

The Role of the Order of St. John in the development of the Portuguese Monarchy

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St. John is an international Order, having its origin in Jerusalem in the context of pilgrimage and crusade, which developed a peculiar line of action with a socio-welfare profile. It took part in the expansion of the Western territorial domain and kept very close to the Pope. Up to a certain point, its attraction for the Portuguese monarchy derives from this. The relationship of the brethren (or at least some of them) with the noble rankings of society also contributed for an important link with the circles of power. Besides, we can stress the performance the Order had assumed in the Portuguese territory with a great expression (civil and ecclesiastic) of its lordships. From the beginning, these characteristics, as well as the strategies implemented by the crown, exposed the Order to a political process which we can point out between the and sixteenth centuries.

The controversy focused on the arrival of the Hospitallers at the Western tip of the Iberian Peninsula, remains an open question. In Portugal, the brethren most probably have been given a monastery already built in Leça, at the North of the territory, probably at the beginning of the second decade of the twelfth century.¹ The historical context of this donation is remarkable. In 1103, Henrique, count of Portucale, went on a pilgrimage to Rome, and eventually to the Holy Land. Although probably the visit to Jerusalem never really happened,² we should not neglect the importance of this nearing to the Holy Land and the identification with the ideal of fighting for the sake of Christ's in the arising interest of Portucalese Count Henrique for the military orders, more precisely, for the Order of the Hospitallers, at the time going through a preliminary phase of its official acknowledgment.

In 1113, the diocese of Porto, where the first house the Hospitallers was established in Portugal, it was restored by the bishop D. Hugo, who came from Compostela where he was archdeacon and faithful to Diogo Gelmires. This clergyman

¹ P. Pinto Costa, "A Ordem do Hospital no primeiro século da nacionalidade," in *Actas do II Congresso Histórico de Guimarães. Sociedade, administração, cultura e igreja em Portugal no séc. XII*, Vol. 5, Câmara Municipal de Guimarães and Universidade do Minho. Guimarães 1997, 97-107.

² D. Peres, *História de Portugal*, Vol. I. Barcelos 1928, 493; A. Herculano, *História de Portugal. Desde o começo da monarquia até o fim do reinado de Afonso III*, ed. J. Mattoso, Vol. 1. Lisboa 1989, 278-279 and 386.

outlined a wide strategy in order to assert his diocese, and he managed to bring Hugo to Porto, who may have helped to make the installments of the Hospitallers in Leça, thus ensuring the reinforcement of the pilgrimage to Compostela. In this regard the Order became part of a dynamic strategy in the northwestern part of the peninsula, thus placing side by side politics and pilgrimage. For example, in Portugal and in Galicia, the commanderies followed these routes of pilgrimage. So, in this case, the settlement of the Order supported the pilgrims' movement.

The Portucalense County – as the target of strong military and boundary re-definitions – demanded, from the very beginning, a set of measures, in order to consolidate its political condition in the northwestern part of the peninsula, and also in relation to the court of Leon. This process demanded different mechanisms, and the Order of St. John, undoubtedly played an important role in the territorial implantation in these geographic areas. The most important role of the brethren was at the level of assisting and supporting the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Its insertion in the universe of pilgrimage was not only caused by the accomplishment of its plan of action. It was also due to political factors, well expressed by the performance of Compostela in the northwestern part of the peninsula.

At the beginning of the second millennium, a geographical displacement of the traditional centers of pilgrimage (Jerusalem and Rome) towards the peninsular area (Compostela) took place. These political reasons are the most convincing for the explanation of this rediscovery of pilgrimage. Thus, the peninsula became prominent in the context of Western Christendom due to the fact that it was a pilgrimage environment. In the political setting, the Order of St. John was the most emphatic expression of the link with pilgrimage and constituted a guarantee of internationalization of this phenomenon.

The Hospitaller brethren proposed to accomplish an important project in the field of welfare. Thus they acted in a sector where until they arrived at the Portucalense County, there were no institutions to play this role. In Portugal, the welfare assistance of the brethren was recognized when, in 1145, a building to be used as a hospital was offered to them, in the city of Braga (North of Portugal).³

In 1140, Afonso Henriques confirmed all the assets that already belonged to them, in the name of Raimundo, legacy of the poor saints of the Holy City of Jerusalem, of Aires, Prior of Portugal and Galicia, and of the brethren living there as well as their successors.⁴ This attitude had a great significance: reinforcement of the links between them, favoring of the Order in terms of its territorial and jurisdictional settling and incentive in relation to the various private initiatives, which were trying to follow the king's desire. Furthermore, Afonso of Portugal, son

³ *Liber Fidei Sanctae Bracarensis Ecclesiae*, ed. A. J. Costa, Vol. 3. Braga 1990, 508-509.

⁴ Arquivo Nacional / Torre do Tombo (henceforth: AN/TT), *Gaveta VI*, maço único, n.º 29 and *Leitura Nova, Guadiana*, l. 1, fls. 123v-124 (with a mistake in the date); *Cartulaire général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem, 1110-1310*, ed. J. Delaville le Roulx, Vol. 1. Paris 1894, (henceforth: *Cartulaire*), doc. 134; *Documentos Medievais Portugueses, Régios*, Vol. 1: doc. 260, 321-323 and 756-758; *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, Vol. 12. Lisboa 1960-1977, 458-461; *Livro dos forais, escripturas, doações, privilégios e inquirições*, ed. J. M. C. Saraiva, Vol. 3. Lisboa 1946-1948, doc. 292, 28-29; I. García Tato, *Las encomiendas gallegas*, doc. 5, pp. 110-111. J. A. Figueiredo, *Nova história da Militar Ordem de Malta e dos senhores grão-priores della em Portugal*, Vol. 1. Lisboa 1800, 90.

of Afonso Henriques, was international Grand Master of the Order, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a situation that demonstrates the interest devoted to this institution.

In a complementary perspective, war was another way which led to a convergence between the interests of the Order and its territorial expansion and the goals of the Portuguese Monarchy. The first kings, until Afonso III, who died in 1279, got deeply involved into the project of the territorial construction of the realm. So, the Reconquest and the definition of the border lines at the Eastern side of the territory display fundamental steps in the process of political maturity of the kingdom, and explain the priority of defense and settling. In this sense, the military orders were called up to perform a fundamental role. The one played by the Hospitallers, due to its origin and features, joined to this crusading project. It dedicated itself to the management and squaring of the rear, and in a following phase, to the war. In fact, on 13 June, 1194, Sancho I, donated them the land of *Guidimtesta* (close to the River Tejo), demanding the brethren to build there the castle of Belver.⁵

The mutual cooperation between the Order and the Monarchy in the beginning of the twelfth century until the middle of the thirteenth, associated the specific characteristics of the Order and its prestige, opened the way to other paradigmatic facts, as for example, the transport of money in the name of the king to the Holy See, the utilization of the fortresses of the Order to deposit the king's possessions, as well as the nomination of the Priors as the king's executors. We can rely upon the following examples. The contacts maintained by the Priory of Portugal with the Conventual headquarters and its dependence in relation to the Holy See were very good reasons for Sancho I to entrust two Hospitallers a part of the annual revenue that Afonso Henriques had promised to Alexandre III.⁶ In the second will of Sancho I, the Prior Mendo Gonçalves was nominated the king's executor, and in the castle of Belver, one of the most important fortresses of the Order, a considerable amount of money belonging to the king was deposited.⁷ In turn, Afonso II wrote in his will that the Prior of the Hospitallers and the Master of the Temple would keep in custody certain assets, until their children reached *roboratio*, revealing once again how trustful those brethren were.⁸

As we have already noted, the performance of the Hospitallers was decisive at the level of the territorial organization, being part of the ambitious scenery of cru-

⁵ *Cartulaire*, doc. 963, 610–611; *Documentos de D. Sancho I (1174–1211)*, ed. R. Azevedo, A. J. Costa and M. R. Pereira. Coimbra 1979, doc. 73, pp. 112–113; P. Pinto Costa and M. Barroca, "A doação de Belver à Ordem do Hospital por D. Sancho I. Leitura e contextualização do documento de 1194," in *Actas do V Encontro sobre Ordens Militares. As Ordens Militares e as Ordens de Cavalaria entre o Ocidente e o Oriente*. Palmela 2009, 712–714.

⁶ *Bulário português de Inocência III (1198–1216)*, ed. A. J. Costa and M. A. F. Marques. Coimbra 1989, doc. 33, 43–44 and *Cartulaire*, doc. 1051, 658.

⁷ AN/TT, *Sé de Viseu*, m. 5, n° 37; *Documentos de D. Sancho I*, doc. 31, 49–51 and doc. 194, 297–301; J. A. Figueiredo, *Nova história da Militar Ordem de Malta e dos senhores grão-priores della em Portugal*, Vol. 1, 149. D. Peres, *História de Portugal*, Vol. 2: 169–170.

⁸ Arquivo Distrital de Braga (A.D.B.), *Gaveta dos Testamentos*, n° 11; Fr. A. Brandão, *Monarquia Lusitana*, Vol. 4. Lisboa 1976–1980, 254–256 and 283–285; D. Peres, *História de Portugal*, Vol. 2: 206.

sade. In 1217, the cooperation of the Hospitallers, side by side with the king in the project of Reconquest, was distinguished by the help provided by a fleet of crusaders from northern Europe. Together, they implemented a plan of conquest, as part of the spirit of the Fifth Crusade, which ended up with the victorious conquest of Alcácer do Sal.⁹

In 1232, Sancho II donated to the Order the village of Crato, under the condition that the Hospitallers should establish a castle.¹⁰ The cooperation he hoped to get from the *Militia* received an almost immediate answer. Thus, that same year, the Order granted a charter of privilege (*carta de foral*) to the people who lived there.¹¹ This and other similar opportunities contributed for the jurisdictional and territorial consolidation of the Order. The consequences of this process led to a well structured royal reaction during the period that followed, directed by the need of control of an institution of great power.

In 1249 the *Reconquista* came to an end. As a consequence, from the second half of the thirteenth century, the military orders gradually became more and more unadjusted and inappropriate in the context of the strengthening of the monarchies. This circumstance reinforced the priority of adjustment of the military orders. In this regard the policy of mutual cooperation which marked the first decades of the first dynasty was gradually blending with procedures that reflect the supremacy of the monarchy in relation to the military orders.¹²

The monarchic authority in the case of the Hospitallers asserted itself gradually and intensely, after the second half of the thirteenth century, although the mutual collaboration could still be noticeable in various situations. Thus, the different monarchs underlined the cooperation of the Order in the political setting.

In the context of the development of the monarch's authority and of the improvement of the State apparatus, king Dinis (1279–1325) fought against the practice of some abuses which questioned his power.¹³ In this sense, Dinis did not hesitate to assert his authority in relation to the Hospitallers. In civil situations open conflicts were engendered in which the Hospitallers end up by being defeated.¹⁴ Opposing verdicts in relation to the jurisdictional power of the brethren and the foundation of the Order of Christ, in 1319, were the most revealing facts of this new behavior. The relations between the Crown and the Order gradually impaired, as the process of the extinction of the Templars developed. This subject called Dinis' attention, and led him to directly interfere, in order to implement a solu-

⁹ A. Herculano, *História de Portugal. Desde o começo da monarquia até o fim do reinado de Afonso III*, ed. J. Mattoso, Vol. 3: 257–271. *Monumenta Henricina*, ed. A. J. D. Dinis, Vol. 1. Coimbra 1960–1970, doc. 25, 45–48 and. doc. 28, 52–54. See also, P. N. M. Henriques - *Os Portugueses e as Cruzadas: séculos XII–XIV*. Porto 2011.

¹⁰ AN/TT, *Gav. VI*, m. ún., n° 22; *Cartulaire*, Vol. 2: doc. 2014, 433–434.

¹¹ AN/TT, *Gav. VI*, m. ún., n° 30; *Cartulaire*, Vol. 2: doc. 2037, 445–447.

¹² L. Ventura, "Afonso III e o Desenvolvimento da Autoridade Régia," in *Nova História de Portugal*, gen ed. A. H. Oliveira Marques and V. Serrão, Vol. 3: *Portugal em Definição de Fronteiras (1096–1325)*, ed. M. H. C. Coelho and A. L. C. Homem, Lisboa 1996, 123–144.

¹³ A. Sousa, "A política anti-senhorial," in *História de Portugal. A Monarquia Feudal*, ed. J. Mattoso, Vol. 2. Lisboa 1993, 158–161. J. A. S. M. Pizarro, *D. Dinis*. Mem Martins 2005.

¹⁴ P. Pinto Costa, "Dinis e a Ordem do Hospital: dois poderes em confronto," in *Actas da II Semana de Estudios Alfonsíes*. Puerto de Santa Maria 2001.

tion that pleased him. Thus, on 14 March 1319, the Order of Christ was founded and received all the properties of the Temple.¹⁵

Through this period the King's attitudes followed a performance that aimed at submitting the Order of St. John to the control of the central power. In the middle of the fourteenth century, the direct interferences in the internal activities of this institution were a constant reality, felt at the level of responsions, of the convocation of the friars by the Great Master and even of the choosing of the Prior.

In the kingdom of Afonso IV (1325-1357) the monarch's interference in the subject matters of the Order was so severe that Pope John XXII tried to avoid that the king took hold of the responsions.¹⁶ This matter keeps happening, and in 1345, Pope Clement VI forbade Afonso IV of impeding the Priory of Portugal of sending its contribution to the convent of Rhodes. The king's intermission acquired a still greater extent and even included the friars prohibition to go to the main convent, if they were called by the Grand Master.¹⁷

The situation went from bad to worse when the Prior Álvaro Gonçalves Pereira died in 1382. Álvaro Gonçalves Camelo received the Priory of Crato from the hand of the Great Master; but the Portuguese king did his best in order to modify this situation. The monarch wished that Pedro Álvares Pereira, illegitimate son of Prior Álvaro Gonçalves Pereira, became entitled of that dignity not following the options of the Order's hierarchy. The king took advantage of the dualist situations caused by the Schism of the Church and wanted Pope Clement VII to grant the Priory of Portugal to Pedro, which really happened.¹⁸ This troubled period still increased due to the Portuguese political instability, which marked the transition between the first and second dynasties where the Hospitallers got directly involved. The political trust in Álvaro Gonçalves Camelo was reinstated and, in 1393, this Prior became the guardian of the hostages who ensured the accomplishment of the contractual clauses, of the negotiated truce between Portugal and Castile.¹⁹ The credibility in this man was the reason why, in 1412, João I sent him to Sicily with Afonso Furtado, Commander of the realm, above all, to evaluate the military viability in relation to the conquest of Ceuta.²⁰

During the second half of the fifteenth century, the relationship between the monarchy and the Order was signaled by intimacy bonds and to its clear insertion into socially protected environments by the crown. In this way the control over the Order of St. John was accomplished in a friendly and pacific way. The

¹⁵ AN/TT, *Gav. VII*, m. 8, n^o 5; *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. 1: doc. 62, 110-119.

¹⁶ *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. 1: doc. 77, 166-167.

¹⁷ *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. 1: doc. 99, 235-236.

¹⁸ F. Lopes, *Crónica del Rei Dom Joham I de Boa Memoria e dos Reis de Portugal o Decimo*, 1^a Parte, ed. Fac-similada da de Anselmo Braancamp Freire de 1915, prefácio L. F. Lindley Cintra, Lisboa 1977, cap. 156; D. N. Leão, *Crónica del Rey D. João o I*, ed. M. L. Almeida, Porto 1975, cap. 40.

¹⁹ AN/TT, *Livro das Demarcações e Pazes*, fl. 142; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 1. Paris-Lisboa 1842-1876, 276-277; F. Lopes, *Crónica de D. João I*, Vol. 2, cap. 190; D. N. Leão, *Crónica del rey D. João o I*, cap. 75.

²⁰ G. E. Zurara, *Crónica da tomada de Ceuta por El Rei D. João I*, ed. F. M. E. Pereira, Lisboa 1915, cap. XVI; *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. 2: doc. 10, 49-53.

Priors were men of the State apparatus and were part of the political circles. The family of the Prior Vasco de Ataíde was strongly attached to the court. The Prior himself was a prominent figure in the life of the kingdom. He was godfather of the future João II and king's counsellor.²¹ In turn, the Prior Diogo de Almeida belonged to one of the most well known families of that time and at a political level his career was ascending. He was a member of the Royal Council, Chief Huntsman of the king, and Jorge (illegitimate son of João II) was raised and educated under his supervision.²² The Prior was chosen as mandatory of Jorge, Duque of Coimbra and governor and administrator of the Orders of Aviz and Santiago, to define the marriage contract of the king's son with Beatriz.²³ The matrimony of king Manuel I with Leonor reflected the consolidation of the contact with the Hospitallers: it was in the rooms that the Order had in Crato that the recently married monarch, by proxy, received his wife.²⁴

At the international level the transition from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century was signaled by the war against the Muslim. This combination of events united even more the Portuguese King and the Order. The victories achieved by the Prior of Crato were very significant.²⁵ In fact, Rhodes is in the middle of this Mediterranean scenery, and the Portuguese Prior stepped into a world of great importance in the field of international politics.

The political development of Portugal and the participation of the Hospitallers in the State affairs demanded a more efficient control in relation to this institution by the monarchy. Thus, we could find evidence of an intensification of direct intervention into the internal organics of the Order during the first half of the sixteenth century, in order to submit it to the Monarch's power.²⁶

The death of the Prior Diego Fernandes de Almeida on 13 May 1508 represented a period which hinged on the sociability of Manuel I and the Hospitallers.²⁷ The king assumed a decisive role in the nomination of the Prior of Portugal, thus acting against all the normative orientations related to this matter. Attentively,

²¹ *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. 12: doc. 68, 133 and doc. 73, 143-145; R. Pina, *Crónica de el-Rei D. Afonso V*. Lisboa 1901, cap. 138. AN/TT, *Chancelaria D. Afonso V*, l. 15, fl. 69v; *Leitura Nova, Místicos*, l. 3, fl. 282; C. Sousa, *Provas da História Genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa*, ed. M. L. Almeida and C. Pegado, 2ª ed., Vol. II, 1st part, l. 4. Coimbra 1946-1954, 106-108.

²² R. Pina, *Crónica de D. João II*, ed. A. M. Carvalho. Coimbra 1950, cap. 80, 81 and 83; G. Resende, *Crónica de D. João II*, ed. J. V. Serrão. Lisboa 1973, cap. 137, 144 and 216; A. B. Freire, *Brasões da Sala de Sintra*, ed. L. B. Guerra, Vol. II. Lisboa 1996, 361-362.

²³ AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 3, nº 13.

²⁴ J. Osório, *Da vida e feitos de El-rei D. Manuel*, ed. F. M. Nascimento and J. Ferreira Vol. 2. Porto 1944, 223.

²⁵ AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 4, nº 74 and II, m. 7, nº 56; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarquia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 2: 11.

²⁶ P. Pinto Costa, "A Ordem do Hospital em Portugal: da Idade Média à Modernidade", in *Militarium Ordinum Analecta*, Vol. 3/4. Porto 1999/2000, 222-240 and P. Pinto Costa, "O poder régio e os Hospitalários na época de D. Manuel," *Revista Camonianiana*, 3ª série, Vol. 15. Bauru, S. Paulo, Universidade do Sagrado Coração (2004), 251-268 and in *Actas do III Congresso Histórico de Guimarães. D. Manuel e a sua época*, Vol. 2. Guimarães 2004, 569-579.

²⁷ A. B. Freire, *Brasões da Sala de Sintra*, ed. L. B. Guerra, Vol. 2: 362.

Manuel I requested the Pope the dignity of the Priory of Crato for João de Meneses, stressing his authority in relation to the Order. This aristocrat was trustworthy and was the king's chief steward and, in the monarch's will, he was one of the personalities chosen to fulfill specific functions in the realm, after the king's death.²⁸

After this controversy around the succession of the Priory,²⁹ Manuel I appointed André do Amaral, Chancellor of Rhodes and ambassador of the Grand Master, as a member of the King's council, on 1514. This man had always followed a behavior in accordance to the king's interests, namely in the fight against the Turkish fleet that wanted to transport wood to the galleys and ships of the Sultan, aiming at damaging the Portuguese fleet in India.³⁰ The performance of the Order, at an international level, and its indispensable collaboration in the Mediterranean war with the purpose of restraining the Turkish advance, clearly shows the triangular articulation of the Holy See, the Portuguese Monarchy and the Order of St. John.

This permanent menace of the Turks led Leon X to ask king Manuel I to command Prior João de Meneses, as well as to the other Hospitallers within his jurisdiction, to urgently take part in the defense of Rhodes.³¹ In 1518, the Grand Master of Rhodes asked directly to the monarch for help against the Turkish menace.³² In a so unfavorable situation, in relation to the Order of St. John, Manuel I assumed the role of intermediary and encourager of his human resources. On 2 October 1522, Miguel Silva, ambassador in Rome, had already called the king's attention to the urgent need to help Rhodes, because otherwise, its defeat would be inevitable and the king's interest thus being impaired.³³ The situation got worse at the end of that year, and in March 1523, the news spread that the enemies had won.³⁴

The Order of St. John was part of the strategy of the monarchy and was an extremely important element in the diplomatic framework. The privileged subjects of the intense diplomatic activity, in the case of the Hospitallers, were two: the Turkish menace that impended over Rhodes, and the apprehension of João III in relation to the nomination for the Priory after the death of João de Meneses (1522). As a whole, João III wanted one of his brothers³⁵ (called Luís) to be entrusted of the administration of the Priory.³⁶ In 1522, the Pope Adrian VI informed the Grand

²⁸ C. Sousa, *Provas da história genealógica*, l. IV, t. I, 1st part, 426-427.

²⁹ AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 7, n° 66.

³⁰ AN/TT, *Chancelaria D. Manuel*, l. 11, fl. 6; J. A. Figueiredo, *Nova história da Militar Ordem de Malta e dos senhores grão-prieores della em Portugal*, Vol. 3: 130.

³¹ AN/TT, *Bulas*, m. 36, n° 39; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. X, 239-240; F. Almeida, *História da Igreja em Portugal*, Vol. 2. Barcelos 1967, 215.

³² AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 7, n° 41.

³³ AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 28, n° 98.

³⁴ AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 29, n° 30; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 10: 287-291.

³⁵ AN/TT, *Corpo Cronológico*, l. m. 28, n° 42; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 10: 273-274; A. B. Freire, *Brasões da Sala de Sintra*, ed. L. B. Guerra, Vol. 3: 351.

³⁶ Fr. L. Sousa, *Anais de D. João III*, ed. M. R. Lapa, 2ª ed., Vol. 1. Lisboa 1951, cap. VII.

Master about the intentions of João III in relation to this subject. Surprisingly, he also asked him not to interfere in any disposition taken about the above mentioned Priory. Besides, the Pope reminded the king of Portugal that it was necessary to Christendom that the privileges of the Order were wholly kept, so that the knights could come to Rhodes and defend Christendom.³⁷

In spite of the vacancy of the Priory, the Order was not inactive, although it was going through a very troubled period as a consequence of the loss of Rhodes for the Turks. After these military campaigns, the Grand Master promoted Gonçalo Pimenta to the dignity of Prior of Crato, although the pope did not legitimate this choice. In turn, the Portuguese king João III congratulated him for not "...having confirmed the insane nomination of the Great Master..." and for having promised to give it to someone of his own interest.³⁸ In this sequence, the pope asked the Grand Master not to interfere in the granting of the Priory of Portugal, because he wanted it at his disposal to someone who proved to be beneficial for that post.³⁹ By assuming this position, the pope was implicitly showing that, in the last resource, the Hospitallers depended directly on the Holy See.

The problem related to the granting of the Priory, after the death of João de Meneses in 1522 ended in 1532.⁴⁰ It was a long cycle of ten years, which coincides with a moment of a true weakness of the governing body of the Order. João III followed the same strategy of Manuel I: after the death of the Prior, he took the initiative of choosing who would succeed him. So, Luís, son of Manuel I, occupied the position of Prior of Crato, a dignity that at the end of his mandate would become for his son's, António, the well known Prior pretender to the throne in the dynastic discussion which led to the Iberian Union (1580-1640). In fact on 25 May 1551, Júlio III granted António with the administration and future succession of the Priory of Crato.⁴¹ I underline the words "administration and future succession" which are revealing of the strategy defined by the monarchy in relation to the Order.

We can consider these facts as the end of a course initiated during the first dynasty. It was João III who completed the subjection of the St. John's Order to the king's jurisdiction. By doing so, the king legitimated the total interference of the crown into the internal life of this military order, providing it with a new configuration according to the political doctrine.⁴²

To conclude: the Order acted as a link between the Monarchy and the Holy See, being part of a triangular power. The characteristics of this institution, as well as

³⁷ AN/TT, *Bulas*, m. 13, n° 12.

³⁸ AN/TT, *Gav.* XV, m. 19, n° 15; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 10: 311-317.

³⁹ AN/TT, *Bulas*, m. 15, n° 25; *Gav.* VI, m. ún., n° 294.

⁴⁰ V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 10: 374.

⁴¹ AN/TT, *Bulas*, m. 30, n° 23; V. Santarém, *Quadro elementar das relações políticas e diplomáticas de Portugal com as diversas potências do mundo, desde o princípio da Monarchia Portuguesa até aos nossos dias*, Vol. 12: 324.

⁴² C. Ayala Martínez, "La corona de Castilla y la incorporación de los maestrazgos," in *Militarium Ordinum Analecta*, Vol. 1. Porto 1997, 257-290; J. I. Ruiz Rodrigues, "Las Ordenes Militares en la Superestructura del Estado Moderno", in *As Ordens Militares*

the evolution of the royal power contributed for the political control of the Order and for the politicization of the functional structures of the Priory in Portugal. The most emblematic moments of this long and complex process took place during the reigns of Dinis (1279-1325) and Manuel I (1495-1521).

There were various ways according to which the Order was shaped due to the strategy implemented for its accomplishment. It went through several interferences in order to adapt itself to the aims of a Monarchy which became more and more centralized and better assessed at the theoretical level. In a previous phase (Dinis), the control of the exerted jurisdiction acquired a special relevance. Later, the diplomacy and the external war (Mediterranean, later crusades), were the primary subjects. Thus, as time goes by, the crown requested the services of the Order and guaranteed the means to exercise its activity in certain domains ensuring the conditions of its public utility. However, the monarchs limited and conditioned its power, and only allowed the Order to exercise it, if that behavior was in compliance with their interests. The Order was successively manipulated and survived as a religious and socio-welfare institution; its active role in the political destiny of the Portuguese kingdom changed. The power of the Hospitallers went through a very complex configuration due to its development in the political world. Its welfare characteristics and manorial property administration would never have been sufficient to promote it to such an important level, neither inside the kingdom nor in the field of international politics. The decisive element that allowed for the rising to this position was its involvement in the political life, which contributed for its own definition in the late Medieval period.

em Portugal e no Sul da Europa. Actas do II Encontro sobre Ordens Militares, Lisboa 1997, 319-322; E. Postigo Castellanos, "... y los Maestres se hicieron Reys, y los Reys Maestres", in *Militarium Ordinum Analecta*, Vol. 2. Porto 1998, 291-318.