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## **The Chronicles of Fernão Lopes – finally in English!**

### **As Crónicas de Fernão Lopes – finalmente em Inglês!**

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A “hidden gem” of European medieval historiography is now available in English. Fernão Lopes’s chronicles (c. 1380-c.1459) have remained relatively unknown to non-Portuguese speaking scholars until, at long last, a new edition has been published: LOPES, Fernão – *The Chronicles of Fernão Lopes*. Eds. Amélia P. Hutchinson, Juliet Perkins, Philip Krummrich and Teresa Amado. Transl. R.C. Willis, Philip Krummrich, Juliet Perkins, Iona McCleery, Francisco Fernandes, and Shirley Clarke. Textos B, 64. Vols. I-V. Woodbridge: Tamesis Books, 2023.

From the bibliographical reference alone, it becomes clear that this complete translation of Lopes’s chronicles is the result of a collaborative effort on the part of a large team of translators, philologists, and historians, assisted by specialists in particular areas related to their content. Besides the translation, the team also produced a comprehensive index listing all persons and places mentioned in the chronicles, the first time that such a task has been attempted.

Previous sections of the chronicles have been translated in the past, mainly in anthologies, such as Derek W. Lomax’s and R. J. Oakley’s *Fernão Lopes. The English in Portugal 1367–1387*, the most extensive, or Edgar Prestage’s *The Chronicles of Fernão Lopes and Gomes Eannes de Zurara* which, as the title indicates, includes texts from Lopes as well as his successor<sup>1</sup>.

In its first years, the translation work for the present edition led also to the development of a website initiated at the University of Georgia, GA, USA, but which eventually became the “Fernão Lopes Portal”, presently hosted by the Instituto de Estudos Medievais (IEM), Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas (FCSH), at the

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<sup>1</sup> LOMAX, Derek W.; OAKLEY, R. J. (eds.) – *Fernão Lopes. The English in Portugal 1367–1387*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1988; PRESTAGE, Edgar – *The Chronicles of Fernão Lopes and Gomes Eannes de Zurara*. Watford: Voss and Michael, 1928.

Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal<sup>2</sup>. At first, the Portal was intended as a database to store an interactive Portuguese-English glossary and other incidental notes that could assist the translators in their work, given their different linguistic backgrounds and training, and the need to sustain an acceptable degree of consistency. Gradually, it became a set of interactive notes supporting the reading of Lopes's chronicles in any edition. To that end, passages are identified by chronicle and chapter, rather than the page number of a specific edition. At the moment, all persons and places mentioned in *The Chronicle of King Pedro* have been listed, but the Portal still needs to be expanded to contain the notes on all the other chronicles. A partnership between IEM and Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda (INCM) is in progress, with the objective of offering access to digital versions of INCM's editions of the original Portuguese text through the Fernão Lopes Portal.

Fernão Lopes's chronicles are of particular interest to researchers on western European affairs from the mid-fourteenth century to the first quarter of the fifteenth. Although Portugal is the main focus of attention, the narrative does not lose sight of the wider political, diplomatic, religious, military, and economic implications, certainly within an Iberian context, but often extending also to a European sphere of action. Lopes shows the kingdom interacting with its neighbours, and further afield, against the background of a Europe in turmoil for extended periods of crisis such as the Great Schism of 1378, the internecine Castilian dynastic conflict, and the Hundred Years War, which reached the Iberian Peninsula when English and French armies, called to support their respective Portuguese and Castilian allies, confronted each other on Iberian soil. Nor did the ravages of the bubonic plague and the consequences of war on those involved, be they intervening countries in general, their rulers or their respective populations, escape Lopes's attention.<sup>3</sup> On occasion, the focus of the narrative moves to Castile, Aragon, Navarre, even Granada, and their complex relations.

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<sup>2</sup> *Fernão Lopes Portal* [Online]. FCSH, Universidade Nova de Lisboa. [Accessed on 5 December 2023]. Available at <http://fernaolopes.fcsh.unl.pt>

<sup>3</sup> MONTEIRO, João Gouveia – 'Casualties of the Aftermath'. In FONSECA, Luís Adão da; MONTEIRO, João Gouveia; PIMENTA, Maria Cristina (eds.) – *The Aljubarrota Battle and its Contemporary Heritage*. European Medieval Battlefields. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2020, pp. 67-74.

The present edition consists of five volumes: four with chronicles and the fifth with an extensive bibliography, and the above-mentioned general index. Each volume contains a scholarly introduction to the chronicle, genealogical trees of its leading personages, and plentiful footnotes and cross references.

Volume I – *The Chronicle of King Pedro of Portugal* – opens with three introductory studies to Lopes’s work covering the historical context and literary architecture of his narrative. The chronicle covers the full reign of King Pedro (1357–1367), and his fraught relations with the King of Castile. The war between Castile and Aragon, with occasional Portuguese intervention, and the papal legate’s search for peace terms occupies several chapters. Other shorter chapters, similar to *tableaux*, reflect the king’s obsession with justice and his close relationship with the people. The chronicle closes with Pedro’s revenge on the murderers of his beloved Inês de Castro, and an appraisal of his reign.

Volume II – *The Chronicle of King Fernando of Portugal* – chronicles the full reign (1367–1383), including Fernando’s three wars with Castile and alliances with Aragon, Granada, and England. The hostilities with Castile bring the two main contenders of the Hundred Years’ War to Iberian soil, where English and French forces confront each other, but now on behalf of their respective allies. The chronicle ends with the dynastic crisis created by the marriage of Fernando’s only daughter to the King of Castile, ready to dispute the succession to the Portuguese throne.

Volume III – *The Chronicle of King João I of Portugal, Part 1* – concentrates on the War of Succession (1383–1385), with the Castilian invasion of Portugal, the great siege of Lisbon, the staunch resistance of its people, and the rise of the House of Avis under João I, after his acclamation at the *Cortes* in Coimbra. Nuno Álvares Pereira proves himself as a military leader and is made Constable.

Volume IV – *The Chronicle of King João I of Portugal, Part 2* – opens with the decisive Battle of Aljubarrota (1385), securing the throne for João I. However, unrest remains with *foci* of resistance within the kingdom, sieges, and frequent skirmishes across the Portuguese-Castilian border. Anglo-Portuguese diplomatic negotiations lead to

the Treaty of Windsor (1386), and João I's marriage to Philippa of Lancaster. João I and the Duke of Lancaster invade Castile and, once again, English and French confront each other by the side of their respective Iberian allies. The Anglo-Portuguese campaign fails in territorial terms, but the Duke of Lancaster accepts a settlement in gold and the proposed marriage of his daughter Catalina (granddaughter of the murdered Pedro I of Castile) to the heir of the Castilian throne. Protracted peace negotiations take place between Castilians and Portuguese. The chronicle closes with the two prestigious marriages of King João I's illegitimate children: Afonso, Duke of Barcelos, to the daughter of the Constable Nuno Álvares Pereira, and Beatriz to the Earl of Arundel.

Volume V – general bibliography and comprehensive index for all chronicles.

As can be appreciated, the above summary points to a challenging range of situations, topics and areas of expertise which can only be expressed through the use of specialized terminology. The translators and editors made a concerted effort to transfer not only the content of the chronicles into modern English, but also the humour, sarcasm, compassion, or lyricism of many passages. Inevitably, concessions had to be made in terms of syntax and other necessary adjustments of style in the target language. The English version presents shorter sentences, and a more straightforward organization of the information, making it easier to read and comprehend, even for Portuguese speakers.

Further information on the innumerable hurdles and problems that translating such a varied and complex text posed, can be found in “The Translators’ Note”, in volume 1. The “Acknowledgements”, and even the “Preface”, also in volume 1, bear witness to the amount of research required. Beyond the linguistic issues referred to above, there were immense challenges created by the necessary identification of many personages bearing the same name. For ease of identification, contrary to Lopes's practice of spelling all names in Portuguese, the translation team adopted the modern orthography of the national language of each personality. Place names also required careful research and the same orthographic policy was adopted.

Lopes's chronicles offer a wealth of information on multiple aspects of medieval life. There are detailed descriptions of military weapons, siege engines, sea and land battles, their tactics, and battle formation. He distinguishes between types of horses used in warfare, scouting missions, or for leisure. The same applies to the different types of hounds used for hunting purposes. All these are valuable sources to the historian, but a major challenge to the translator. Of particular difficulty was the translation of titles and offices in four different countries and cultures, especially when there were no corresponding offices in any of them.

The degree of detail in Lopes's chronicles is particularly impressive in his narrative of the great siege of Lisbon. On the excruciating famine afflicting the city dwellers, he tells of people scratching the ground in search of lost grains that they may be able to eat. He goes to the point of describing the corpses, swollen and deformed on account of the excessive water that people drank to assuage their hunger pangs. He also details with great sympathy and compassion the mental torment of parents who see their children die of hunger without being able to save them.

Lopes is a master of emotions. In a hunting scene in the *Chronicle of King Fernando*, he demonstrates the skill of a narrator who knows how to create suspense, transmit the thrill of the chase, the surprise of the unexpected, and the humour of a ludicrous situation.<sup>4</sup> He portrays a whole universe inhabited by people from all walks of life, engaging in all manner of activity.

To give an example of a completely different topic: in Chapter 55 of *The Chronicle of King Fernando of Portugal*, Lopes expands on monetary issues of inflation and devaluation with impressive detail<sup>5</sup>. He describes the different coins circulating at the time, offering ample examples of equivalences in value and, in some cases, indicating their power of purchase before and after devaluation. In short, there is a hidden guide to all walks of medieval life inserted into the historical narrative of Lopes's chronicles.

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<sup>4</sup> In LOPES, Fernão – *The Chronicle of King Fernando of Portugal. The Chronicles of Fernão Lopes*. Vol. 2. Ed. Amélia P. Hutchinson, Juliet Perkins, et al. Transl. R.C. Willis, Philip Krummrich, et al. Textos B, 64. Vol. I. Woodbridge: Tamesis Books, 2023, pp. 176-177.

<sup>5</sup> LOPES, Fernão – *The Chronicle of King Fernando of Portugal*, pp. 98-101.

In the foreword to the last issue of *Medievalista*, dedicated to the theme of Medieval Chronicles, its editors, Graeme Dunphy and Isabel Barros Dias, remarked on the growing interest in medieval historiography in the last thirty years, attributing that interest to “the realization that genres previously regarded as straightforward historical sources were also goldmines for literary and cultural studies.”<sup>6</sup> The works of Fernão Lopes amply satisfy, and justify, that realization. Scholars such as Teresa Amado<sup>7</sup>, Luís de Sousa Rebelo<sup>8</sup>, João Gouveia Monteiro<sup>9</sup>, Nicholas G. Round<sup>10</sup>, Josiah Blackmore<sup>11</sup>, Amélia Hutchinson<sup>12</sup>, and Maria do Amparo Tavares Maleval<sup>13</sup>, beyond appreciating the literary and cultural value of these chronicles, also considered the rhetorical artistry in constructing the framework of the narrative so as to convey an underlying comment on the information being transmitted<sup>14</sup>. This means that Fernão Lopes’s concerns as a narrator did not stop at recording facts in a polished

<sup>6</sup> DUNPHY, Graeme; DIAS, Isabel Barros – “Medieval chronicles”. *Medievalista* [Online] 34 (2023), consultado a 05 dezembro 2023. Disponível em <http://journals.openedition.org/medievalista/6884>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/medievalista.6884>

<sup>7</sup> AMADO, Teresa – “Fiction as Rhetoric: A Study of Fernão Lopes’s *Crónica de D. João I*”. *The Medieval Chronicle* 5 (2008) pp. 35-46; AMADO, Teresa – *Fernão Lopes, Contador de História: sobre a Crónica de D. João I*. Lisboa: Estampa, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> REBELO, Luís de Sousa – *A Concepção do Poder em Fernão Lopes*. Lisboa: Horizonte, 1983; and REBELO, Luís de Sousa – “The Idea of Kingship in the chronicles of Fernão Lopes”. In HODCROFT, F. W., et al. (eds.) – *Medieval and Renaissance Studies on Spain and Portugal in Honour of P.E. Russell*. Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1981, pp. 167-179.

<sup>9</sup> MONTEIRO, João Gouveia – *Fernão Lopes: texto e contexto*. Coimbra: Minerva, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> ROUND, Nicholas G. – “The Revolution of 1383–84 in the Portuguese Provinces: Causality and Style in Fernão Lopes”. *Dispositio* 10 / 27 (1985), pp. 65-84; ROUND, Nicholas G. – “Fernão Lopes and the Writing of a Late Medieval Portuguese History”. In LOPES, Fernão – *The Chronicle of King Pedro of Portugal. The Chronicles of Fernão Lopes*. pp. 11-53.

<sup>11</sup> BLACKMORE, Josiah – “Afeição and History-Writing: The Prologue of the *Crónica de D. João I*”. *Luso-Brazilian Review* 34 / 2 (1997), pp. 15-24; BLACKMORE, Josiah – “Singing the Scene of History in Fernão Lopes”. In HAMILTON, Michelle M.; SILLERAS-FERNÁNDEZ, Núria (eds.) – *In and Out of the Mediterranean: Medieval and Early Modern Iberian Studies*. Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2015, pp. 143-55.

<sup>12</sup> HUTCHINSON, Amélia P. – “Leonor Teles: Representations of a Portuguese Queen”. *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, 30 / 1. Historical Guineveres and Literary Eleanors: “Narrating” Medieval Women’s Lives (2004), pp. 73-87; HUTCHINSON, Amélia P. – “Punctuating the Narrative: The Structural Function of Female Characters in Fernão Lopes’s and Gomes Eanes de Zurara’s Chronicles”. In ABREU-FERREIRA, Darlene; ELBL, Ivana (eds.) – *Women in the Lusophone World in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period Portuguese Studies Review*, 13 / 1-2 (2005/2007), pp. 1-14.

<sup>13</sup> MALEVAL, Maria do Amparo Tavares – *Fernão Lopes e a Retórica Medieval*. Estante Medieval 5. Niterói: Editora da Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> “O que se intenta, inclusive, é combater o tédio do interlocutor, mediato ou imediato, com a finalidade de melhor e mais facilmente conquistá-lo para a causa de Avis, através de elementos argumentativos emotivos, que se vêm juntar aos racionais, este pertinentes à demonstração pura e simples dos fatos, à provas documentais e testemunhais”. MALEVAL, Maria do Amparo – *Fernão Lopes e a Retórica Medieval*, p. 233.

literary style. He actually used different styles and modes of *emplotment*<sup>15</sup> to support and reinforce the architecture of his narrative, thus passing on to his readers a stronger impression of coherence and veracity.

His comments on the work of his counterparts writing on the same period encompassed by his chronicles (1357-1411) is also most interesting: they transmit a diversity of opinions, often quite conflicting, but undoubtedly reflecting a real and complex world, besides lending colour, tension, and dynamism to his and his peers' narratives. One could say that Fernão Lopes's chronicles must be read for their own sake and for the sake of the complementary information they provide to the reader of chronicles by his near contemporaries. This observation applies especially to Pero López de Ayala, but also to Jean Froissart.

One aspect that distinguishes Lopes from most medieval chroniclers is the attention he pays to the common people. As if a forerunner of "history from below"<sup>16</sup> well before its time, he records snippets of their everyday lives and beliefs, struggles and anxieties, their voice of protest in attempting to gain agency over their own lives, as well as their moments of joy and forms of celebration. Nevertheless, as the medieval man he is, many of the isolated or individual stories he weaves into the fabric of his main historical narrative can be interpreted as *exempla* worthy of a *speculum principum*, or a manual of conduct illustrating commendable or reproachable qualities, as can often be found in medieval romances, especially of Arthurian inspiration<sup>17</sup>. In short, beyond the inescapable focus centered on major persons and events, as to be expected in a royal chronicle, Fernão Lopes also provides

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<sup>15</sup> WHITE, Hayden – *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1973, p. ix.

<sup>16</sup> "Turning their attention to the lives and struggles of ordinary people, they focused on social relations at the grass roots, popular forms of protest, everyday activities such as work and leisure, as well as attitudes, beliefs, practices, and behavior. This became known in the 1960s as 'history from below'", PORT, Andrew – "History from Below, the History of Everyday Life, and Microhistory". In WRIGHT, James D. (ed.) – *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* [Online]. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Vol. 11. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015, p.108. [Consulted on 4 December 2023]. Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304194393\\_History\\_from\\_Below\\_the\\_History\\_of\\_Everyday\\_Life\\_and\\_Microhistory](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304194393_History_from_Below_the_History_of_Everyday_Life_and_Microhistory)

<sup>17</sup> Such *exempla*, of course, go back much further, to classical sources. See: PERKINS, Juliet – "Fernão Lopes and Livy". *Medium Aevum*. 92 / 2, pp. 353-376 (forthcoming).

considerable information on the cultural and social fabric of medieval Portugal and relations across the social spectrum.

It is hoped that Fernão Lopes's chronicles, now in the *lingua franca* of our age, will make a significant contribution to a wide range of areas of research, from historiography to diplomatic and social history, international relations, military affairs, municipal and land administration, but also to numismatics, medicine, women studies, religion, and many others.

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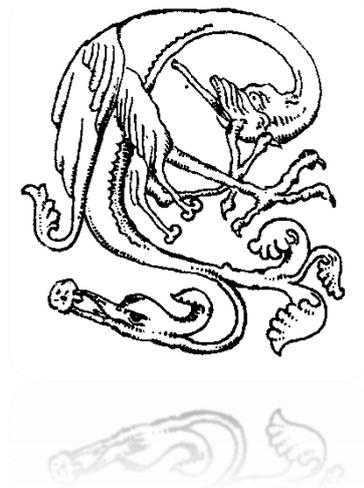
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