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The Portuguese University and the crisis of the end of the fourteenth century: Gains and losses

In the last decades of the 14th century, part of Europe was going through an economic and social crisis that was even more aggravated by political and religious conflicts, which were both cause and consequence of this crisis. Portugal was fully integrated in this European context; and, at the epicentre of this time of crisis, the kingdom of Portugal was under the rule of King Fernando (1367-1383)¹.

This monarch passed legislation to overcome the agricultural crisis in the kingdom; he supported the development of maritime trade; he reinforced the military protection of many cities with walls. But at the same time, to protect the commercial and political interests of the kingdom, he had to engage in war with Castile – 1369-1371; 1372-1373; 1381-1382 – which further aggravated the social, economic and financial crisis².

Relations with the University and the protection which this monarch seems to have bestowed on it must be understood in the context of this crisis. The main goal of this paper will be to question the role of the Portuguese *Studium* in building royal power – and vice versa – during the last decades of the 14th century in a general environment of crisis.

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¹ For an overview of this reign see R.C. Gomes, *D. Fernando*, Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores, 2005.

² The wars with Castile are part of the struggles around the succession of Pedro de Castela, who was killed by his brother, Henry of Trastámara. Fernando claimed his right to the throne as a descendant of Beatriz de Castela, but above all claimed the right to redesign the geography of the peninsula, in which Galicia played a central role. C. Estow, *Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369*, Leiden-New York, Brill, 1995.

1. Fernando's policy regarding the University during the times of crisis

1.1. The foundation of the University

During the times of Fernando, the University was already established with some maturity in the kingdom of Portugal. It had been founded in Lisbon by King Dinis (1279-1325) with the support of the Church in March 1290, and it had been recognised by Pope Nicholas IV in that same year. With the creation of the *Studium Generale*, which included the Faculties of Arts, Canon Law, Civil Law and Medicine, the king intended to better instruct the kingdom's clergy and train men who would help the monarch in governing the kingdom³. This institution was located in Lisbon until 1308 when it was moved to Coimbra, where it remained until 1338. In that same year, it returned to Lisbon, now under the government of Afonso IV (1325-1357), the same king who transferred the institution again to Coimbra in 1354⁴.

The University had enjoyed great privileges granted by royal power since its beginnings.

One group of privileges concerned premises for the University and the students. Buildings to host the *Studium* were ceded by the king, both in Lisbon and Coimbra. In parallel, numerous facilities and privileges were granted for the accommodation of the students, even if residential neighbourhoods were located where the students were placed. However, the presence of these students was a constant source of tension between the town and student populations both in Coimbra and in Lisbon.

A second set of privileges concerned the sustenance of members of the university body. Supplies for students and servants of the *Studium* deserved special attention from the outset. Thus they had their own market and suppliers (butchers, winegrowers and bakers), prioritised lines of supply and ease of acquisition and importing of food. They even had their own official,

³ The connection, if not indeed the dependence of the University on the king, has been highlighted in numerous studies dedicated to the History of the Portuguese University, as we shall see below. The circumstances of the founding of some Iberian universities in the 13th century were recently subject of a comparative study by A. Rucquoi, *Reyes y universidades en la Península Ibérica (siglo XIII)*, in «CIAN. Revista de Historia de las Universidades», 21, 1, 2018, pp. 15-39, Doi: <https://doi.org/10.20318/cian.2018.4189>.

⁴ There is an extensive bibliography on the founding of the Portuguese University. We thus refer only to the two most recent works as well as a recent article on the subject; in its various chapters and notes it references older and classic works and studies: *História da Universidade em Portugal, I.I, 1290-1536*, Coimbra, Universidade de Coimbra-Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1997; H. Fernandes (coord.), *Universidade Medieval em Lisboa. Séculos XIII-XVI*, Lisboa, Tinta da China, 2013 and M.H. da Cruz Coelho, H. Fernandes and H.V. Vilar, *O «Studium» Medieval Português: Singularidades de Um Caso Periférico*, in «Studia Historica. Historia Medieval», 36, 2, 2018, pp. 83-115, Doi: <https://doi.org/10.14201/shhme201836283115>.

the *almotacé* (Inspector concerning supplies⁵).

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⁷ A. Moreira Sá (ed.), Lisboa, Instituto de Alta

⁸ Martins, *Lisboa, a Ci* Fernando in the cartulary,

the *almotacé* (Inspector of Weights and Measures), to supervise all issues concerning supplies⁵.

Finally, in matters related to premises and sustenance, the students were protected by a special academic forum and their own justice system, which was exercised by the *Conservador* of the *Studium*⁶.

All these privileges were in themselves a way of financing the University. In addition, since the student population and some masters were clergymen, there was also an accumulation of privileges granted by the Church with ecclesiastical benefits. The burden of paying the salaries of professors and the maintenance of the University with its officers and common expenses was also divided between the Church and the king. Several churches had been allocated to it, some of them being property of the Church and others of royal patronage.

This was the general panorama of the University when Fernando began his reign in 1367. But the crisis experienced at various levels, especially financial, would also bring changes in the way the University itself functioned and was organised, during the course of a reign that lasted until 1383.

1.2. Fernando and the «re-foundation» of the University in times of crisis

When King Fernando ascended to power, the University was located once again in Coimbra, after oscillating between this city and Lisbon.

The University immediately requested the new ruler to confirm the privileges granted by previous monarchs, which Fernando confirmed by letter on 29 May 1367⁷, and in the following years he continued to privilege it. In fact, he was the monarch who addressed the biggest number of diplomas to the institution during the 14th century⁸.

⁵ These privileges, at the time the *Studium* was located in Coimbra, were analysed by M.H. da Cruz Coelho, *Coimbra Trecentista. A Cidade e o Estudo*, in «Biblos», 68, 1982, pp. 335-356. Likewise, the beginnings of the University, in both cities, until the end of the 14th century, including its exemptions and freedoms, were studied by A. Martins, *Lisboa, a Cidade e o Estudo: a Universidade de Lisboa no primeiro século da sua existência*, in Fernandes (coord.), *Universidade Medieval em Lisboa*, cit., pp. 41-88.

⁶ Regarding the academic forum, see A. Vasconcelos, *Origem e evolução do foro académico privativo da antiga Universidade Portuguesa*, Coimbra, Coimbra Imprensa da Universidade, 1917; M. Brandão and M. Lopes de Almeida, *A Universidade de Coimbra. Esboço da sua história*, Coimbra, Oficinas Gráficas da Atlântida, 1937, pp. 71-73, 92-99. In 1315, the *Conservador*, who first of all guarded the privileges of the *Studium*, already had jurisdiction over civil matters involving students, officers, and servants of the *Studium*, with its reach extending to the causes of crime in 1355. Cfr. Coelho, *Coimbra Trecentista. A Cidade e o Estudo*, cit., p. 350.

⁷ A. Moreira Sá (ed.), *Chartularium Universitatis Portugalis (1288-1537)*, I, 1288-1377, Lisboa, Instituto de Alta Cultura, 1966, doc. 246, pp. 265-266 (hereafter, *Cup*).

⁸ Martins, *Lisboa, a Cidade e o Estudo*, cit., p. 79 points out 53 documents issued by King Fernando in the cartulary, many more than the 15 by Dinis, 8 by Afonso IV or 10 by Pedro.

However, the diplomas granted in the first decade of his administration are clear proof that the University was going through a difficult phase of deep conflict with the municipal government and the residents of the city of Coimbra, which housed the institution, and even with royal officials.

The economic and social difficulties of the second half of the 14th century triggered reactions against each and every privileged individual who freed himself from burdens and services to the city or the crown and who, under the protection of the academic forum, with its own officials and justice system, was exempt from reparations or freed from sanctions. The privileged University soon came under bitter criticism.

It was perceived that the municipal authorities disputed the privileges concerning supplies enjoyed by the students, and Fernando was called upon to protect them⁹.

The rulers of the city united with royal officials, demanding that the students should receive clients or vassals of the king or the royal family in their house. This contradicted the privilege of exemption from providing lodging (*apostatadoria*) which the students enjoyed, one which Fernando corroborated¹⁰.

But academic forum and the power of the *Conservador* of the *Studium* came under particular attack. The scholars themselves railed against the abuses of the *Conservador* and the monarch had to define the place and manner in which his justice should be exercised¹¹.

The judges and other officers of the city also continuously denounced the excesses of the way in which the *Conservador* of the *Studium* exercised justice; this forced Fernando to attempt a conciliation between these two powers, which was not easy to reach¹². The situation was close to getting to its limit.

In 1370, Fernando sought to move the University from the upper part of the city of Coimbra, where the royal palace and the political power were located, to the city suburb, largely with the aim of reducing the tensions between the residents and the powers based in the walled area and the *Studium*¹³. But this measure did not materialise and a more radical one was put in place.

The monarch relocated the University in Lisbon on 3 June, 1377. In the letter which ordered the change, it was said that some professors, whom the king had appointed to teach at the *Studium*, only wanted to do so in Lisbon,

⁹ *Cup*, I, doc. 248, p. 268 of 14 July 1367; doc. 275, p. 295 of 6 November 1370.

¹⁰ *Cup*, I, doc. 247, p. 267 of 13 July 1367.

¹¹ *Cup*, I, doc. 249, p. 269 of 24 July 1367.

¹² *Cup*, I, doc. 255, pp. 274-275 of 14 April 1368; doc. 262, pp. 283-284 of 12 September 1368; doc. 274, pp. 294-295 of 6 November 1370; doc. 283, pp. 303-304 of 19 December 1374.

¹³ *Cup*, I, doc. 272, p. 292 of 14 October 1370. An overview of the conflicts between city and University can be found in the article by A. Leitão, *Cidade e Universidade. Poderes em conflito no Portugal baixo-medieval*, in «Roda da Fortuna», 4, 1-1 (Número Especial), 2015, pp. 164-181.

and the relocation reasons – conflict of political will to move before undertaking requests and demands.

The response to the facilities for the students were maintained. The privileges concerning the *servador* was retained. Of the privileges of the standards of teaching, the chancellery should be maintained.

The monarch accepted the request. Two ideas are clear: it is clear that the monarch had enough power and, on the other hand, the king was needed not only to accept the request.

The reform would be an attraction for its location in Lisbon, ensuring more direct control to protect it. In the past, the king had always granted the request.

And after this, the request was granted by Fernando.

¹⁴ *Cup*, II, doc. 29.

¹⁵ In the above-mentioned *Studium* to Lisbon, an order combined acceptance sent to the king was mentioned in a note in the Archive of Lisbon. The provisions had on the

¹⁶ The growing concern of increased attention in analysing the process of urbanisation in Lisbon. Medeiros Fernandes, *Introdução à História da Tinta da Chancelaria Arquidiocesana: o entrelaçamento entre a cidade e a universidade*. Lisboa. Centro de Estudos de História, 2011.

and the relocation was required for that reason¹⁴. There were, in fact other reasons – conflicts between the University and the city of Coimbra and a political will to maintain and reform the institution. But the University, before undertaking the relocation, sent a representative to King Fernando with requests and demands.

The responsables for the University wanted to be sure that there were facilities for the *Studium*, that the school district or favourable rent conditions were maintained for the houses of the masters and scholars, that the privileges concerning supplies were preserved, that the authority of the *Conservador* was retained and that justice was enforced to obtain confirmation of the privileges and freedoms granted by previous kings to ensure certain standards of teaching and learning, and that the institution of the University chancellery should be safeguarded.

The monarch accepted all of these¹⁵.

Two ideas are noteworthy in an analysis of this document. On the one hand, it is clear that the University, almost a century after its foundation, had already enough power and strength to make demands of the royal power. On the other hand, the king was aware that the kingdom, in order to be well governed, needed not only an army but also learned men to keep law and justice. So he accepted the requests that could allow for the development of the *Studium*.

The reform did demand a change – to settle the University in the capital would be an attraction for masters and possibly for more students; moreover, its location in Lisbon, where the court remained for longer periods of time, ensured more direct dialogue with the royal power, which would not cease to protect it. In the same way, it benefited from the privileges that monarchs had always granted to Lisbon¹⁶.

And after this «re-foundation» of the University, the set of privileges granted by Fernando grew further with the bestowal of tax exemptions; privi-

¹⁴ *Cup*, II, doc. 299, pp. 5-8 of 3 June 1377.

¹⁵ In the above-mentioned document, Fernando does not limit himself to transferring the *Studium* to Lisbon, arguing the will of the lettered scholars and foreign masters. The transfer order combined acceptance of the requests made by the University via Lopo Esteves, a graduate sent to the king with a set of requests, at some point before this document was drawn up. As mentioned in a note in the *Cup*, this royal charter is partially transcribed in the Historical Archive of Lisbon City Council, a fact that can be explained by the implications that the provisions had on the life of the city.

¹⁶ The growing centrality of Lisbon in the Portuguese kingdom has become the subject of increased attention. The studies cited include the most important bibliographic references in analysing the process of constructing Lisbon's capital status. M.F. da Silva, *A mutação urbana na Lisboa Medieval. Das Taifas a D. Dinis*, Lisboa, Universidade de Lisboa, 2017; H. Fernandes, *Introdução*, in Id. (coord.), *A Universidade Medieval em Lisboa, séculos XIII-XVI*, Lisboa, Tinta da China, 2013, pp. 19-38; H. Vilar, *A afirmação de Lisboa e a construção de uma arquidiocese: o entrelaçar de uma rede (1279-1393)*, in J.L. Fontes (dir.), *Bispos e Arcebispos de Lisboa. Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa da Universidade Católica Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Livros Horizonte, 2018, pp. 107-122.

leges for those who worked on the properties of the University and collected their income; and greater facilities for teachers and students in buying food¹⁷.

In a letter of January 1, 1378¹⁸, Fernando once again accepted requests from the institution and increased university prerogatives, especially with tax exemptions. Thus the servants who worked the lands of teachers or scholars or received the rent of the churches adscribed to the *Studium* would not render certain public services that would distract them from their duties, and the receiver of church rents would maintain the privileges which he had hitherto enjoyed. In turn, the victuals that the masters and scholars bought in or outside the kingdom were subject to no commercial taxes (tolls or tithes). Even the scholars could choose not to take on public duties. Fernando gave his assent, but as the scholars received an allowance for their status as knights, he obliged them to keep horses.

Clearly, at the end of the 1370s, when the crisis in the kingdom was already apparent, the institution and its body of teachers, students and servants still sought to defend themselves through their ancestral privileges; this, the monarch could consent to. In this phase of change in the institution and its insertion into Lisbon urban life, he therefore maintained the policy of favouring the *Studium*. He appointed the *Conservador* for the *Studium*¹⁹; he ordered Lisbon judges not to oblige readers and scholars to pay extraordinary taxes (*peitas, talhas*)²⁰; he ordered the lawsuits in which the University was involved to be paid out of the rents of the churches adscribed to the *Studium*²¹.

He even requested papal support, playing with the different pontiffs according to their position in relation to Rome or Avignon (as will be detailed later). Gregory XI gave the University the right to grant the titles of doctor, undergraduate and bachelor with all solemnity²² and, more importantly, he accepted the request of Fernando and exempted, for three years, the doctors, professors and students from the *Studium* from the obligation to reside in the churches where they enjoyed benefits²³. This was, in fact, an important privilege that greatly helped students to pay for their study costs and that also served to reward the teaching work of the masters.

When Fernando gave his support to the Pope of Avignon, Clement VII granted an edict confirming the relocation of the University to Lisbon²⁴ and

¹⁷ *Cup*, II, doc. 305, pp. 15-18 of 1 January 1378; *Cup*, II, doc. 300, p. 9 of 1 July 1378; *Cup*, II, doc. 306, pp. 18-19 of 26 February 1378; *Cup*, II, doc. 307, pp. 19-20 of 25 February 1378.

¹⁸ *Cup*, II, doc. 305, pp. 15-18 of 1 January 1378.

¹⁹ *Cup*, II, doc. 300, p. 9 of 1 July 1378.

²⁰ *Cup*, II, doc. 306, pp. 18-19 of 26 February 1378.

²¹ *Cup*, II, doc. 307, pp. 19-20 of 25 February 1378.

²² *Cup*, II, doc. 301, p. 10 of 7 October 1377.

²³ *Cup*, II, doc. 302, pp. 11-12 of 7 October 1377. And soon after, another bull of the same date determined that the deans of Lisbon and Silves fulfilled the said privilege (*Cup*, II, doc. 303, p. 13 of 7 October 1377).

²⁴ *Cup*, II, doc. 351, pp. 89-90. Bull of Clement VII, *In superne dignitatis*, of 7 June 1380.

another edict that ratified to it²⁵.

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²⁵ *Cup*, II, doc. 352, pp. 9 June 1380.

²⁶ *Cup*, II, doc. 310, p. 22

²⁷ In fact, we know that ev designated the *Livro Verde*, the a «liuro da dita vniuersidade e outorgados ao dito estudo e ajudar» («book of this univ granted and bestowed on the they may draw benefit from» recent version by M.A. Rodri de Coimbra, Coimbra, Arquiv cultural ambience which surr

²⁸ On this topic, see M.H Portugal, cit., pp. 39-67. A to PTDC/EPH-HIS/3154/2014 the Portuguese University: A de História da Universidade

²⁹ *Cup*, II, doc. 366, pp. of 28 June 1383.

another edict that ratified the incomes of the churches that were allocated to it²⁵.

While all these privileges helped the survival of the institution, it is also certain that there were economic difficulties and social problems to face in maintaining the University's mission. As already mentioned, the letters show us that there were judicial questions involving the University. Thus, the rectors and masters of the University asked the king to copy several documents with privileges and annexation of churches to the University that were in the Tower of the Castle of Lisbon²⁶, where Fernando had moved the royal archive.

There was often a need to present the written document as proof in order to justify privileges and show the legality of university incomes and demand their collection. These documents were later copied into the *Livro Verde*, the only university cartulary in the middle ages, responsible for an institutional and patrimonial memory²⁷.

The financing of the University through ecclesiastical incomes, which paid the salaries of the masters, was in fact becoming a problem²⁸. Such incomes came essentially from the rural assets of the churches. These were difficult times for agriculture, because labour was scarce, many lands were not worked and there was a lack of cereals. To this could be added violences caused by social uprisings and the war that destroyed crops and led to looting of barns.

So, for example, in 1382 the prior of church of Santa Maria de Sacavém did not pay the rent to the University, because the crops had been destroyed by war²⁹. This had to do with the destruction that the Castilians, who had come by sea to Lisbon in March 1382, caused in the lands around this city. Therefore, the incomes of the ecclesiastical assets that supported the *Studium* would have suffered a fall, like those of the other lords, due to the harm that

²⁵ *Cup*, II, doc. 352, pp. 91-92. Bull of Clement VII, *Ad ea ex apostolice servitutis*, of 7 June 1380.

²⁶ *Cup*, II, doc. 310, p. 22 of 4 November 1378.

²⁷ In fact, we know that even before the 15th century constitution of the University cartulary designated the *Livro Verde*, there already existed, as mentioned in a document of April 16, 1398, a «liuro da dita vniuersidade em que som contheudos os priuilegios e graças que som dados e outorgados ao dito studo e vniuersidade e scollares a que pertencia e se per elle emtendiam ajudar» («book of this university, in which are contained the privileges and favours which are granted and bestowed on the *Studium* and university and scholars which belong to it and which they may draw benefit from») (*Cup*, II, doc. 531). The *Livro Verde* is published in its most recent version by M.A. Rodrigues and M.T.N. Veloso (coords.), *Livro Verde da Universidade de Coimbra*, Coimbra, Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra, 1992. On this problem and the cultural ambience which surrounds it, see Martins, *Lisboa, a Cidade e o Estudo*, cit., pp. 80-82.

²⁸ On this topic, see M.H. da Cruz Coelho, *As Finanças*, in *História da Universidade em Portugal*, cit., pp. 39-67. A topic in question is undergoing thorough research in the project PTDC/EPH-HIS/3154/2014: *OECONOMIA STUDII. Funding, Management and Resources of the Portuguese University: A Comparative Analysis (13th-16th Centuries)*, based in the Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa, to which the three authors of this study are affiliated.

²⁹ *Cup*, II, doc. 366, pp. 107-108 of 19 September 1382; *Cup*, II, doc. 373, pp. 114-115 of 28 June 1383.

the war of 1381-1382 had caused in agricultural production. And even before, the Castilian incursion of 1372 and 1373, which devastated the lands of Beira and Extremadura³⁰, would have had hard consequences for the rents of the University, as the churches allocated to the institution were located essentially in those regions. The monarch could lend his power to the *Studium* to demand the collection of the overdue rents, but its fulfilment would depend on the amounts earned from agricultural production.

To face the crisis, the royal power insisted on exempting the institution and requesting favours in its benefit. Fernando persevered in the tax exemptions on supplies to the social body of the University – those to do with circulation that reverted to the crown or the papal tithe from the incomes received from the allocated churches³¹.

But he was even more pertinent before the Holy See.

2. *The ecclesiastical policy of Fernando and its impact on the University*

On 14 July 1380, Martinho, Bishop of Lisbon, addressed Charles V in Paris. In his long, elaborate speech, he transmitted to the King of France that Fernando, King of Portugal, recognised the legitimacy of the Avignon Pope, Clement VII³². He delivered his speech after a long trip from Lisbon to the Pope's residential city, where he had the chance to submit to the Pontiff a long list of petitions on the behalf of several clerics who, like him, supported the Avignon Pope. From there, he travelled to Reims and Paris, where he presented King Fernando's commitment to obey the King of France.

We do not need to recall that Portugal's support to Avignon meant more than mere religious obedience. In doing this, Portugal joined one of the parties involved in a long series of combats that ravaged Western Europe: the Hundred Years' War³³. Besides splitting and dilacerating the Church, the Schism between Rome and Avignon was connected to the military and political confrontation between France and England. In this light, choosing between Avignon and Rome was not an issue involving only the Church, also presenting a problem to kings and their religious policy. Portugal was no exception.

³⁰ A summary of these wars, illustrated with maps, can be found in A.H. de Oliveira Marques, *Portugal na Crise dos séculos XIV e XV*, Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 1987, pp. 509-523.

³¹ *Cup*, II, doc. 358, p. 99 of 11 January 1381; *Cup*, II, doc. 371, p. 112 of 4 May 1383. He also gave his consent for the Bishop of Guarda to buy property – which was forbidden to the clergy – to fund a college for twelve poor scholars (*Cup*, II, doc. 370, p. 111 of 28 March 1383).

³² A.D. de Sousa Costa, *A Península Ibérica e o Cisma Do Ocidente. Repercussão Do Cisma Na Nacionalidade Portuguesa Do Século XIV e XV*, in *Monumenta Portugaliae Vaticana* (hereafter, *Mpv*), Braga, Editorial Franciscana, 1982, vol. III.1, pp. 9-874. The speech can be found published on pp. 228-249.

³³ M.H. da Cruz Coelho, *The Portuguese Cortes during the Reign of Ferdinand I (1367-83): The Context of the Hundred Years War (1337-1453)*, in «Parliaments, Estates and Representation», 36, 2016, Doi: 10.1080/02606755.2015.1047624.

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³⁴ J.C. Baptista, *Portugal e o C*

³⁵ The career of this bishop Fontes (dir.), *Bispos e Arcebispo*

³⁶ Gomes, D. Fernando, cit.,

Júlio Cesar Baptista, one of the Portuguese historians who most studied the Schism and its impact on Portugal, clearly states that the king had the task of choosing between popes and illustrates his oscillations³⁴. King Fernando sought the information he needed about the election process of Urban VI, and later did the same for that of Clement VII. It was the king who, after gathering such information, requested the opinion of advisers and scholars to help him identify the real legitimately-elected pope.

In Paris, Bishop Martinho spoke on his behalf. This shows that it was not a merely religious issue, that, in the late 14th century, could be addressed solely by the Church of each kingdom. In the Portuguese case, this was particularly serious, as the only archbishop that existed in Portugal, the Archbishop of Braga, one the most important bishops of the realm, chose a different side. Archbishop Lourenço Vicente remained faithful to the Pope of Rome. Bishop Martinho of Zamora, now Bishop of Lisbon³⁵, supported Clement VII.

Royal politics (sometimes considered contradictory or oscillating) prevailed over this – not always peaceful – split of the episcopal group between the two parties. When looked at from the short-term perspective of a troubled realm, it seems to correspond to a successive realignment of alliances by the Portuguese king.

At first, King Fernando remained neutral between April 1378 and January 1380, i.e. not choosing either pope, somehow following the advice of the King of Castile. But somewhere between the end of 1379 and the beginning of 1380 he vowed to obey Clement VII; it was in this context that Bishop Martinho travelled to Paris to deliver a speech that made such obedience material. In his speech, he briefly expounded the history of Portugal, in order to underscore the strong religiousness of Portuguese kings and the greatness of King Fernando's ancestors.

In practical terms, however, the speech did not remain in force for long. Around July 1381, i.e. about one year and a half after deciding to support Clement VII, King Fernando chose to support Urban VI. Then, possibly around August 1382, he went back to supporting Clement VII, or may even have kept a neutral position.

King Fernando died soon after, in October 1383, and his death triggered a dynastic crisis.

These changes were always considered negative by later historians and contributed greatly to creating the portrait of a fragile, dependent, and insecure king³⁶. The strength and longevity of this notion prevented a more serious analysis of the reasons and implications behind such changes.

³⁴ J.C. Baptista, *Portugal e o Cisma do Ocidente*, in «Lusitania Sacra», I, 1, 1956, pp. 65-203.

³⁵ The career of this bishop was summarised by A. Martins, *Martinho Anes de Zamora*, in Fontes (dir.), *Bispos e Arcebispos de Lisboa*, cit., pp. 417-430.

³⁶ Gomes, *D. Fernando*, cit., pp. 247-260.

Indeed, this is not the place to evaluate the political junctures underlying the above changes, but it is worth gauging the relationship between the University and the background defined by the Schism and the king's shifts of obedience, in order to understand to what extent the University resented the existence of a split Church – namely regarding the episcopal group, and the shifts of obedience.

In the reign of King Fernando, as mentioned above, the University moved back to Lisbon and was granted several privileges. According to the surviving documentation, the king seemingly developed a policy aimed at strengthening the support and attention given to the University, to which the king tried to give new breath and a new dimension.

Thus, King Fernando apparently wished to pay the same attention to this institution that other kings, his ancestors, had already given, reinforcing the ties that united it with royalty. In addition to this interest, the documentation increasingly refers to the presence of individuals carrying bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in the royal entourage, both administrative and advisory, but also in ecclesiastic structures, mainly Cathedral Chapters³⁷.

As stated in previous studies, the implications of the shifts of obedience by King Fernando did not involve only choosing between one or the other conflicting party, i.e., England or France. In the Iberian context, the military conflict reverberated in the wars against Castile, which tormented the Portuguese territory during this reign, and amplified the country's economic and financial problems. Along with these implications, shifts in papal obedience necessarily impacted on the awarding of benefices, as sometimes several candidates were presented for the same one³⁸.

A non-exhaustive analysis of petitions made to popes such as Clement VII shows precisely that. There petitions can be found, made either by the king on behalf of clerics close to him, or by different bishops that intervened on behalf of their men, or even by laymen and ecclesiastics who individually sought the Pope's grace. As mentioned above, Bishop Martinho himself travelled to Avignon to submit a list of petitions to the Pope.

³⁷ The links between collegiate churches and universities in the Castilian area have been analysed by different authors, especially noteworthy being S. Guijarro González, *Estudiantes, Universidades y cabildos catedralicios en las diócesis castellanas durante la baja Edad Media*, in «Revista de Historia», 4, 1998, pp. 38-55. With regard to the presence of lettered scholars and university students in the administrative structure, the study of A.C. Homem, *O Desembargo Régio. 1320-1433*, Lisboa, INIC, 1985.

³⁸ The role of supplication as an instrument of government has been repeatedly reaffirmed and re-examined. The classic work of G. Barraclough, *Papal Provisions. Aspects of Church History Constitutional, Legal and Administrative in the Later Middle Ages*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1935 should be cited, as well as the more recent studies included in the book of W.M. Ormrod, G. Dodd and A. Musson (eds.), *Medieval Petitions: Grace and Grievance*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2009. An interesting view on papal provisions is given in the article by W. Smith, *The Development of Papal Provisions in Medieval Europe*, in «History Compass», 13, 2015, pp. 110-121.

Likewise, the University was the author of petitions to the king in November 1378 and to the Pope in November 1378. Students, Archdeacon and other officials' petitions had been delayed since September 1378, due to the king's refusal to grant them the date usually granted.

On that occasion, the king's policy apparently maintained the status quo, but it had impacted on the ability of students, namely law students, to become beneficiaries of new degrees.

This long list strengthened the University's position, as more students were becoming increasingly dependent on the University. This trend apparently began in the 14th century and was reinforced in the 15th century when they studied in the University of Lisbon, to the presence of Portuguese students, even during the reign of King João I.

In truth, however, the University's influence for many laymen and ecclesiastics is certified by the fact that bishops and kings themselves could obtain or acquire benefices of central importance of ecclesiastical administration. Granting benefices was not only to the king, who had the influence, but also to bishops and other students. The support given to the papacy, particularly during the reign of King João I.

Possibly for this reason, the University was attentive to the Portuguese king. King Fernando stayed in Lisbon and used the creation of a University of Lisbon request to his predecessor, King João I, and the Dean of the University of Lisbon.

³⁹ *Mpv*, vol. II, pp. 18-29.

⁴⁰ See, for example, the lists of students in the study by Orléans and M. de la Roche, in particular A. Norte and A. de la Roche, *Academia entre os séculos XII e XIII*.

Likewise, the University (*Studium*) of Lisbon also appears as protagonist and author of petitions to the Pope. One list worthy of attention dates from November 1378 and consists of 87 petitions³⁹; on this list, the Dean of the Students, Archdeacon João of Viseu, claimed that the submission of such petitions had been delayed with regard to the Pope's election date, i.e. September 1378, due to the king's indifference. Thus, they asked Clement VII to grant them the date usually given to *Studia*, when the pontiff was made Pope.

On that occasion, Archdeacon João of Viseu mentioned the neutral position apparently maintained by King Fernando in 1378 and 1379, a fact that had impacted on the ability to obtain benefices. This concern affected many students, namely law students, whose names Archdeacon João mentioned as beneficiaries of new donations.

This long list strengthens the abovementioned notion that law studies were becoming increasingly important among members of the secular clergy. This trend apparently gained special importance during the second half of the 14th century and was reinforced during the 15th century. Obviously not all of them studied in the University of Lisbon. Many other lists of petitions point to the presence of Portuguese students in several other European universities, even during the reign of King Fernando, which shows a continued academic *peregrinatio* by Portuguese students⁴⁰.

In truth, however, the *Studium Generale* was a privileged education space for many laymen and ecclesiastics who could not afford to go abroad. This fact is certified by the petitions made by the University's authorities, or by bishops and kings themselves, seeking the Pope's approval, so that many students could obtain or accumulate benefices, which also states the increasing central importance of education.

Granting benefices to University students and masters was important not only to the king, who saw the University gaining more importance and influence, but also to bishops, who, one way or another, protected it or its students. The support given to masters and students was also important for the papacy, particularly a split papacy in need of support.

Possibly for this reason, Clement VII seemingly remained particularly attentive to the Portuguese king's requests during the short period in which King Fernando stayed under his obedience. As early as June 1380, he authorised the creation of a *Studium* in Lisbon, i.e. after King Fernando's previous request to his predecessor, and simultaneously ordered Bishop Martinho of Lisbon and the Dean of Coimbra, his supporters, to grant the revenue of a

³⁹ *Mpv*, vol. II, pp. 18-29.

⁴⁰ See, for example, the lists of supplications in *Mpv*, vol. II, pp. 17-18 and 30-32 respectively, in the study by Orléans and Mompillier. The *peregrinatio* has been studied by André Leitão in particular A. Norte and A. Leitão, *A mobilidade dos escolares portugueses: a peregrinatio academica entre os séculos XII e XV*, in «Lusitania Sacra», 33, January-June 2016, pp. 43-98.

significant number of churches to the University. The months which elapsed between November 1378 and January 1381 were marked by successive grants to scholars, reinforcing possessions or increasing benefices already received.

Unfortunately, we cannot find the counterpoint that could be provided by the documentation issued by the Chancellery of Urban VI. The absence of documentation does not allow for a detailed comparison of each pope's concession policies.

Nevertheless, it is not absurd to think that something similar might have occurred in the following months, when King Fernando shifted to the side of the Roman Pope. Differences would be found in the names of the beneficiaries and in some cases of the intercessors.

King Fernando's religious policy necessarily impacted on the University. As in other institutions, the University felt the consequences of the king's shifts in obedience, as did the chapters and the prelates. The pursuit of backing by the papacy must have divided masters and students who saw their names, individually or in joint lists, being used in an extensive and complicated web of petitions.

In a general way, some ideas can be drawn from this analysis and some gains and losses of the Portuguese University can be established in the times of crisis and in its fight against it.

As clear proof of its maturity, the University had the power to «force» the king to undertake a kind of new foundation of the institution. It presented the king with a roll of demands, which he promptly accepted. In fact, it was also in the royal interest that the institution be relocated in order to free the University from the conflicts in which it was involved with the leaders and population of the city of Coimbra, where it was based. The king also needed the University to educate its councillors and lawmen who served the kingdom. Once settled in Lisbon, the University gained stability by being continuously in only one place for more than a century and a half, which previous continuous displacements did not allow. Teaching and learning could be reformed. Its power and prestige could be strengthened. Its memory, chancellery and archive could also be cared for, asserting its role as an entity that issued written texts of its own responsibility and was also a due receptor of other texts, demanding the transcript of royal and ecclesiastical diplomas that guaranteed its privileges and patrimony, copies that will become the basis of its archives-cartularies, the *Livro Verde da Universidade*.

This relocation to Lisbon, the capital where the court remained for the longest period of time, made space for a privileged and close relationship with the monarch who greatly protected the University, granting it privileges, exemptions, and imploring for it before ecclesiastical entities. The integration of the University into Lisbon's world, a mercantile city, open to external relations and welcoming to cultural innovation, as well as being largely privileged by royal power, offered the University new conditions for reform and modernity.

The strengthening of the University had implications even in accordance with Fernando.

While the pursuit of power of Rome may not actually have certainly favoured it, the University aimed to gain access to the port, to a greater or lesser extent. The supplications seem to have determined changes in the policy of Schism and the change in the Portuguese University in particular benefits to the University.

Nevertheless, not everything was positive. We must point out that the University and even the wars against it were disastrous for the income of the churches that were in shortage, suffering the impact of devastated by wars, resulting in payments due by those who were negatively impacted. For these reasons, the University was in a difficult position.

But the University, the king and the Church were in support of the University which moved from Coimbra to Lisbon and then in Coimbra of the University in times of crisis.

To sum up, in a nutshell, the crisis on the Portuguese University (gains and losses) the University survive and even enhanced by the unrest, inflation and economic crisis. Three traditional areas of the environment should be considered in the political crisis, all three from the point of view of the University.

First of all, biological and social mainstream narrative about the University are not available concerning the University. However, there is no doubt to suggest a high rate of change.

The strengthening of the relation between the University and real power had implications even in the relations of the Roman Curia with the University, in accordance with Fernando's ecclesiastical policy.

While the pursuit of support by both the Pope of Avignon and the Pope of Rome may not actually have instigated the multiplication of requests, if certainly favoured it. Such requests, put forward by clerics, kings or nobles, aimed to gain access to beneficial income in exchange for conjunctural support, to a greater or lesser extent, for the disputing popes. The increase in supplications seems to be a constant of the late Middle Ages and it even determined changes in the system of benefits, but the truth is that the period of Schism and the changes of observance by Fernando also had repercussions for the Portuguese University, whether in obtaining authorisation to travel or in particular benefits to its servants.

Nevertheless, not everything went in favour of the *Studium Generale*.

We must point out that the crisis of the second half of the 14th century and even the wars against Castile in which Fernando was involved were disastrous for the income of the institution. The rural and urban patrimony of the churches that were allocated to the University, badly worked from labour shortage, suffering the impact of bad agricultural years, epidemics and often devastated by wars, resulted in less income and delayed, decreased, or inexistent payments due by those churches to the University. In addition, cash incomes were negatively impacted by the increasing devaluation of the currency. For these reasons, the University finances were affected and weakened.

But the University, struggling against adversity, managed to survive. The king and the Church were its backbone. And the same matrix that had supported the University when Dinis, with the ecclesiastical help, founded it first in Lisbon and then in Coimbra, was reproduced in Fernando's 're-foundation' of the University in times of crisis.

To sum up, in a nutshell, what was really the impact of the late 14th century crisis on the Portuguese medieval *Studium*? What were the main challenges (gains and losses) the *Studium* was facing? How did the *Studium* manage to survive and even enhance its impact in a society dealing with great political unrest, inflation and economic crisis?

Three traditional areas of impact connected to a recessive economic environment should be considered, demography, economic conjuncture and political crisis, all three deserving an individual attention from the *Studium* point of view.

First of all, biological stress, due to epidemics and famine, the bulk of the mainstream narrative about late 14th century society, cannot be assessed, as data are not available concerning its impact on the population of scholars and masters. However, there is nothing in the slim information about academic careers to suggest a high rate of mortality among academic staff and scholars, unlike

in monasteries. On the contrary, some individual biographies we were already able to put together suggest lengthy careers, particularly those connected to the royal service, which are better known through the royal chancery register.

In spite of this apparent stability, indirect impact may be asserted through repercussion on rents of the manpower crisis that overwhelmed agricultural product⁴¹. That would explain why some churches, like for instance that of Sacavém, are no longer in condition (allegedly) of paying rents to the *Studium*. But in fact it is impossible to determine whether churches are really impoverished by the crisis or are using common knowledge and perception of the repercussion of the decaying demography on farming activities to escape paying contributions previously imposed by the Crown to finance the functioning of the *Studium*.

These last observations may well serve to introduce a second set of issues relating to economic conjuncture. In fact, unlike what happens with demography, there is little doubt that the accelerated devaluation⁴² of coinage in the Portuguese economy, in line with the European trends, already underlined some many years ago by Oliveira Marques, impacts harshly both on rents and on teachers' incomes. On the rents side devaluation put in the nude the insufficiencies of the funding system, which was in the DNA of the *Studium* since its foundation in the late 13th century, as real value of ecclesiastical rents and fees decreased impressively. This fact has considerable impact, as the *Studium* had never been able to set up a solid financial and patrimonial basis due to volatility of the lists of churches endowed during the 14th and early 15th centuries, a deficiency that explains why fees, in particular, seemed to play such a major role. By the time King Fernando changed the siege of the *Studium*, devaluation of fees probably accelerated economical crisis within it, and that may explain why such an attention is given by royal privileges to the fees pay by the students to receive a degree. Undoubtedly fees had become a key source of revenues, the updating established by the privileges keeping them in tune with inflation, unlike in the case of ecclesiastical rents.

On the wages side, devaluation resulting from inflation made the demand for ecclesiastical benefices even more relevant. That accounts, we think, for the great number of petitions, and also explains a later effort by the crown to connect the funding of the *Studium* with canonicates. In this sense, it is impossible to reduce scholars wages to the fixed amounts they received from the University through it's own budget. Ecclesiastical benefices play a key role in the structure of the rent and should be considered part of the income at least as much as direct wages. Perhaps being aware of this fact is the reason

⁴¹ A. Henriques, *Plenty of Land, Land of Plenty: The Agrarian Output of Portugal (1311-20)*, in «European Review of Economic History», 19, 2, May 2015, pp. 149-170, Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ereh/heu023>.

⁴² A.H. de Oliveira Marques, *História de Portugal*, Lisboa, Palas Editores, 1978⁸, vol. I, p. 162.

why in the 15th century of funding.

In any case it goes beyond the pope and the role of the papacy and the Avignon alternative.

This calls for a final paradox: how did the University manage to survive at an international level, regarded eventually as a mirror of the times, even if Fernando III, with Castile, urban universities did not seem to impact directly on the dynastic shift being suffered? It took the side of the crown, the Crown as an institution, its behaviour, in the sense of political engagement. It is the case of the great universities after the death of Fernando III.

Also we must understand the transition from Coimbra to Lisbon, how it allowed the *Studium* to maintain the atmosphere of a mercantile and welcoming culture of Portuguese Universities, to say that it was more «

why in the 15th century the Crown was able to bet in the canonicate model of funding.

In any case it generally underlines the importance of the petitions to the pope and the role of political uncertainty concerning relations with Rome and Avignon alternatively in the late 14th century.

This calls for a final set of issues that can be described through a seeming paradox: how did the *Studium* consolidate in a time of political instability concerning the kingdom's internal affairs and the relation with a major player at an international level, the papacy. In this perspective the schism may be regarded eventually as a showcase for struggle for benefits among the scholars, mirroring closely the constant shift of royal policies. However, on the Crowns side, even if Fernando's reign is also internally one of political distress (wars with Castile, urban unrest) ending with a deep succession crisis, that does not seem to impact directly on the *Studium*, the internal consequences of the dynastic shift being scarcely noticeable, perhaps because the scholarly elite took the side of the new king. Perhaps, also, the close connection between the Crown as an institution and the *Studium* may account for its' conservative behaviour, in the sense of in line with the *status quo*. In any case the evidences of political engagement seem to be all closely connected to the Crown. This is the case of the great turmoil of 1383-1385 when the crisis of succession after the death of Fernando made way for social uprising in Lisbon.

Also we must underline that king Fernando's decision of moving the siege from Coimbra to Lisbon, ensured stability in a period of distress. It would allow the *Studium* to benefit from the more connected and soon cosmopolite atmosphere of a mercantile city, open to European and African commerce and welcoming cultural and scientific innovation. If we may sum up the role of Portuguese University within the crisis of the late Middle Ages, we could say that it was more «Con il re» than «Contro il re».

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