AMBASSIATORES MEOS: CIRCUMSTANCES, PROCESSES AND AGENTS OF PORTUGUESE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (1279-1325)

Introduction

With the aim of studying diplomatic relations during the reign of King Dinis (1279-1325), namely the interactions with the other powers in Christendom (kings, popes, emperors), the aim of my project is to study foreign policy in depth regarding the questions raised by diplomatic practices and challenges. I focus especially on understanding the motivations, forms and agents used. My intention is not only to analyse the diplomatic acts themselves, but also the diplomatic action of the king and his closest family – namely the queen and the royal children, including illegitimates – but also of selected Portuguese ecclesiastics – such as the archbishop of Braga and the bishops of Lisbon, Porto and Évora – besides lesser known agents, who nonetheless proved fundamental in the process of building institutional networks at the time. My intention is to move beyond traditional treatise analyses, in line with the most recent historiographical advances.

Objectives

1) To reconsider the diplomacy of the reign of King Dinis taken together, extending its geopolitical scope, which traditionally has been limited to inter-Iberian relations and the papacy, to the Western Christian powers (namely England, France, Flanders, the Holy-Empire, Venice, and Genoa).

2) To understand the logic behind the royal action of Dinis and the way in which mediators served Portuguese diplomatic relations, based on the analysis of diplomatic interactions, by establishing a comparison with European powers that have been studied before.

3) To define, among others, the role of the royal family (queen and offspring), of members of the Portuguese court as constituents of diplomacy and indispensable elements in the development and cementing of diplomatic alliances and interactions in Western Christendom.

4) To take apart and understand the process of selecting ambassadors according to the specificities of each individual. This will enable, through a prosopographic approach, reconstructing the diplomatic networks and their interdependencies.

5) To define, in line with recent studies, the relevance and the role of negotiators as diplomatic agents, paying attention to the terminology and their effective actions.

6) To demonstrate the role of Portugal in the plan of Christianity at the end of the 13th century - the beginning of the 14th century, encompassing it in the historical and inter-relational process of international powers.

Methodology

1. Listing all the circumstances leading to the exchange of diplomatic missions.

2. Fieldwork guided by three distinct but interconnected actions:
   A. Further bibliographical survey
   B. Further documentary survey
      A. Published
      B. Unpublished: National and international archives
   C. Analysis of chronicles and non-formal sources.

3. Database aimed at defining:
   A. Ambassador choice criteria.
   B. Ambassador’s profile (social, economical, intellectual) and career.
   C. Group characteristics in which agents can be included.
   D. Terminology to define the diplomatic agents

4. Writing the thesis.

Documentary Sources

This study takes into account the documentation most commonly used for research on diplomacy, such as political treaties and diplomatic correspondence, but also procurations, instructions sent to/with the ambassadors, reports from envoys, letters of safe conduct, orders of payment to couriers and receipts for travel expenses. These sources are found mainly in the Portuguese, Aragonese, British and the Vatican archives.

This project is financed by the FCT SFRH/BD/143626/2019