose of the play was to pledge the new queen to intercede in favour of the enamoured courtiers who would declare themselves to their beloved. The monarch, with twenty of his ‘best’ men, was to participate disguised as a mummer. After a brief exhibition staged in a garden with a dragon, the king was to address himself to the queen, take off his mask and dance with her. After the king, each mummer did the same thing, delivering their damsel a note, before they danced together.⁵³ Mummers were present in the previously mentioned *Cancioneiro Geral*. A courtier named Pedro Homem dedicated a poem to mummeries, stressing the contrast between innocuous theatrical characters and treacherous competitors.⁵⁴

Performing in mummeries meant that courtiers underwent an overall transformation that made them unrecognisable. During part of their performance, courtiers hid their identity from the audience until they made themselves accepted by the ladies coveted. *Anagnorisis*, that is, a change from ignorance to knowledge, the

⁵¹ Maria Jesús Díez Garretas, ‘Fiestas y juegos cortesanos en el Reinado de los Reyes Católicos. Divisas, motes y momos’, *Revista de Historia Jerónimo Zurita* 74 (1999), pp. 163–74.

⁵² Aires A. Nascimento (ed.), *Leonor de Portugal, Imperatriz da Alemanha. Diário de Viagem do Embaixador Nicolau Lanckman de Valckenstein* (Lisbon: Cosmos, 1992), p. 45.

⁵³ About mummeries in Portugal and also those of Christmas 1500, see Luiz Francisco Rebello, *O Primitivo Teatro Português, 2nd ed.* (Lisbon: Ministério da Cultura, 1984), pp. 45–58 and 95–104. The narrative of this particular occasion can be read in Antonio de la Torre and Luis Suárez Fernández (eds), *Documentos referentes a las relaciones con Portugal durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos* (Valladolid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 77–85.

⁵⁴ Resende, *Cancioneiro Geral*, vol. 2, p. 104.

moment at which true identity is revealed by removing the mask or raising the visor of the helmet, was also a leitmotif of chivalric romance. What could have been the consequences for Afonso of participating in such an event? We are left to speculation, unavoidable in this context, where so many gaps in evidence prevail. Hiding beneath a disguise might have been an opportunity to assume another kind of masculinity that differed from the one inherent to his own self. The interplay between variations of identity could have provided the constable with different role models, allowing him to compose a new self that did not have to conform to stereotypes. The construction of identity was thus a chameleonic process.

Together with other games, jousts were part of Afonso's new everyday life. The receipt book previously mentioned records a picture representing a jousting scene with two men battling in front of a crowd. The constable also possessed various pieces of armour including a full harness. The significance of wearing armour in court games should be discussed, as it is highly likely that the visual effect was as important as protection itself. There has been discussion about the practical role of armour recently, especially concerning 'heroic' armour. According to Springer, the use of armour is a paradox. Its bearer sought to affirm his power, but at the same time vulnerability was also acknowledged, as the primordial function of this prosthesis was to minimise physical damage.⁵⁵ When applied to Afonso's context – he was constable of a kingdom which had recently signed a peace treaty with its only territorial neighbour (Castile) and, therefore there was neither need nor opportunity for him to participate in a real war – it is clear that Afonso's use of armour was more symbolic than defensive. Despite the absence of evidence of his participating in these jousts, armour could certainly have been a tool to help Afonso express his manhood. There were two additional advantages to its use. The first was the impression that might be caused in the audience, as this type of performance had a significant psychological effect, violence being an aesthetic in itself.⁵⁶ Another effect could well be crucial, given Afonso's peasant background: a complete armour covered physical features entirely, concealing the appearance of its bearer. The use of a harness as disguise could help Afonso to perform a role that he surely would not be entirely ready to play. Psychologically, this could signify a considerable advantage, as visual contact between Afonso, his opponent and the rest of

⁵⁵ Springer, *Armour and Masculinity*, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Angus Patterson, *Fashion and Armour in Renaissance Europe: Proud Lookes and Brave Attire* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2009), p. 15.

the audience could be filtered through the 'lens' of the armour, hence providing an additional mechanism to help transform a boy into a prince.

Conclusions

After having considered the role that gender played in the rehabilitation of Afonso and the consequent assumption of a newly constructed identity, it is time to summarise how these interpretations could contribute to historiographical work, however their hypothetical character. Knightly values were accessible to a boy of fourteen to sixteen years old who had to make the transition from a peasant environment to court. Chivalric romances were widely popular, and the skills required of a courtier at the turn of the sixteenth century did not involve sophisticated manners. Furthermore, literacy would not have been essential in Afonso's new status as constable. The attributes of chivalry – horses, clothes, armour – could have been elements at play in recreating his persona within courtly masculinity. We have seen that his ledger demonstrates that Afonso possessed a copy of *Amadis of Gaul*, establishing a further point of contact between his new self and the hero, who, like him, grew up not knowing he was a child of royal blood. Marriage settled him into the important family of his in-laws and thus marked the transition to adulthood. Court games gave him the opportunity to perform, perhaps competing with other men and reaffirming his manhood, in a setting where visions of masculinity frequently included an imagined enemy, which was, the Moors. We actually do not know how the constable fulfilled the new roles he was now entitled to play and the portrait we have traced is hypothetical. Despite the lack of information, a problem exacerbated by his premature death (1504) his lineage would continue. His daughter Beatriz de Lara married her cousin, Pedro de Meneses, a matrimonial arrangement full of meaning given the traditional proximity between the two families. What we have tried to accomplish is the idea that identity can – within certain limits, which in the constable's case were his lack of formal training as knight and his probable sketchy literacy – be reshaped in order to fit a hegemonic model. It is not a given, but it can be imagined. Whether the constable performed well as his new self, we do not know, but conditions for his success were created at least at a public level where he would have to perform accordingly. Court spectacles like cane games, jousts and mummeries constituted appropriate occasions for the monarchy to use masculinity as a tool to control power. In this sense, there is material for comparison with, for instance, the political uses of late medieval tournaments in England. Further research could, for

instance, from a comparative perspective, highlight the role of subordinated royal family members and the way in which they tried to integrate and enact hegemonic masculinity.