

AFONSINA

III

2022



**CRAFTS AND
CRAFTSMEN
IN THE MIDDLE
AGES**

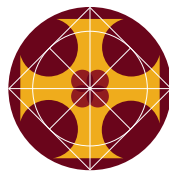


MUNICÍPIO DE
GUIMARÃES

AFONSINA

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The articles included in this issue of Revista Afonsina are the result of the conferences and communications presented at the *III Jornadas Históricas* held in Guimarães on June 25, 2022.

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The textile and garment crafts in Guimarães in the Middle Ages

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Abstract

This article analyzes some of the oldest historical sources regarding the production of linen fabrics in the lands of Guimarães. Based on sample analyses, we seek to determine the percentage of men and women who dedicated themselves to the activities of spinning, weaving, shearing and clothing making. Finally, some of these craftsmen are approached via brief news relating to unusual events during their life paths, in an attempt to give a face and voice to those who contributed to making Guimarães one of the main hubs of textile production in medieval Portugal.

Keywords: Textiles, Linen, Weaving, Tailor.

This work is financed by National Funds through FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Portugal), within the scope of the MedCrafts Project Ref.a PTDC/HAR- HIS/31427/2017.

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Guimarães, land of linen

It is well known that the town of Guimarães stood out over the centuries for its production of linen fabrics, which still boast great notoriety today and on which the typical embroidery of Guimarães is based.

Both in its *galega* (Galician) and *mourisca* (Moorish) variant, the flax plant was widespread in the Portuguese territory during the Middle Ages, especially in the Entre-Douro-e-Minho region. Despite this national profusion, the lands of Guimarães stood out in particular regarding this production, taking on a leading role long before the formation of the Portuguese Kingdom (SEQUEIRA, 2014: 51–52). A document from the tenth century, dated from 950, refers to the existence of “lenzarios”, i.e., artisans who dedicated themselves specifically to the weaving of linen cloths of “extreme fineness” (FERREIRA, 1984: 129).¹ Here is the document:

“Edificavit Mummadomna deovota arcisterium Vimaranes per jussione et consensulm Ranimiri principis (...). Et ipse rex, ad misericordiam motus, concessit ad ipso monasterio mandamentos de Ave in Avizella per testamentum sicut sunt a nominati (...) cum ingenuos et homines fiscalia fatientes sive et servos quod in colmellos resonat etiam et ingenuatizos sicut scripti sunt in noticias et in agnitione (...). Istos mandamentos quod superius resonant cum homines ibidem habitantes et cum omnes suas hereditates, tam ingenuos quam etiam et fiscalia facientes sive et de casata et incommuniatos seu et scusatos, lenzarios et viniarios et alio tributo redentes”.²

This is a large donation of land by King Ramiro II of León (r. 931–951) to the Monastery of Santa Maria de Guimarães, including the rules to apply to the inhabitants, but exempting the “lenzarios” and “viniarios” [wine producers] from paying taxes. This exemption is in itself indicative of the importance of these productive activities, which would certainly have a relevant economic role that should be protected. The “lenzarios” are also mentioned in other Leonese documents, one dating from 1014³ and another from 1059 (COSTA, 1981: 166). The specific designation of “lenzarios” refers to a specialization within the weaver’s craft, which is, by all accounts, quite early. Indeed, the various specializations within this craft would only become recurrent in Portugal in the late Middle Ages (SEQUEIRA, 2014: 127–128). This ingrained tradition of linen fabrics production in the lands of Guimarães would endure over the following centuries.

¹ See a definition of a typical Guimarães *lenço* in Joana Sequeira (2014: 227-230).

² Document partially transcribed by Avelino Jesus da Costa (1981: 180-81).

³ Document published in *Vimaranis Monumenta Historica a saeculo nono post Cristum usque ad vicesimum*, vol. 1, 1908: 26.

The Portuguese Kingdom was already formed and had already been recognized by the papal authority when in his will, dated 1210, the second monarch, Sancho I (r. 1185–1211), left his son, Prince Afonso (future King Afonso II), some "Panos meos de Vimaranes" (my fabrics from Guimarães). Curiously, these Guimarães fabrics, which the monarch refers to as his own, are among the first assets that he makes a point of bequeathing to his son. Viz:

“Imprimis mando ut filius meus Rex Donnus Alphonsus habeat Regnum meum cum cellariis e redditibus meis, e CC morabitinos qui sunt in turribus Colimbriae e VI morabitinos de Elbora e panos meos de Vimaranes e omnia arca mea e duos annulos qui fuerunt patris mei (...).”⁴

After having registered the legacy of the Kingdom and some amounts of money, the fabrics of Guimarães are the first non-monetary goods that the monarch chooses to leave behind as a legacy, immediately followed by other personal objects: a chest and two rings that had belonged to his father, Afonso Henriques (r. 1143–1185). The inclusion of these fabrics in the will does reveal their importance. Sancho was likely referring to *lenço* and linen fabrics that he would have collected among the rents from the various *reguengos* [royal lands] of the lands of Guimarães. This fact is confirmed a few years later, already in the reign of Afonso II (r. 1211–1223), through the *Inquisitiones* held in 1220 north of the Mondego River.⁵

These documents detail the location of the royal estates, as well as the rents and duties paid. A large part of these payments were made in goods: wheat, wine, flax, chickens, goats, eggs, among others. The originality of much of the lands of Guimarães lies in the fact that the lists of goods to be paid also included pieces of fabric. *Bragal* [type of linen fabric] or linen fabrics thus appear very frequently in the emphyteuses and duties paid by the Guimarães royal lands (Table 1). The *bragal* was a coarse, more rustic linen fabric, while the *lenço*, as mentioned above, was a thinner type of linen (SEQUEIRA, 2014: 194, 227). Of the 78 spatial units of the lands of Guimarães that paid rents or duties to the King, 57 (73%) delivered some textile product (fabric or flax). Rents could be paid in *peças* (pieces) or in *côvados* (cubits) (1 cubit = 66 cm). Some authors (CARVALHO, 1941: 14) suggest that a piece of *bragal* would measure seven *varas* (1 *vara* = 1.10 m) and a piece of *lenço* would measure 14 *varas* or 14 cubits. However, in the *Inquisitione* regarding São Romão de Arões it is specified that two *casais* (land unit) paid as *fossadeira* [payment due in lieu of personal military service] six *bragais* of eight cubits (“VI bracales de VIII cubitos”). In total, in the lands of Guimarães alone, the King collected 488,5 pieces of *bragal*, 102 cubits of *bragal* and 28 pieces of *lenço*— which was a finer and higher quality linen fabric (Table 1). Taking as equivalence the measure indicated in the *Inquisitione* of São Romão de Arões, the lands of Guimarães probably delivered an impressive amount of about 2,634 meters of *bragal*. As for the *lenço*, it would be about 250 or 430 meters, depending on whether the equivalence in cubits or in *varas* adopted. The localities of Sobradelo (modern Sobradelo da Goma, Póvoa de Lanhoso), São Paio de Figueiredo, São João de Gondar, São Julião de Serafão (Fafe), São Martinho de Conde, São Paio de Riba de Vizela (Vizela) stand out, which collected more than 100 meters of fabric each. As this production was limited to the royal lands, the productive capacity of the region was probably even greater, making it a true *avant la lettre* industrial district.

⁴ Document transcribed and published by António de Sousa (1739: 18).

⁵ The collection of information on the 1220 *Inquisitiones* in the lands of Guimarães was done via the database Regnum Regis: ANDRADE, Amélia Aguiar (coord.), FONTES, João Luís Inglês, SILVA, Gonçalo Melo, BARCELOS, Hugo Aguiar (collab.) (2005-2008), REGNUM REGIS – As inquirições do reinado de Afonso II (1211-1223) [online database]. Lisbon: Instituto de Estudos Medievais, FCSH/NOVA. Available at: <https://jlimaiem.fcsh.unl.pt/Unidadesespeciais>

It is also known that the rents to be paid to the See of Braga included *bragal* fabrics. The various parishes of Guimarães paid a total of 228 cubits and 59 pieces of *bragal* (COSTA, 1981: 166).

In addition to pieces of fabric in 17 of the spatial units there were some *casais* that paid a part of their tributes in flax to the king, most likely at a stage before the spinning process, in percentages of production ranging from half to a quarter. Table 1 shows the values grouped by spatial units, mostly parishes, but it is important to note that rents and emphyteuses were due by small units of land, almost always *casais*. Each *casal* usually supplied one or two pieces of *bragal*. It was a network of small production units, probably of a family and domestic nature. It should also be noted that pieces of fabric were often provided as payment of the tribute of *fossadeira* thus exempting the tributaries from accompanying the King in *fossados* [military incursions]. The abundance of linen fabrics and their use as a bargaining chip is also evident in other areas. As A. L. de Carvalho (1941: 75-76) points out, it was common for some Guimarães residents to exclude some family members from their inheritance, leaving them some quantities of *bragal* in their will.

Documents relating to the 16th century allow us to see the continuity and vitality of the linen production in this region. According to Mestre António, in 1512 the village exported more than 100 thousand varas of linen fabric and tow (CARVALHO, 1941: 36).

Table 1. Rents and duties paid to the King in pieces of fabric or flax in the lands of Guimarães, 1220

Spatial Unit	Linen pieces	Cubits of linen	Pieces of lenço	Flax (raw material)
Sobradelo	50			
São Paio de Figueiredo	36			
São João de Gondar	26 (a)	8		1 third (9 <i>casais</i>)
São Julião de Serafão	26			1 quarter (26 <i>casais</i>)
São Martinho de Conde	25,5		4	
São Paio de Riba de Vizela	25	12		Non-specified (19 <i>casais</i>)
São Miguel de Negrelos	19 (b)	16		1 third (4 <i>casais</i>)
Vila Fria	19	16		1 third (6 <i>casais</i>)
São João de Brito	18	8	10	
Tagilde	17			
São Martinho de Candoso	16	22	2	
São Martinho de Fareja	16			1 third (8 <i>casais</i>)
Santa Eulália de Nespereira	14,5			1 third (12 <i>casais</i> and fields and vineyards belonging to the King)
São Faustino	12	13		Non-specified (5 <i>casais</i>)
Silvares	12	12		
São Cristóvão de Riba de Selho	10			
Santa Maria de Vila Nova de Sande	9 (c)			
São Cosme	9			
Santa Eufémia de Fins	8			

São João de Penselo	8			Non-specified (5 <i>casais</i>)
São Pedro de Asorém	8			
São Tomé de Abação	8	16		
Mosteiro de Souto	7			
São Clemente de Sande	7			
São Estêvão de Colgeses	7	53,5		1 third (11 <i>casais</i>)
Santa Eulália de Riba de Selho	6			1 third (3 <i>casais</i>)
São Gregório de Entre Ave e Selho	6	10		
São Tiago de Candoso	6	12		1 third (<i>quintana</i>) and half (6 <i>casais</i>)
São Torcato	6	4,5		
Santa Maria de Matamá	5			
São Mamede de Vila Cova	4			half (2 <i>casais</i>)
São Martinho da Portela de Leitões	4		8	
São Pedro de Polvoreira	4		3	
Santa Cristina de Caíde	3			
São Martinho de Penacova	3			half (1 <i>casal</i>)
São Romão de Arões	3	48		
São Vicente de Mascotelos	3			
Santa Maria de Corvite	2,5	12		
Santa Cristina de Agrela	2			
Santa Cristina de Arões	2			1 third (2 <i>casais</i>)
Santa Maria de Gémeos	2			
Santo Adrião de Riba de Vizela	2	2,5		
São João da Ponte	2	6		
São Jorge de Riba de Vizela	2			1 third (2 <i>casais</i>)
São Tomé de Caldelas	2	3		
Santa Lucrecia junto a São Torcato	1			
Santo Tirso de Prazins	1			
São Cláudio de Riba de Ave	1			
São Lourenço de Riba de Selho	1			
São Lourenço de Sande	1			
São Miguel de Cerzedelo	1			
Santa Cristina de Longos		7		
São Félix de Gominhães				1 third (1 <i>casal</i>)
São Mamede de Aldão			1	
São Martinho de Vila Nova de Sande		36		
São Pedro de Freitas		63		
São Romão		3		
Totals	488,5	102	28	

Sources: ANDRADE, Amélia Aguiar (coord.), FONTES, João Luís Inglês, SILVA, Gonçalo Melo, BARCELOS, Hugo Aguiar (collab.) (2005-2008), *REGNUM REGIS – As inquirições do reinado de Afonso II (1211-1223)* [online database]. Lisbon: Instituto de Estudos Medievais, FCSH/NOVA. Available at: <https://jlimaiem.fsh.unl.pt/Unidadeespeciais> [accessed January 2023].

Textile crafts: numbers and contexts

It is not possible to determine the exact number of men and women who dedicated themselves to textile crafts in Guimarães during the Middle Ages, but there are some exercises that can provide us with information, especially regarding the 15th century. Based on a sampling of documents dated between 1424 and 1451 from the Collegiate Church of Santa Maria da Oliveira, André Rodrigues (2020: 488) was able to identify 38 references to textile and clothing craftsmen: 26 tailors, six shearers, five weavers, and one seamster. Within the scope of the so-called mechanical crafts, the textile and clothing sector is second only to the leather sector (41 references in total). According to Conceição Falcão Ferreira, "Guimarães seemed dominated (...) in the trades by the crafts of footwear and clothing" (2010: 535) ("Nossa tradução").

However, across all mechanical professions, the tailor's crafts ranks the highest in terms of number of references (26), followed by the crafts of shoemaker (22) and saddle maker (11). By systematizing the data collected by Maria José Ferro Tavares (1984: 513–523) — which refer exclusively to Jewish craftsmen between 1440 and 1455 —, it is verified that Guimarães presents a total of eight references to Jewish tailors and 12 to Jewish doublet makers (tailors specialized in producing doublets⁶), thus placing Guimarães in second place in the set of localities of Entre-Douro-e-Minho, immediately after Porto (Table 2). This significant number of tailors suggests, on the one hand, that the demographic dimension of Guimarães would certainly be one of the largest in the region and, on the other hand, that the people of Guimarães used to invest in making clothes to try to keep up with fashion trends.

Table 2. Jewish tailors and doublet makers in Entre-Douro-e-Minho, 1440–1455

Locality	No. of tailors	No. of doublet makers
Porto	10	22
Guimarães	8	12
Barcelos	3	1
Braga	2	3
Ponte de Lima	1	-
Vila do Conde	-	1

Source: Tavares, 1984, 513-523.

It was fairly common for master tailors not to work alone and hire seamsters to assist them in the sewing task, which in turn allowed them to dedicate themselves to cutting the fabrics, a task that required greater expertise and greater responsibility. According to the 1457 regulation of the tithes of the village of Tomar, a tailor who had young apprentices or seamsters would pay 25% more than one without any employees (15 vs 12 *soldos*),⁷ which is a clear indication of his greater economic power, since the existence of employees allowed him to accept a greater number of orders. In the documentation of the Collegiate Church of Guimarães there are some records related to seamsters. In a 1383 document feature as witnesses Pero Domingues and João Esteves, identified as "seamsters of Geraldo Anes, tailor"⁸. In another document dated

⁶ The doublet was a lined and padded garment that dressed the upper part of the male body, and was very much in vogue since the middle of the XIV century (MARQUES, 1987: 37).

⁷ Document published in *Monumenta Henricina*, Vol. XIII, 1972: 109-112.

⁸ Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), *Colegiada de Santa Maria da Oliveira*, maço 37, n.º 27, PT/TT/CSMOG/DP37/27.

⁹ ANTT, *Colegiada de Santa Maria da Oliveira*, maço 45, n.º 4, PT/TT/CSMOG/DP45/04.

1428, Afonso Gil (tailor) and Diogo Vasques, “his seamster”, also feature as witnesses.⁹ Three years later, this same tailor features again as a witness to a document, accompanied by Diogo Vasques and two more of his seamsters: João de Baião and Vasco Peres.¹⁰ These examples are indicative of the relationships of dependence, and consequently of an internal hierarchy in this craft. On the other hand, they also show us that the tailor workshops in Guimarães would be of a reasonable size and employ several workers.

This outstanding importance of tailors in Guimarães is also confirmed by the fact that they had a confraternity associated with their craft — the *Confraria dos Alfaiates* (Tailor's Confraternity) —, at least since 1241, located on Rua de Alcobaça (FERREIRA, 2010: 664), which in the mid-14th century would merge with the Confraternity of São Vicente, and then ended up being annexed by the Confraternity of Service of Santa Maria (OLIVEIRA, 1998). This fact is particularly important, because it is one of the oldest Portuguese crafts confraternities (FERNANDES, 2022). According to the studies by Conceição Falcão Ferreira (2010: 532–536), we also know that the tailors were distributed along several arteries of the city, focusing mainly on Rua da Ferraria.

The tailor's craft was an indispensable profession in all communities of medieval Portugal, since most of the garments were custom-made, but the same cannot be said of weavers, since a significant portion of the fabrics consumed in Portuguese territory during the Middle Ages were imported (FERREIRA, 1984). However, as demonstrated in a study on the Portuguese textile industry, the Portuguese Kingdom also had the capacity to produce wool, linen and silk fabrics (SEQUEIRA, 2014). Moreover, Guimarães stood out from a very early age for its production of linen fabrics throughout its territory. While linen fabrics were mostly used in bedding and undergarments, outer garments and overcoats were mostly made of woolen fabrics.

In their study on the crafts of Guimarães, Isabel Fernandes and António Oliveira (2004: 163–164) collected references to seven weavers and two weaveresses for the 15th century. The data collected by Maria José Ferro Tavares (1984: 527–539) also add seven Jewish weavers to this number, thus making Guimarães stand out clearly among all the localities of Entre-Douro-e-Minho regarding this specific domain (Table 3). Regarding the number of Jewish weavers existing at the national level, Guimarães is only supplanted by the towns of Estremoz (9 references), Elvas (14) and Évora (16), all located in a region of greater concentration of the Jewish community and of outstanding wool production (SEQUEIRA, 2014: 38–39). However, in the case of Guimarães, it is probable that most of these weavers and weaveresses were not so much dedicated to the production of woolen cloths as linen fabrics, as was characteristic of this area several centuries ago. The oldest price list that we know of relating to the weavers of Guimarães dates back to 1522 and indicates that all the cloths listed are linen or tow (CARVALHO, 1941: 22–23; FERNANDES and OLIVEIRA, 2004: 166–167). Also noteworthy is the presence of a French weaver (George Anes)¹¹ in Guimarães in the mid-15th century — a fact that possibly suggests not only a transfer of knowledge and technical processes, but also the ability of the region to attract specialized foreign professionals.

10 Arquivo Municipal Alfredo Pimenta (AMAP), *Colegiada de Santa Maria da Oliveira, Coleção de Pergaminhos, Confraria dos Tabeliães*, 8-3-2-20, PT/AMAP/ECL/CSMOGMR/001/8-3-2-20.

11 AMAP, *Colegiada de Santa Maria da Oliveira de Guimarães, Coleção de pergaminhos, Confraria dos Tabeliães*, 8-4-4-1.

Table 3. Jewish weavers in Entre-Douro-e-Minho, 1440–1455

Locality	No. of weavers
Guimarães	7
Ponte de Lima	3
Monção	3
Vila do Conde	1
Porto	1

Source: Tavares, 1984: 527-539.

12 AMAP, *Colegiada de Santa Maria da Oliveira de Guimarães, Coleção de pergaminhos, Confraria dos Tabeliães*, 8-1-1-9; (CARVALHO, 1941, II: 34; FERNANDES e OLIVEIRA, 2004: 163).

13 Arquivo Municipal de Braga, *Armário dos Pergaminhos*, n.º 24. I thank Raquel Oliveira Martins for having indicated and transcribed this document.

If individual references provide the image of a greater preponderance of men versus women regarding the weaving craft, in other contexts of general references to this activity the adopted designation appears in the feminine, making it clear that this was a craft dominated by women. An interesting letter from King Dinis (r. 1279–1325) dated 1308, features a complaint by the residents of the *vila* (town) of Guimarães, who accused the King's praetor of prohibiting a series of activities during the fair in the *vila* (town) of Castelo:

“Dom Dinis pela graça de Deus Rei de Portugal e do Algarve. A vós João Gonçalves pretor meu homem morador em Guimarães saude. Sabede que os Juizes e o Concelho dessa vila de Guimarães a mi enviaram queixa que vós lhes fazia- des muitos agravamentos e ponde defesa que os alfagemes não sangrem nem cercem nem os ferreiros não ferrem as bestas nem os alfaiates nem os sapateiros não cosam nem as mulheres não fiem nem teçam e cada uma das mulheres do segre levades dois pares de perdizes”¹²

In the case of armorers, blacksmiths, tailors and shoemakers, the general reference appears in the masculine, but spinning and weaving activities appear associated exclusively with women, suggesting that this type of tasks was more associated with women. This is also one of the rare references to the activity of spinning, which is usually not included in written records, because it generally took place in domestic context (SEQUEIRA and MELO, 2012: 7–9). The above-mentioned 1308 document is also interesting in that it suggests the existence of commercial competition between the between the vila of Guimarães and the vila of Castelo (which are nowadays joint in the modern city, but were separated towns during the Middle Ages). As Paulo Cunha (2019: 76) clarifies, the praetor's actions “would have been taken under the ban on conducting trade outside the fair to people from the town of Guimarães. However, King Dinis considers the behavior of his officer as abusive and decides that such activities should not be prevented” (Nossa tradução).

Another document, dated 1455, presents the designation of this craft in the feminine. In fact, it is a special chapter presented by the municipality of Braga in the Lisbon *Cortes* (Parliament): the residents of Braga complained about a decision that forced the weaveresses to hold a fair every fortnight, claiming that the residents of Guimarães had filed an appeal against such a decision and had managed to have it changed, and the

weaveresses were only required to hold a fair once a month.¹³ This document further corroborates that this craft appeared to be dominated by women, which would justify the use of the feminine. This testimony is also important because it indicates that the weaveresses not only owned the fabric they produced, but that they themselves also sold their product to the final consumer. Although several ways of organizing textile work in medieval Portugal have been identified, from the simple order by the consumer to the figure of the entrepreneur who dominated the entire production chain, this testimony proves that fabric producers could also take the lead in the production and commercial processes, thus ensuring the necessary investments (SEQUEIRA, 2014: 145–150).

Totaling six (RODRIGUES, 2020: 488), the cloth-shearers were craftsmen who dedicated themselves exclusively to trimming the fluff of the fabrics in a uniform way to make the surface more homogeneous, soft and shiny (DURÃO, MELO e POLONIA, 2001: 120–130), using for this purpose long sharp scissors. The only price table of Portuguese medieval cloth-shearers is relative to Évora and dates from 1379. The list includes 15 types of cloths, all of them imported from abroad (SEQUEIRA, 2020: 849). In the 15th-century table of the Guimarães cloth-shearers, the mentioned fabrics also seem to be all imported from abroad (FERNANDES and OLIVEIRA, 2004: 172).

Fragments of the lives of weavers and tailors of Guimarães

Unfortunately, the craftsmen left no written testimonies of their own, and the scant information we can ascertain about them is often gleaned from indirect references. However, some (few) documents allow us to probe the past and peek into the lives of some of the men of the textile and clothing crafts in medieval Guimarães. Naturally, it was the unusual moments that remained on record. The following are four stories about two weavers and two tailors.

The first story is set in the early 15th century. The tailor Domingos Joanes was riding from Chaves on a sumpter when he felt unwell and had to stop on the way, next to the Monastery of São Gens de Monte Longo (in modern Fafe).¹⁴ Considering his moribund state, his wife was called to the place and she immediately rushed there, having given him sugary water several times. Domingos Joanes was lying in a broom field and his condition was such that an abbot who was passing by on his way to Braga decided to hear his confession. The tailor eventually died right on the spot. The reasons for Domingos Joanes' trip are unknown, but it is possible that it was due to professional reasons. The tailor could have been returning from one of the fairs in the inland region of the Kingdom, where imported cloths were available, especially those of Castilian manufacture, or he could also have traveled to serve a customer.

The second story involves people and animals and successive physical assaults. It all started when the dog of Álvaro Anes, a weaver from the parish of Polvoreira, attacked and killed a sheep that belonged to his nephew João Esteves. The nephew's reaction was to beat up his uncle's dog, and that was when all hell broke loose. The weaver protested, condemning the beating of his dog, and João Esteves ended up losing his temper and seriously injured his uncle, inflicting him "some wounds with the spear and one in the throat that had cut his throat". Naturally, João Esteves ended up being arrested. Despite his serious injury, the

¹⁴ Document transcribed and published in A. L. de Carvalho (1944: 78).

weaver survived and made a full recovery, and his nephew subsequently petitioned the King for a pardon in 1443 to have his prison sentence lifted. The King agreed, taking into account that the assaulted was already recovered, but demanded the payment of 400 *reais brancos* (a Portuguese currency at the time) from the convict.¹⁵

That same year, the King granted a pardon to the weaver João Afonso, who lived in Guimarães. The craftsman had been on the run from justice for two years for assaulting his brother-in-law, resulting in a "wound in the face". As in the previous case, since the victim had already recovered and had no sequelae, João Afonso asked the King for a pardon. However, there was an interesting detail: his brother-in-law had already forgiven him, but in order to get rid of the penalty, João Afonso had to pay the costs of the trial. It turned out that the weaver "was very poor and did not think he could get pay it". This is a rare testimony to the level of wealth of textile craftsmen. Naturally, the fact that he had been on the run from justice for two years certainly contributed to his loss of income. The King eventually pardoned him for the crime of assault, but still sentenced him to pay 500 *reais brancos*, which João Afonso promptly paid off.¹⁶

The last story features a tailor involved in a case of double murder. Afonso Gonçalves, who lived in the town of Guimarães, was a tailor and lived with Rui de Castro, D. Pedro's squire, who supported him by giving him "bread, wine and cloth for his sustenance".¹⁷ It was, therefore, a relationship of dependence. Despite his specialized craft, Afonso acted as a squire's servant. One day in 1464, at around ten o'clock at night, Rui Castro called his servants to accompany him armed to his chamber because he knew that his wife was there with another man and he wanted to catch them in *flagrante delicto* so that he could "arrest them and bring them to justice". The two servants accompanied Rui de Castro and confronted the adulterers; however, instead of arresting them, the squire began to beat them with such violence that the adulterous lovers died. In the meantime, ten years had passed and the squire had already managed to get rid of the sentence for the crime. But the tailor, being of lower social status and with fewer means to defend himself, was still on the run from justice for fear of being arrested, but he eventually decided to ask the King for a pardon, claiming that he had no responsibility for the crime committed. The King did not immediately agree to the request, because he had consulted the various documents of the case, which clearly identified Afonso Gonçalves as "guilty and the deliberate murderer, with Ruy de Castro, of the deaths of his wife and the adulterer Pero Dominguez". However, the parties involved in the case had already forgiven the crimes, so the King also ended up granting the pardon in 1479, but with a catch: Afonso would have to serve fourteen years of banishment in Africa, in the stronghold of Alcácer-Ceguer, where specialized craftsmen like him were definitely needed.

Final thoughts

Guimarães had already played a leading role in the production of linen fabrics since before the founding of Portugal. Medieval sources attest to this textile vocation of the Guimarães population, given the number of various domestic and family production units. Although it is not possible to accurately assess the relative number of men and women who were involved in textile production and clothing manufacture, the samples analyzed suggest that the number of tailors, doublet makers and their respective seamsters was quite significant. The profession of weaver also gained particular importance due to the fact that the region of Guimarães was specialized in the production of linen fabrics.

¹⁵ ANTT, *Chancelaria de D. Afonso V*, livro 27, fólio 76v.

¹⁶ ANTT, *Chancelaria de D. Afonso V*, livro 27, fólio 71.

¹⁷ ANTT, *Chancelaria de D. Afonso V*, livro 27, fólio 52v.

The few and fragmentary life stories collected here show us that these craftsmen suffered from the vicissitudes of life like other ordinary men, and in some cases endured relative poverty. As has been shown, textile production was an important pillar of the Guimarães economy, to which these craftsmen and craftswomen contributed with great skill, helping to build one of the most important identity marks of their homeland.

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