

## The Discoverer of Brazil, Pedro Alvares Cabral

A memorial presented to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Lisbon by Visconde de Sanches de Baéna<sup>1</sup>, corresponding associate of the same Academy.

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### *Translator's Notes:*

1. *The original, a copy of which may be found in the library of the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy (FMG), England, is in 19<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese. A scanned electronic copy is on the FMG website. The main text is in eight chapters on pp.1-72. The remainder of the book (pp.73-151) is a transcript of original documentary sources.*
2. *A translation of key passages related to medieval genealogy is being prepared by Steven Edwards for the FMG. Chapters 1 and 7 have been completed so far, with chapter 1 following these notes.*
3. *In translating the texts I have tried to use plain English to convey the meaning, rather than slavishly to follow grammatical Portuguese constructions that sound stilted or overelaborate when translated literally. Where appropriate I have also condensed the wording to convey the key points and avoid duplication. Titles are always difficult to translate but I have given approximate English equivalents where possible (eg alcaide – commander of a castle; alcaide mor – commandant in chief; senhor – lord; vedor – overseer). Infante is widely understood in English, and has not therefore been translated.*
4. *Years in the original up to 1422 AD wre given in Spanish Era format, together with the Christian Year (AD) equivalent. Spanish Era<sup>2</sup> began in 38 BC with year 1. The AD format was adopted in Portugal from 1422 onwards. In the English text I have used AD dates (Julian/Gregorian as appropriate) throughout.*

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<sup>1</sup> Augusto Romano Sanches de Baena Farinha [1822-1909], visconde de Sanches de Baena. He wrote a lot on genealogy, however he had little critical spirit or erudition. Of his many genealogical works, which should be consulted with care, noteworthy are the Historico-Genealogical Account of 19<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese Dukes, published 1883, and Noble Families of the Algarve, in 2 volumes, recently reprinted. (*commentary from the internet*)

<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol III by John Gerard, 1908, online edition 1999.

## **Summary and translation**

### **Introduction**

The first pages provide an introductory preface by Julio de Castilho (pp.1-6) followed by some preliminary comments on the book, and on the Cabral family by the author (pp.7-12). It continues as follows:

### **Chapter I** (pp.13-21)

**I Alvaro Gil Cabral**, nephew of the famous bishop of Guarda, Gil Cabral, is the earliest whose descent we can prove. He was greatly honoured by King Fernando I, and was commandant in chief [*alcaide mór*] of Guarda castle. When King Juan of Castile entered Portugal, Alvaro Gil shut the gates of the castle against him. Neither promises, through the intervention of Martim Affonso de Mello, nor threats would move him to yield the fortress to the royal intruder.

For these and other services he was made Master of Aviz, even being regent and defender of the kingdom, through the commandantships of the castles of Guarda and Belmonte, with hereditary rights for all time, releasing his descendants from paying homage. Furthermore he was granted hereditary rights over the lands of Azurara and Valhelhas in a letter signed in Lisbon on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1384, and another of 10<sup>th</sup> May the same year concerning Alemquer, of the lands of Manteigas and Tavares, with jurisdiction and rights of succession. Alvaro Gil had to go to Torres to see the King, and the Castilians took from him everything he had, including the titles mentioned above. However the King ordered them to give everything back, in a letter from Coimbra dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1385, granting him permission to sell, donate, give or exchange them. In another letter signed in Coimbra on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1395 he was granted the estate of Santo André within the boundaries of Azurara, which previously belonged to his mother-in-law, Constança Rodrigues Pereira, cousin of the Constable Nuno Alvares Pereira of whom we shall speak shortly.

Alvaro Gil Cabral died at a good age in Coimbra on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1433 and was buried in his own tomb in the church of the see of Velha in the same city. This was verified in 1895 when a gravestone was discovered at the level of the first pavement of the church, with a goat (*cabra*) at its centre surrounded by a barely discernible legend: "Here lies Alvaro Gil Cabral commandant in chief who was... eight days walking on his knees...."

He was married to Maria Eanes Loureiro, heiress of the estate (*quinta*) of Santo André and sister of João Eanes de Loureiro, heir through his grandparents of the church of Santa Maria de Silgueiros. Both these [Maria and João] were children of Diogo Affonso de Figueiredo, overseer of the house (*vedor da casa*) of the Infante João and vassal of his brother King Fernando, who gave him the rights to the important estate of Santo André within the boundaries of Azurara, as recorded in the first book of that King on p.50. They [Maria and João] were also children of Diogo's wife Constança Rodrigues Pereira, daughter of Rui Vasques Pereira who was the uncle of the constable Nuno Alvares Pereira. Constança Rodrigues Pereira had been previously married to Gonçalo Garcia de Figueiredo, commandant in chief of Feira castle. She was the latter's second wife and had no issue by him. Constança, through the death of her second husband (Diogo Affonso de Figueiredo) inherited the estate of Santo André, together with Quebradas and Celorico de Maceira, next to the town of Feira.

João Eanes de Loureiro, was heir as mentioned of the estate of Loureiros, and of the church of Santa Maria de Silgueiros in the boundary of the city of Vizeu. This

inheritance was founded by Daganel (which seems to be a foreign name) and his wife Sancha Gonçalves, both of whom contributed 1000 *cruzados* to the said church, on condition that their family would be forever abbots. To consecrate the church they gave the bishop of Vizeu a grand house in Silgueiros, as confirmed by a letter of September 1184, in the diocesan archives in the city of Vizeu.

Alvaro Gil Cabral and his wife had two children:

(2) **Luiz Alvares Cabral** – continued at II below.

(2) **Brites Alvares Cabral**, wife of Fernão Velho, commandant in chief of Vallada castle and lord of various lands contiguous to it. This marriage produced 5 children, two males and three females, of whom the second born was Gonçalo Velho Cabral. The latter was commander of Almonrol, in the order of Christ, Lord of Pias de Bezelga and of Cardigos<sup>3</sup>. He was commissioned in 1431 by the Infante Henrique for his voyage of discovery to the Azores, which he realised the following year when he found the islands of Santa Maria and São Miguel, which he governed, as well as the other five which were granted to him by the Infante.

Gonçalo Velho had no children, so he left his two captaincies to his nephew João Soares d'Albergaria, son of his sister Thereza Velho Cabral, whose husband was also João Soares d'Albergaria. João Soares d'Albergaria, the son, sold the captaincies for 750\$000 *reis* to Rui Gonçalves da Camara, a sale that was confirmed on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1474 by the Infanta Brites, widow of the Infante Fernando, in her capacity of tutor to his son Diogo.

**II Luiz Alvares Cabral**, son of Alvaro Gil Cabral, heir to his father's estates, the lordships, commandantships, the estate of Santo André, and the inheritance instituted by his aunt Maria Gil Cabral<sup>4</sup>. He was a shield-bearing nobleman of João I, overseer of the house of his [João's] son the Infante Henrique, with whom he went to take Ceuta.

On 8<sup>th</sup> October 1433 a royal letter from the city of Porto confirmed his titles. At the king's request he sold to him the lands of Valhelhas and Tavares but kept the towns of Azurara and Manteigas and the estate of Santo André in the form of the ancient titles, by letter of 8<sup>th</sup> July 1437.

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<sup>3</sup> Pinheiro Chagas, in his *Dicc.Pop.* gave Gonçalo Velho three hereditary estates – Pias, Bezelga (ancient Belzaga) and Cardigos. In fact they were barely two small lordships, both in the district (*concelho*) of Thomar.

<sup>4</sup> The title aunt is from ancient practice as she was second cousin of Luiz Alvares Cabral through being daughter of his second uncle, Bishop Gil Cabral. Maria Gil married her cousin Gil Alvares Cabral, by whom she had no children although lineage writers would have given her some.

He died in Tangier fighting at the side of the Infante Henrique. He married twice, first to his cousin Constança Annes de Loureiro and second to Leonor Domingues, without issue by the latter. By his first wife he had:

(3) **Fernão Alvares Cabral**

(3) **Izabel Cabral** who died a maiden

(3) **Brites Cabral**, wife of Diogo Gonçalo Peixoto, governor of the castle of Miranda do Douro and lord of Penafiel de Sousa, by letter signed in Coimbra on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1440. They had issue.

**III Fernão Alvares Cabral**, son of Luiz Alvares Cabral, with whom he went to Tangier where he fought valiantly at the side of the Infante Henrique<sup>5</sup>. He took the role of vassal and served as chief guard (*guarda mór*) to the same Infante.

King Duarte confirmed to him the above-mentioned titles and commandantships, by letter signed in Almeirim in 1438, and also conferred on him the title to Moimenta, alongside Gouvea.

He died in 1448, having been married to Thereza de Novaes de Andrade (widow of Estevão Soares de Mello) daughter of Ruí Frei de Andrade, admiral of Portugal and commandant in chief of Vizeu, and of his wife Aldonsa de Novaes.

They had:

(4) **Fernão Cabral** (continued at IV below).

(4) **Aldonsa Cabral**<sup>6</sup> wife of Vasco Martins Moniz, lord of Angeja, commander of Panoias and Garvão, of the order of S. Thiago. C.9.

(4) **Diogo Cabral**, who at the request of João Gonçalves Zarco, and recommendation of the king, was married in the island of Madeira to Brites Gonçalves da Camara, second daughter of said Zarco, by whom he had one son and six daughters. Diogo Cabral made his home in Calheta in Val d'Amores, where he built the chapel of Nossa Senhora da Estrella, and where he died 15<sup>th</sup> December 1486.

**IV Fernão Cabral**, known as the “giant of Beira”<sup>7</sup>. He succeeded to his father’s house, with the inheritance of Maria Gil Cabral, together with the commandantships and lordships of Azurara, Manteigas, Moimenta and the estate of Santo André; all of which was confirmed by King Affonso V in a letter signed in Santarem on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1449. He was a nobleman of the house of the same king<sup>8</sup>, confirmed in the office of chief justice (*regedor das justiças*), as had been his father, in a letter signed in

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<sup>5</sup> Some writers have confused the son with the father. Luiz Alvares Cabral and his son Fernão accompanied the Infante Henrique to Ceuta and then to Tangier, where they engaged in the most severe fighting resulting in the death of the father, not the son. We give this correction because on p.131 of the “Life of the Infante Henrique” by Candido Lusitano it erroneously records the death of Fernão Alvares Cabral, the son.

<sup>6</sup> Some genealogists are inclined to the view that Aldonsa was the daughter of her mother’s first marriage, which has no foundation at all.

<sup>7</sup> Pinho Leal in his “Portugal Ancient and Modern” affirms that in the town of Belmonte there was a lasting tradition the Fernão Cabral, through his gigantic body and herculean strength, was known in his time as “the giant of Beira”, and that in the castle of the same town, even till recently, an iron weight of around 15kg had been preserved, which he used in combat etc.

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. Gen. da Casa Real*, vol. II of the Proofs, p.25

Castello Branco on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1464<sup>9</sup>. He also had the use of all the rights, revenues and privileges of the town of Belmonte, and the office of governor (*condel mór*) in all its territories, by a letter of 21<sup>st</sup> January 1476. He was on the council of King João II, and from this monarch he received a *tença* of 60\$000 reis<sup>10</sup>.

He died in Belmonte in 1493, with a will dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 1492, in which he directed that his bones should be buried in the chapel he had built in the church of *Nossa Senhora* in the town of Belmonte, where his wife was. He ordered daily masses to be said, and also for Maria Gil Cabral (see doc. I), and that prayers should be said for her in the chapel during divine office. For this he ordered decoration and provided all the costs of oil and wax. These expenses were met through his income and that of his wife through the properties they had in Covilha and its territory, the estate of Engeira, Valhelhas and its territory, Belmonte and its territory, Pedrogão and Meimão in the territory of Penamacor.

Fernão Cabral married Izabel de Gouvêa, heiress of her father's house due to the death of her brother, Vasco Fernandes de Gouvêa, both being children of João de Gouvêa, lord of Almendra, Valhelhas<sup>11</sup>, castle Bom, and commandant in chief of castle Rodrigo, and of his wife Leonor Gonçalves de Athaide.

Izabel de Gouvêa died in Belmonte with a will closed on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1483, which directed as follows: she should be buried in the church of S. Thiago; as soon as her husband had finished the chapel, her bones were to be moved there, along with her father's, mother's and brother's; that her brother's debts were to be paid, for which purpose she had left the farm of Riva-Côa, and she specially recommended paying Leonor de Queiroz, Mecia de Queiroz and Izabel Saraiva.

Fernão Cabral had 11 children by the above-mentioned marriage, five boys and six girls. Following the death of their father his estate was divided amicably between them, all being over the age of majority. The land holdings and farms were divided in thirds, namely Belmonte, Covilhã, and Castello Novo, Meimão and Pedrogão in the territory of Penamacor. Further rights were added in from Moimenta and Serra da Estrella, the large houses of Vizeu, with 6 estates, houses in Mangualde and Carvalho de Alcaface. Having done this the estate was divided into 9 parts only, because the daughters Brites and Violante were already married and had received their dowries. Having thus divided the nine shares the siblings drew lots and accepted that which came to them, which was marked in a public document in Belmonte, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1494.

The names of the siblings in the order they are inscribed in this partition are as follows:

- (5) **João Fernandes Cabral**, first born and therefore head of the house in the inventory and partition which he did with his siblings in the castle of Belmonte, of which he was already commandant in chief, as well as lord of Azurara, Manteigas, Moimenta and the estate of Santo André, which

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<sup>9</sup> See doc. II in the appendices to this book.

<sup>10</sup> *Hist. Gen. da Casa Real*, vol.III p.48.

<sup>11</sup> Here remember the proverb: "The house returns to the good son". The grandfather of Fernão Cabral sold his land in Valhelhas to the king. The latter gave it to Fernão Alvares de Queiroz, from whom it was inherited by his daughter Leonor de Queiroz. She married Vasco Fernandes de Gouvêa and their son was João de Gouvêa. Through his daughter Izabel de Gouvêa, as mentioned above, the same lands of Valhelhas returned to the Cabrales whence they had originally come.



same title who was Captain General of Ceuta where he served, and he who accompanied the Infanta Izabel, daughter of King Manuel, when he went to be received by the Emperor Carlos V. The daughter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquis was Juliana de Menezes e Lara<sup>13</sup>, wife of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Aveiro, João de Lencastre, who before becoming Duke had the title of Marquis of Torres Novas. It does not seem unreasonable to add that this 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Aveiro was the son of Jorge de Lencastre, master of the order of St. Thiago and Aviz and Duke of Coimbra, granted by letter of King Manuel in Coimbra, 16<sup>th</sup> March 1509.

We make this genealogical and biographical digression to show the close relationship that existed between the Marquises of Villa Real and the Cabral family, when in 1507, through the influence of the above Master of the orders of St. Thiago and Aviz, Jorge de Lencastre, Vasco da Gama was posted out of the town of Sines.

There was issue from the marriage of Brites Cabral and Pedro de Noronha.

- (5) **Violante Cabral**, wife of Luiz da Cunha, Lord of Santar de Senhorim, of the territory of Barreiro, and other inheritances. Their son was Antonio da Cunha, who married Izabel d'Abreu, daughter of Bartholomeu de Paiva, chamberlain (*camareiro mór*) and councillor of King João III<sup>14</sup>.

Bastard son of Fernão Cabral was:

- (5) **Diogo Fernandes Cabral**, who attended at the death of João II<sup>15</sup>, and who was noble chaplain in 1499, Dean of the see of Guarda and of the chapel of Prince João, governor of the bishopric of Guarda in 1509 with the benefice of the priory of Povos and others, and moving in 1516 to serve in the chapel of King Manuel.

This dean had a son and a daughter. The son was called Jorge Dias Cabral and the daughter Violante Lopes Cabral, wife of Pedro Saraiva Cardoso, from whom was born Cecilia Cabral, wife of Rodrigo Homem, Lord of the hereditary rights to Lagiosa, who had issue.

As for Jorge Dias Cabral, he was appointed noble knight (*cavalleiro fidalgo*) on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1517, and according to Rousado he acquired new arms for having won a challenge to a knight of the Garter in England. According to others<sup>16</sup> these arms were granted by the Emperor Charles V for having distinguished himself in the wars of Naples.

Be that as it may, these arms were not registered in the official archives (*Torre do Tombo*), and his biography simply states that he was Archdeacon of Campello and Abbot of Ancede in the council of Bayão.

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<sup>13</sup> *Hist. Gen. da Casa Real*, Vol. II, p.515

<sup>14</sup> *Idem.*, Vol. III, p.520

<sup>15</sup> *Chronica de Garcia de Rezende*, Chap.212

<sup>16</sup> *Dicc. Popular*, Vol. 4, p. 12

Perhaps after the exploits that are attributed to him<sup>17</sup> he entered the ecclestical life to pray to God for the wreckage made by his sword on the field of Mars. What there is no doubt about is that he had three bastard daughters: Catherina Dias Cabral, Maria Dias Cabral, and Joanna Dias Cabral, all of whom married well and had issue.

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<sup>17</sup> See note 14 above