

Carla Alferes Pinto

The Inventory of Infanta Beatrice's of Portugal Wedding Dowry (1522)

A Biography of the Documents

Abstract: In 1522, Álvaro do Tojal and Vaseon Traillan, treasurers to the Infanta Beatrice of Portugal and to the Duke Charles III of Savoy, respectively, signed two inventories, a Portuguese and a Savoyard version, confirming the receipt and appraisal of her wedding dowry. This chapter questions the conventional interpretation of a dowry's inventory (the content) by reconstructing the history and biography of the documents, which were written after the marriage of Beatrice and Charles and present the same content in different ways. For this purpose, the contribution analyses issues relating to the documents' narrative potential and agency. Further, it argues that *the inventory* of Beatrice's dowry results from the analysis and interpretation of both documents, written under the same circumstances and aiming at the same purpose, but targeted to different audiences, using a methodology that can apply in case studies with similar characteristics.

Key Words: artistic objects, cultural biography, gender, heritage, material culture, Savoy

On 15 April 1522, Vaseon Traillan, treasurer to Charles III of Savoy (1486–1553), signed a document confirming the delivery and receipt of the objects listed in the dowry of Infanta Beatrice (1504–1538), daughter of King Manuel I of Portugal (1469–1521), upon her marriage to the Duke. Duchess Beatrice also signed this document as it was intended to be sent to the Lisbon court as an attestation to the successful conclusion of her matrimonial deal. Later it would be published in a collec-

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Carla Alferes Pinto, CHAM, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, FCSH, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 1069-061 Lisboa; capinto@fcsih.unl.pt

tion of documents concerning the Portuguese royal dynasty.¹ The discharge document that Traillan signed was thus a closed appraisal of the Infanta's dowry, which was crucial to ensuring the settlement and, therefore, fostering good diplomatic and political relations between the two courts.

However, Traillan also signed other documents related to the dowry of Beatrice dating between February and March 1522 that were meant to be deposited at the ducal chambers as critical financial papers. The surviving handwritten copies are kept in the Archives of Turin.² These and the Portuguese printing are the primary sources that support the reflection raised by this chapter, which aims to address the connection between Beatrice's dowry of marriage (expressed mainly in monetary values), the trousseau (the collection of objects to the exclusive use of the Duchess), and its inventories (the documents that list the objects).

Portuguese princesses took a dowry (that is, the amount of money, either quantified in cash or not, that husbands would not have to return to the original dynasty if there were no offspring), a trousseau (which did not necessarily incorporate the first), and an allowance (*assentamento*, which was supposed to support the expenses of her entourage and household) to the wedding. Jewellery, silver, and gold objects were an integral part of the dowry. Although common to the couple, the husband could dispose of them whenever needed.³ Hence, a princess's dowry was first and foremost a contract for transferring goods, and while the values in money and income were negotiated in detail and known through other types of documents, such as marriage contracts, the precious and mobile objects that were common to the couple and the trousseau are known only by inventories.

The value of Beatrice's dowry was 150,000 cruzados, of which 55,000 corresponded to the trousseau. The inventories that list and describe Beatrice's dowry (that is, the objects common to the couple) include the trousseau but are incomplete, and their textual characteristics do not reproduce a coherent interpretation of what was what. For instance, none of the primary sources mentioned above record underwear or shoes whose value, particularly the shoes that resorted to expensive fabrics and metals in their making, added to the parcels of the sum of 55,000 cruzados. On

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- 1 This work is funded by national funds through the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Norma Transitória – DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0069. This chapter had the support of CHAM (NOVA FCSH / UAc) through the strategic project sponsored by FCT (UIDB/04666/2020). D. António Caetano de Sousa, *Provas da Historia Genealogica da Casa Real Portuguesa*, vol. II: 445–489, Na Regia Officina Sylviana, e da Academia Real, Lisbon 1742.
 - 2 Archivio di Stato di Torino, Turin: *Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Matrimoni*, mazzo 2 d'addizione, fascicolo 9 (1521–1522).
 - 3 For a thorough analysis of the history and composition of dowries of the Portuguese infantas in the late medieval and early modern periods see: Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *Coisas de princesas: casamentos, dotes e enxovais na família real portuguesa (1480–1580)*, in: *Revista de História da Sociedade e da Cultura* 10 (2010), 95–118.

the other hand, silver and golden objects, mainly what we would call ‘tableware’, are reported immediately after the header in the Portuguese version, while jewels and precious stones are classified and described elsewhere. Moreover, inventories are political and financial devices whose making encompasses selection, agenda decisions, and individual and collective processes that act upon our awareness of the dowries and their value.

Beatrice’s dowry has two inventories (documents), a Portuguese and a Savoyard version appraised and written simultaneously, and that due to several circumstances, which will be addressed in this chapter, contain different but complementary information. This raises the question of what *the inventory* of Infanta Beatrice’s of Portugal dowry is. Is it each of the documents (the Portuguese and the Savoyard version), or what can we learn from reconstructing the circumstances surrounding the drafting of the different papers and the history of the documents themselves? Is what we call *the inventory* of a marriage dowry each of the documents that lists the objects, or is it the content of the various documents, even if referring to the same things interpreted in different ways?

This text argues that, whenever possible, *the inventory* should correspond to the complete content and information provided by different documents that were written under the same circumstances and address the same purpose. This study aims to reflect on the documents’ specific characteristics and narrative potential that account for *the inventory* of marriage dowries for Portuguese royal consorts in the early modern period. Taking Infanta Beatrice’s inventories as examples, we will focus on their socially constructed (rhetorical devices of personal and collective dispute and empowerment) and instrumental nature (the set of administrative and financial rules and codes). To reconstruct the history and biography of *the inventory* aspects of the printed Portuguese version and the handwritten documents from the Turin archive are analysed, which helps to clarify how the inventory was drawn up and received at the Lisbon and Savoy courts. This chapter addresses two main aspects: the methodological approach to the materiality, historicity, and biographies of the inventories (the Portuguese and the Savoyard documents) and the interpretation of some discursive and textual features of their content, shedding light on specific examples in which *the inventory* helps to clarify and construct discourses of power and gender, above and beyond the Pyrenees.

Beatrice’s marriage and the dowry inventories

Conducted by power of attorney in Lisbon in April and confirmed on 30 September 1521 by the Cardinal of Ivrea, Bishop Bonifacio Ferrero (?–1536) at the Monas-

tery Church of St Dominic in Nice, the marriage of Infanta Beatrice to the Duke of Savoy evoked the alliance that had been forged in the first dawn of the kingdom of Portugal.⁴

This dynastic re forging of the link between the Portuguese royal house and that of Savoy, despite the displeasure of some members of the Lisbon court, also helped Manuel I reinforce the legitimacy of the Beja branch of the Avis dynasty (to which he belonged), since the wife of Afonso Henriques (1109–1185; the first Portuguese king), Mafalda (or Matilda) of Mourienne (1130/3–1158), was also from Savoy. By reprising this union, the King was making an enthusiastic effort to hark back to the memory of the founding dynasty in one of a series of propaganda activities aimed at cementing the lineage that affiliated him with the House of Burgundy.⁵ At the same time, the circumstances and requirements of Beatrice's marriage contract provided the most direct means of promoting this image, which had been carefully crafted on the part of the King, and which, by association, extended to his daughter's dignity to serve as a figurehead as the Duchess of Savoy.⁶

As far as the Savoyards were concerned, this marriage was of interest because of two fundamental reasons. On the one hand, it shifted the Duke's scope of action beyond the sphere of influence of the Valois and put him on an equal footing with the imperial Habsburg dynasty, with whom the Portuguese royal family had close ties of kinship through their Castilian branch. On the other hand, the Infanta's

4 For more on the marriage between the Infanta Beatrice and the Duke of Savoy, see Carla Alferes Pinto, *Objetos artísticos, aparato e cor carmesim na memória esquecida do casamento da infanta D. Beatriz (1521)*, in: Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues/Manuela Santos Silva/Ana Leal de Faria (eds.), *Casamentos da Família Real Portuguesa. Êxitos e fracassos*, vol. 4, Círculo de Leitores 2018, 169–198, and Carla Alferes Pinto, *Encenações talássicas e a imagem de poder das dinastias de Avis e Sabóia nos portos de Lisboa e Villefranche-sur-Mer por ocasião do casamento da Infanta D. Beatriz (1521)*, in: Nunziatella Alessandrini (ed.), *Chi fa questo camino è ben navigato. Culturas e dinâmicas nos portos de Itália e Portugal (sécs. XV–XVIII)*, CHAM 2019, 145–158. For more on the biography of the Infanta, see Ana Isabel Buescu, *D. Beatriz de Portugal (1504–1538). A infanta esquecida*. Manuscript, Lisbon 2019.

5 See Ana Cristina Araújo, *Cultos da realeza e cerimoniais de Estado no tempo de D. Manuel I*, in: D. Manuel e a Sua Época. III Congresso Histórico de Guimarães. Actas: Arte e Cultura, Guimarães 2001, 71–94, and Rafael Moreira, *A Arquitectura do Renascimento no Sul de Portugal. A Encomenda Régia entre o Moderno e o Romano*, PhD thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon 1991.

Manuel I was not born the son of a king and was Duke of Beja when he ascended the throne, due to the successive deaths of his older brothers. He was the youngest son of the Duke of Viseu (later the First Duke of Beja), the Infante Ferdinand (1433–1470), son of King Edward I of Portugal, and his cousin Beatrice of Portugal (1430–1506; daughter of the Infante John, brother of King Edward I), and brother of Queen Eleanor (1458–1525), wife of John II (1455–1495), the king who named Manuel as his successor. For more on the biography of Manuel I, see João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, *D. Manuel I (1469–1521). Um Príncipe do Renascimento*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisbon 2005.

6 Pinto, *Encenações*, 2019, and Carla Alferes Pinto, *The Otherness of the Duchess and her Authorship of the Decorative Schemes for the Baptisms of her Sons Adrian-John-Amadeus and Emmanuel Philibert*, in: Andrea Merlotti/Matthew Vester (eds.), *Cheiron. Materiali e strumenti di aggiornamento storiografico* (forthcoming).

dowry, amounting to 150,000 cruzados worth of coins, jewels, precious stones, silver, tapestries, and textiles, would replenish the depleted Savoyard coffers.⁷

The dowry inventories list objects, with a more or less detailed description, written and appraised by specific agents under a structure that may vary accordingly to functional and organisational purposes or space, issuing “their own fictional character and performative qualities”.⁸ Dowries are usually known by a single inventory original, copy or version, due to the perishability of the materials used and their function that implies being handled and transported until it becomes outdated or unnecessary. That is not the case of Beatrice’s dowry, which has two inventories, one Portuguese version and another Savoyard. Such documents intervene as mediators between what was in fact the dowry (the collection of objects) and the interests and strategies of the courts that produced the documents as well as the environments in which they were written. As such, the entire content of Beatrice’s dowry, both the objects for personal use and those that her husband could use as he saw fit, is not known but rather conveyed by inventories (the documents) that unveil the interests of the agents involved in the evaluation and elaboration of these court- and person-related papers.⁹

Infanta Beatrice’s dowry inventories were produced within a particular context and with a specific aim. They would only be handled and read by a select few, but its content intended to have a broader scope and be conducive to the creation of alternative or complementary narratives both coevally and subsequently, as the documents acquired historicity of their own. On the one hand, these documents are indicative of the centralisation process of regal states through the creation and complexification of bureaucratic and courtly devices, filtered both by personal (such as observation skills and mastery of vocabulary engaged in the description of the artistic objects) and collective agencies. And, on the other hand, they are expressions of the rhetoric and archival classification of written documentation that relates to

7 Ana Isabel Buescu, *L'infanta Beatrice di Portogallo e il suo matrimonio con il duca di Savoia (1504–1521)*, in: Maria Antónia Lopes/Blythe Alice Raviola (eds.), *Portogallo e Piemonte. Nove secoli (XII–XX) di relazioni dinastiche e politiche*, Rome 2014, 43–77; Pierpaolo Merlin, *Beatrice di Portogallo e il governo del ducato sabauda (1521–1538)*, in: Maria Antónia Lopes/Blythe Alice Raviola (eds.), *Portogallo e Piemonte. Nove secoli (XII–XX) di relazioni dinastiche e politiche*, Rome 2014, 79–102; Pinto, *Objetos*, 2018; Carla Alféres Pinto, *Transferencias culturales y artísticas a principios del siglo XVI y redes familiares de los Habsburgo. Beatriz de Portugal en Saboia*, in: Alejandra Osorio/Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (coords.), *Redes, circulación y transferencias culturales en la monarquía española de los Austrias*, Publicacions i edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona 2022 (forthcoming).

8 Christina Antenhofer, *Inventories as Material and Textual Sources for Late Medieval and Early Modern, Social, gender and Cultural History (14th–16th Centuries)*, in: *Memo: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture Online* (2020) (viewed 5 May 2021).

9 On the textual importance of inventories and person-related definition see, Antenhofer, *Inventories*, 2020.

the history of nations or dynastic houses.¹⁰ Although in different circumstances, the Portuguese and the Savoyard versions of Beatrice's dowry were preserved and made accessible to the public because they reported essential events for the narratives of legitimation and genealogical ancestry of the governing houses royal or ducal. In the case of the Portuguese version, as we will see, the document survived because it was published precisely as part of a collection of documents designed to prove the ancestry of the house of Braganza.

The inventory of Infanta Beatrice's dowry is a well-known and oft-cited document in Portuguese historiography, even though it has never been the subject of a study in its own right. This apparent paradox stems partly from its piecemeal use, with historians tending to look at specific types of objects listed. Another reason is the sheer extent of the descriptions and the difficulty of interpreting them.

Portuguese inventories have been studied as sources of information that can assist to thematic narratives, as evidence of socio-economic characterisation, or, more rarely, as self-contained, written sources that help construct profiles of certain actors and can substantiate discourses on courtly performative environments and trades and define concepts. In this regard the research project on the inventory of the 5th Duke of Braganza, Teodósio I, adopted an integrated approach that was informed by a range of different disciplines, methodologies, and concepts.¹¹ While this approach is now gaining popularity within Portuguese academia, the fact remains that there are only two sixteenth century dowry inventories published and no known manuscript versions of any other.¹²

The printing of the Portuguese inventory of Infanta Beatrice's dowry

In 1739, António Caetano de Sousa (1674–1759), a Theatine priest born in Lisbon, published the first of six volumes of the *Provas da Historia Genealógica da Casa Real Portuguesa* [Evidence to the Genealogical History of the Portuguese Royal Family], an exhaustive series of documents that confirmed the account contained in the thirteen tomes that made up the *Historia genealogica da Casa Real Portuguesa desde a sua origem até ao presente, com as Famillias illustres, que procedem dos Reys, e dos Serenissimos Duques de Bragança, justificada com instrumentos, e escritores de inviolável fé* [Genealogical History of the Portuguese Royal Family from its Origins up

10 Christina Normore, On the archival rhetoric of inventories. Some records of the Valois Burgundian court, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 23/2 (2011), 215–227 [215–216].

11 Jessica Hallett/Nuno Senos (coord.), *De Todas as Partes do Mundo. O património do 5.º duque de Bragança, D. Teodósio I. Tinta da China*, Lisbon 2018.

12 Sá, *Coisas*, 97–98, 101.

until the Present, with the Noble Families that came from the Monarchs, and the Serene Dukes of Braganza, substantiated with means and writers of inviolable trustworthiness]. These two vast works were offered to King John V as their titles set out the stall for the publication drive: to leave no doubt as to the royal and ancestral origins of the house of Braganza, nor of those who supported the crown, based on the reconstruction of the aristocratic family trees.

The Theatine priest was Maria Craesbeeck's son, a member of the Flemish family of the same name that had settled in Portugal in the late sixteenth century and founded a prestigious printing office that served the royal house.¹³ Alongside his religious training, António cultivated a profound interest in literature, hagiology, genealogy, and Portuguese history, and would go on to become one of the 50 founding members of the Royal Academy of Portuguese History, created in 1720.

His considerable erudition and the eagerness that he took in researching and quoting literary and documental sources earned him renown and the patronage of King John V, who ordered the printing of the 19 volumes of the *História* and the *Provas*.¹⁴ Both the writer and the censors left some clues in the first volume of the *História* (1735) on the methodology used to recollect and organise the documents. The intention was to issue narratives divided into chapters about ancestral characters who were historically relevant to the royal lineage and the noble houses, as well as to collate and transcribe a vast quantity of documents, arranged in chronological order, that would substantiate the genealogy of the Braganza and serve as a repository of narratives that “gave shape and structure to this precious, but as yet poorly organised material” [“de[ssem] forma a taõ preciosa, ainda que mal ordenada, matéria”] (Prologue). It was apparent that the author had spent hours reading and cross-referencing:

“public deeds and other instruments worthy of note, many of which were [...] resurrected from the Archives for the very first time, having been buried there for centuries” [“escrituras publicas, e outros instrumentos dignos de grande fé, de que muitos pela primeira vez, [...], resuscitarão dos Archivos, em que estavaõ ha muitos seculos sepultados”] (in the censorship by the Count of Ericeira).¹⁵

13 Nuno Daupiás d'Alcochete, *L'officina craesbeeckiana de Lisbonne*, in: *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português IX* (1975), 601–637 and João José Alves Dias, *Craesbeeck. Uma dinastia de impressores em Portugal: elementos para o seu estudo*. Associação Portuguesa de Livreiros Alfarrabistas, Lisbon 1996.

14 About António Caetano de Sousa see: Inocêncio Francisco da Silva, *Dicionário bibliográfico português, estudos*, vol. 1: 101–103, Lisbon 1858, and Afonso Dornelas, *D. António Caetano de Sousa: a sua vida, a sua obra e a sua família*. Casa Portuguesa, Lisbon 1917.

15 D. António Caetano de Sousa, *Historia Genealogica da Casa Real Portugueza desde a sua origem até ao presente, com as Familias illustres, que procedem dos Reys, e dos Serenissimos Duques de Bra-*

Later on, Caetano de Sousa mentions some of the archives that he had consulted: the royal chancellery, the drawers at the cabinets in the Casa da Coroa, the royal archive of the Torre do Tombo, and the archives of the houses of Braganza and Cadaval. Simultaneously, the Teatine inquired about the registry offices of the monasteries of São Vicente de Fora, São Diniz de Odivelas, Santa Maria de Belém, the Senate, as well as the libraries of various nobles which he considered to harbour a wealth of family history documentation, plus his own collection.

The volumes, which represented the endeavours of Sousa's labour, were complete in 1749 with the publication of the general index for the two titles. The information therein became particularly pertinent in the light of subsequent events after the 1755 earthquake and fire in Lisbon, which destroyed many buildings and their libraries, archives, and original documentation. Nevertheless, the Portuguese version of Infanta Beatrice's dowry survived because it was printed on pages 445–489 of the second volume of the *Provas*.

While Sousa's efforts saved the document from falling into oblivion, they also crystallised it in time. The inventory contents are presented through a palaeographic record (the rules of which are not explained), preventing any other spelling or interpretation of the original manuscript. Unfortunately, transcription errors may also take the form of several typographical errors that are not always easy to unpick. Thus, the Portuguese version of the inventory is a closed document in which palaeographic transcription is concerned, conveying another layer of intervention over the original, which remains unknown.

Whether as a primary source that describes artistic objects and material culture or as a process of listing things received and appraised at the new court, the inventory of Beatrice's dowry was, from the very outset, a device intended to be interpreted and understood by a specific audience. By their very nature, inventories fulfil a practical function whose drafting and perception are subjected to widely shared rules among courtiers. Nevertheless, each inventory (the document, may it be an original manuscript, a handwritten copy, or a printed version), and in this case its two versions, has its history and 'cultural biography' that goes beyond the events mentioned above.¹⁶

gança, justificada com instrumentos, e escritores de inviolável fé. Na Oficina de Joseph Antonio da Sylva, Lisboa Occidental 1735, n. pag.

16 Igor Kopytoff, *The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process*, in: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge 2011, 66–67.

The biography of the Portuguese inventory

Retrieving information about the inventory printed by Sousa shows how the mediation process between the original document and the version that has survived to this day started. Indeed, António Caetano de Sousa provides paratextual information (practices and discourses as defined by Genette) to his palaeographic transcription of the original manuscript, which allows us to pinpoint the document's origin and the reason why it had been preserved for over 200 years.¹⁷ Before printing the document, Sousa added a header that reads as follow:

“Dowry of the Duchess Infanta Beatrice, taken from the old original, of the accounts given once by Alvaro do Tojal, her treasurer, and which has been preserved by his great-great-grandson Francisco do Tojal, Chancellor of Trade at the Casa da India, a position that was then entrusted to the aforementioned Alvaro do Tojal.” [“Dote da Duqueza Infante D. Beatriz, tirado da conta dada naquele tempo por Alvaro do Tojal, seu Thesoureiro, do Original antigo, que conserva seu quarto neto Francisco do Tojal, Juiz da Balança da Casa da India, Officio que entaõ foy dado ao dito Alvaro do Tojal.”]¹⁸

As mentioned in the prologue of his *Provas*, Sousa had spent several hours searching for documents that he considered relevant, among them the archives of the Tojal family, whose members continued to serve the crown four generations later. Francisco do Tojal, a descendant of the Infanta's treasurer, Álvaro do Tojal, had kept at least one copy of the 'old original' of the Infanta's dowry inventory that his ancestor had penned. Sousa, therefore, copied it out from the archives of the Tojal family, which had kept their ancestral documentation neatly organised, ready to assist at any time with ease and determine the context for ongoing deals, thus attesting, with evident success, the quality and longstanding service rendered to the crown.

When Sousa transcribed the document in the first half of the eighteenth century, it was no longer the original but rather a copy made by officials or members of the Tojal family as they made efforts to organise and preserve their archives. As such, it remains unclear whether this document was faithful to the original and whether whoever had copied it had properly understood and correctly interpreted all the letters and symbols. It also confirms that the inventory of the dowry was a series of papers that were probably copied by various people over time, in various con-

17 Paratext as a concept in literary theory was first presented in Genette's book, *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré* (Paris 1982) and later developed in: Gérard Genette, *Seuils, Éditions du Seuil*, Paris 1987 (translated into English in: *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997).

18 Sousa, *Provas*, 1742, 445.

texts and for different purposes, and that the surviving documents are essentially the result of a process of selection, which may or may not have involved alterations.

These questions are especially relevant when relating to the description of the objects since their value, expressed in numbers and symbols, would be subject to scrutiny and rigorous attention. Moreover, although one may be prepared for the different syntax of the phrases and organisation of the object's aesthetic and plastic characteristics, some pieces' description is complicated to understand. When, as is the case here, there is no known relationship between things and textual inventories, such intricate descriptions increase the frustration of not being able to visualise the objects. As such, doubts could arise relating to the degree of accuracy of the eighteenth-century print concerning the copies' quality and Sousa's transcription. However, Sousa transcribed the Tojal document as he received it, thus including the preface by which Infanta confirmed the delivery of the dowry in Savoy, which reads as follows:

“To the overseers of the Treasury of the King, my Lord and brother, and the accounters of his house, [I attest] that Alvaro do Tojal, my Treasurer has given account of the handing over of all the silver, jewels, gold, precious stones and pearls, tapestry, ornaments from my house, bedchamber and chapel, and all of the other pieces from my dowry, which were given to him in Portugal, and which have been inscribed in the Book of Receipt” [“Vedores da Fazenda del-Rey meu Senhor e Irmão, e aos contadores de sua caza, que Alvaro do Tojal meu Tezoureiro deu cá sua conta [accounts] com entrega de toda a prata, joias douro pedras, e perolas, tapeçaria, ornamentos de minha caza, cama, e Capella, e assi de totalas outras couzas de minha [sic] dote, que lhe em Portugal foraõ entregues, e se acharaõ carregadas sobrele no Livro de sua Receita”].¹⁹

The Portuguese inventory starts by listing 118 entries describing several items without category, only attesting to the importance of objects fashioned from silver and gold in the dowry as they could be converted into coinage or used to finance Charles III activities and its Dukedom.²⁰ Particular attention by the treasures concerned in assessing the best standards to silver and gold also occur with the category *guarnições* [that is, horse gear] and other categories in which the pieces contained a significant quantity of the precious metals.

The document's accounting practice and financial concern overlapped a neat organisation, ordered by categories after the first 118 entries. In this regard, the Portuguese version of the inventory also expresses the level of specialisation of King Manuel I officers and the bureaucratic growth of his court:

19 Sousa, *Provas*, 1742, 446–447.

20 Merlin, *Beatrice*, 2014, 81.

“The aforementioned silver numbers one hundred and eighteen items, ranging from large to small, starting with two gilded silver fonts covered in *bastiães* [decorative motifs], both of the same design and features; and ending with the one [entry] above, which is a gold cover, used for a jug, included in the account of the one hundred and eighteen additions, which are all listed on eight pages, complete with this, containing no erasures or amendments, nor leaving any room for doubt.” [“Esta prata atraz conteuda está em cento e dezoito padrões antre grandes e pequenas, as quais se começaõ em duas fontes de prata douradas todas e lavradas de bastiães ambas duma sorte e feiçaõ; e acabaõse nesta assim que he huma sobrecopa douro, que serve com pucaro, a qual entra no conto das ditas cento e dezoito addições, e todas estaõ em oito folhas completas com esta sem nenhuma entrelinha borradura, nem couza que faça duvida.”]²¹

While the Portuguese officials delivered the documents that the Tojal family kept for 200 years, a Savoyard version of the inventory by the Duke’s treasurer was also issued.

The Savoyard handwritten copies

The Turin Archives hold various copies of inventories drawn up in Savoy in the sixteenth century, most of which relate to the Infanta’s jewels. Unfortunately, most are neither provided with ample context nor studied, likely written during periods of ongoing pawning of jewellery to amass money to meet the financial needs of the duchy or after Beatrice’s death. As such, these documents are not relevant to the inventory’s biography and history, nor to the underlying argument set in this chapter that *the inventory* of Beatrice’s dowry (that is, the textual content) is the result of a comparison and analysis of the documents produced in 1522: the Portuguese and the Savoyard versions.

For this purpose, we are interested in two specific documents, both nineteenth-century handwritten copies. The cover wrapped around the set of documents that contains these two copies bears the following title:

“Record containing a copy of the marriage contract between Duke Charles of Savoy and the Lady Beatrice, Infanta of Portugal, with several inventories of jewellery, silver, linen, furniture and clothing, acknowledgements and attributions, [...] 1521–1522).” [“Registre contenant copie du contract de mariage entre le duc Charles de Savoie et Dame Beatrix Infante de Portugal avec

21 Sousa, Provas, 1742, 455.

divers inventaires de ses bijoux, argenterie, linges, meubles et habits, quittances, assignations, [...] 1521–1522)”²²

However, the header on the cover does not correspond to the contents, nor has it been possible to pinpoint any full inventory of the dowry (original or copy) other than the two shortened nineteenth-century handwritten copies mentioned above, relating to the jewellery and tapestries (which included other types of domestic and religious textiles).²³ The jewels were all the objects that had pearls or metal and precious stones for the Duchess's domestic use or that she wore on her body. It included reliquaries, books, chapel items, and accessories, which are set out between pages 457 and 468 in Sousa's printed version, under the titles of “Gold pieces and precious stones”, “Bracelets”, “Crosses, roses and brooches”, “Reliquaries and beads”, “Books”, “Pontas” (lacework and trimmings made with precious metals), “Girdles”, “Rings”, “Arrecadas e pendentes” (earrings), “Miscellaneous pieces”, “Pearls”, and, finally, “Neckwear”. Nevertheless, there is no registration of the objects described in the first 118 entries in the Portuguese version of the inventory.

These objects were part of the dowry, but apparently, there is no distinction between those belonging to Beatrice's trousseau and those shared by the couple. Among the first would be at least the reliquaries and beads as well as the books of hours. Comparing the jewellery and tapestries in both the Portuguese and Savoyard versions of the inventory also shows that they refer to the same art objects from the dowry. As broader as the understanding provided by the items listed under jewellery and tapestries may be, the fact that these are two separate documents reveals that the Savoyard version was also organised, in all likelihood, by categories.

The two documents (tapestries and jewellery) that comprise the Savoyard version of the inventory of Beatrice's dowry provide us with additional information about the process through which the inventory was created and help explain why it has been sorted into categories, as we will see below.

22 Archivio di Stato di Torino, Turin: Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Matrimoni, mazzo 2 d'addizione, fascicolo 9 (1521–1522): 7 February 1522 – Inventario ed Estimo dell Gioje donate dal Re di Portogallo alla sua figlia l'Infante Beatrice in occasione del suo Matrimonio col Duca Carlo IX di Savoja, cover. In the earlier organisation of the archive: Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Scritture riguardanti le gioie e mobili, Gioie e mobili, mazzo 4 d'addizione, fascicolo 12.

23 The cover of Tapestries inventory is blank, and the cover of Jewellery bears the title: “1522. 7. Febrajo. / Inventario ed Estimo dell Gioje donate dal Re di Portogallo alla sua figlia l'Infante Beatrice in occasione del suo Matrimonio col Duca Carlo IX [sic] di Savoja” [“1522. 7. February. / Inventory and Evaluation of the Jewels given by the King of Portugal to his daughter the Infanta Beatrice on the occasion of her wedding to Duke Charles IX [sic; in reality III] of Savoy”], Archivio di Stato di Torino, Turin: Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Matrimoni, mazzo 2 d'addizione, fascicolo 9 (1521–1522). On the jewels of Infanta Beatrice see, Nuno Vassallo e Silva, A Joalharía Feminina em Portugal na Época dos Descobrimentos, in: *Oceanos* 21 (1995), 103–112.

The Portuguese inventory mentions that only two people have played a role in the appraisal of the dowry: Álvaro do Tojal, Treasurer to the Portuguese Infanta, and Vaseon Traillan, Treasurer to Charles III, who signed the Savoyard version in Turin on 15 April 1522. In the Portuguese version, the descriptions are hurried and sometimes even impatient when it comes to addressing the more intricate objects, and frequently it is lacking in any adjectives or detailing that might allow the reader to distinguish one piece from another of the same kind. Details are scarce and often confusing, making it difficult to recreate the pieces visually. Furthermore, even if organised by type, we are a long way from the classification process and consistently standardised descriptions that developed with the advent of museum collections and the creation of museums themselves.²⁴

Álvaro do Tojal was a bureaucrat concerned with getting the best deal to his king and to pleasing the Duchess, with whom he would stay in Savoy. His language and terminology are that of one with some court experience but primarily based on accounting practice, straight to the point and with no room for individualisation. One can find an exception in the eighth entry in the “Girdles” [*Cintas*] category: “Another girdle which used to belong to the Infanta Isabel” [“*Outra cinta que foi da Ifante Dona Izabel*”].²⁵

Tojal does not describe the girdle. The Portuguese version of the inventory does not provide information concerning material, shape, colour, or even the value of the girdle. It only confirms that the sisters were close and that to Tojal, the fact that it had belonged to Isabel, Beatrice’s older sister and wife to be of Charles V, was sufficient to attest the value to that particular girdle.²⁶

Nevertheless, Vaseon Traillan had other concerns. He wanted to assess the amount of gold the girdle had, and by comparing the description of the girdles in the Savoyard version, we learn that:

“Another girdle in black velvet / embellished with crossbars [*travessanos*] in which [?] the gold weighed one mark and seven / ounces and six octaves, with

24 H.D. Schepelern, *The Museum Wormianum reconstructed. A Note on the Illustration of 1655*, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 2/1 (1990), 81–85; Eva Schulz, *Notes on the History of Collecting and of Museums: In the Light of Selected Literature of the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 2/2 (1990), 205–218; Oliver Impey/Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The Origins of Museums. The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, 2nd edition, House of Stratus Ltd, Leeds 2001; Mark A. Meadow (ed.), *The First Treatise on Museums. Samuel Quiccheberg’s Inscrptiones*, 1565, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles 2013.

25 Sousa, Provas, 1742, 463.

26 Carla Alferes Pinto, *Educación, objetos artísticos y poder. La Infanta Beatriz de Portugal (1504–1538) en la corte de Saboya*, in: Henar Gallego Franco/María del Carmen García Herrero (eds.), *Autoridad, poder e influencia: Mujeres que hacen Historia*, vol. 2, Barcelona 2018, 297–298, and Buescu, D. Beatriz, 2019, 48–50.

the mouth and / the end and the two eyelets given this value by the / Lady's treasurer – 176 ducats / and by my Lord's treasurer – 135 escudos" ["Plus vne aultre sainture de vellours noir/ garnye de trauessanos ou ne m oblies/ mye domt [sic] l or poyse un marc sept/ onces six octaues y comprins la boucle et/ le bout et deux ollietz a este avalue par/ le dourier de madame – CLXXVI ducats/ Et par le dourier de monseigneur – CXXXV escuz"].²⁷

In other words, this was a girdle made of black velvet with 'crossbars' – a rectangular decorative motif placed horizontally –, in gold, appraised by the two treasurers and given different values in different currencies. In doing so, each of them – Álvaro do Tojal and Vaseon Traillan – were defending the interests of their masters, with the former valuing the piece based on Isabel's nobility and the latter doing what he could to ensure the payment of the dowry down to the very last cent.

The Savoyard version listing the 'jewellery' and 'tapestries' in Beatrice's dowry shares the same difficulties of palaeographic interpretation as the Portuguese version. For one thing, both are copies: one a handwritten, the other a printed copy. They also share the textual difficulties of understanding words that have since disappeared or whose meaning has changed. Other difficulties include the effective loss or evolution of the vocabulary used to describe things, such as using the word *travessão* [crossbar]. That might tell us what the thing is in terms of shape, but it does not help to visualise the features and materiality of the girdle described. Finally, the Savoyard documents have the added difficulty of being written in a court environment where French was the political and cultural language, and several Italian languages and dialects were used.

The jewellery's description in the Savoyard's dowry does not need to be compared against the Portuguese version to grasp that an inventory of this nature was an exercise in power and always a tense affair. Throughout the pages, one can count on the fingers of one hand the occasions on which the two treasurers agree on the value attributed to the pieces. However, the fact is that the Savoyard treasurer Traillan signed the 'delivery account' for all the objects listed by the Infanta's treasurer in the Portuguese version of the dowry's inventory. Despite the financial and diplomatic agency that the representatives brought to bear on every appraisal, the final decision was invariably a political matter and open to negotiation.

The Turin version also clarifies that the creation of the inventory involved more people than those mentioned by Tojal. On the Savoyard side, the Duke's secretary, Claude Chatel (who had been part of the delegation sent to the Portuguese court to

27 Archivio di Stato di Torino, Turin: Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Matrimoni, mazzo 2 d'addizione, fascicolo 9 (1521–1522): 7 February 1522 – Inventario ed Estimo dell Gioje donate dal Re di Portogallo alla sua figlia l'Infante Beatrice in occasione del suo Matrimonio col Duca Carlo IX di Savoia, no page number.

negotiate the marriage with the King's daughter) and Anthoigne de Faignon, responsible for discussing the values and converting them into different currencies, were both present. Of the Portuguese delegation, Bento Fernandes, a notary, and Gonçalo de Meza, Faignon's Portuguese counterpart, were also in attendance together with the treasurer.

The history of the *inventory*

Begun on 17 February, the Savoyard jewellery inventory was signed on 27 March, and the tapestries inventory on 3 February 1522, both in Vigone (Vignon in the original). The Portuguese version of the inventory was signed on 15 April the same year but in Turin. If we compare this information to what is known about Beatrice's arrival in Nice and her entry into Turin (March 1522), the inventory must have been made in transit, probably during the most prolonged breaks in the journey, in different areas and towns.

Beatrice disembarked on 29 September 1521 in the port of Villefranche-sur-Mer in the Mediterranean. She made her solemn entrance in Nice on 3 October, after the newlywed Beatrice and Charles departed for Vigone five days later. The following notice confirms that the Ducal couple remained in Vigone for months once they took part at an essential assembly of the Savoyard states on 25 January 1522. Moreover, although in different months (February and March), the two Savoyard inventories were signed in Vigone, while the Portuguese version was only in April, already in Turin.²⁸

Given the rush to receive the dowry payment and to settle accounts, the fact that Nice was the seaport of the Cisalpine duchy, and the transient nature of the Savoyard court at that time, the appraisal of the pieces and writing of the inventories probably took place in rooms specially arranged for that purpose.²⁹ The chests containing the objects would have been moved there, thus explaining the decision to conduct the process by categories. The hypothesis is supported by several notes written in the Savoyard version of the jewellery inventory. These include, for instance, reference to pieces that were not estimated because the Infanta was wearing them, others that were appraised in books not identified, and the following note added to the margin of the list appraising the bracelets:

28 See the chronological narrative in Giovanni Fornaseri, *Beatrice di Portogallo Duchessa di Savoia (1504–1538)*, Cuneo 1957, 11–14.

29 For more on how the Savoyard court functioned, see Alessandro Barbero, *Il ducato di Savoia. Amministrazione e corte di uno stato franco-italiano (1416–1536)*, Editori Laterza, Rome/Bari 2002.

“there was a bracelet with seven ruby roses, two white enamel roses with a ruby in each, and nine diamonds and twenty pearls, which Madame lost in Nice [...]” [“qui l y auoyt vng bracetlet qui tenoit sept roses de rubys deux roses esmailles de blanc avec vng rubys en chacune et neuf diamantz et vingt perles qui a este perdu a nyce par madame”].³⁰

This piece of jewellery formed part of a set of six, so Traillan only valued the five that remained while Tojal registered and noted the delivery of the six that had arrived in Nice.

The previous mention is not the only reference in the inventory that Beatrice had lost entire pieces or sections that made up part of more elaborate sets, especially those she wore. While it was written to achieve a monetary valuation, this aside Vaseon Traillan provides details to visualise and understand the everyday use of jewellery and the technical problems that the body’s movement raised to jewellers in the planning and execution of the pieces.

The Infanta used jewels to convey an image appropriate to the status of a princess who had married a Duke, and Queen Maria’s (1482–1517) emphatic opposition to her marriage to the Duke of Savoy may have come to Beatrice’s mind more than once. King Manuel I only agreed on the wedding after the queen’s death, the Catholic marriage market offered very few options, and he was negotiating his marriage contract to Eleanor of Austria (1498–1558), Charles V sister. Nevertheless, one cannot help questioning to what extent Beatrice was aware of what historiography has already called the “dynastic obsession” that encapsulates the Portuguese tendency to marry their infantes and infantas to their respective counterparts from their closest neighbours’ royal houses, feeding cross-unions between Iberian cousins for several generations.³¹ In this business of monarchies transferring people, income and objects back and forth, the infantas were just another “piece of precious dynastic property”.³² As such, particularly during the reign of Carlos V, Portuguese currency was used to finance the Emperor’s military campaigns and wars in Europe, so the composition and value of the dowries of the infantas was a matter of controversy and dispute at the Portuguese court throughout the sixteenth century.

30 Archivio di Stato di Torino, Turin: Materie politiche per rapporto all’interno, Matrimoni, mazzo 2 d’addizione, fascicolo 9 (1521–1522): 7 February 1522 – Inventario ed Estimo dell Gioje donate dal Re di Portogallo alla sua figlia l’Infante Beatrice in occasione del suo Matrimonio col Duca Carlo IX di Savoia, no page number.

31 Pinto, *Educación*, 2018, 295 and Sá, *Coisas de princesas*, 2010, 98–103.

32 Sá, *Coisas de princesas*, 2010, 101; Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods. A New History of the Renaissance*, Macmillan, London 1996, 408.

Discourses of power and gender

The most bitter disputes arose as to the value of the sum of money paid to the groom and the objects that, being part of the dowry, were for the couple's use and did not need to be returned to the bride's family if there were no offspring. A systematic and comprehensive analysis of the processes that gathered the objects that made up the dowry and determination of provenance (for example, whether they originated in the house of the queen or king) remains undone.

However, Portuguese narratives that report to Beatrice's wedding dowry, such as Gaspar Correia Chronicle, provide further information:

“in which she was given many rich tableware, cast in superb quality in gold, and golden jewellery and precious stones of his [the King's] own possession, with a value of one hundred thousand cruzados, besides the silver and precious objects from his [the King's] own and of his house, a huge abundance of brocade, and tapestries of great price and worth” [“em que lhe deu muy ryqua bayxela de gram lavor cozyda em ouro e joyas douro e pedrarya de sua pessoa em valor de cem mjll cruzados afora a prata e atabyos de sua pessoa e casa de muita avomdança de brocado e tapeçaryas de gramde preço e valya”].³³

The Chronicle emphasizes the importance of the King's wardrobe for the dowry composition, particularly regarding the objects made of precious metal, convertible into money, and of the tapestries.

The queen's house would likely have also played a relevant role in the choice of objects for the dowry, but in the case of Beatrice, the Queen, Eleanor of Austria (from July 1518), was no longer her mother. Queen Maria had died in March 1517, and when Beatrice's dowry was assembled, she had already received her share of the inheritance from her mother's wardrobe divided three ways at the monarch's behest. The first part went to the Infanta Isabel, her eldest daughter, the second to Beatrice, Maria's only other daughter, and the third to John, the prince who would inherit the throne. The other *infantes*, all male, did not inherit.

Queen Maria had a very close relationship with the King and was often consulted in matters of diplomacy and politics.³⁴ She had also overseen the meticulous upbringing of her children, sons and daughters alike, to whom she had conveyed the importance of her lineage.

33 Gaspar Correia, *Crônicas de D. Manuel e de D. João III (até 1533)*, João Pereira da Costa (reading, introduction, notes and book index), Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, Lisbon 1992, 144.

34 For more on the life of Queen Maria of Portugal, see Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, *Rainhas consortes de D. Manuel I*, 2nd edition, Círculo de Leitores 2012, 124–163.

The matriarchal line was pivotal in the empowerment and representation of the Infanta as Duchess of Savoy. Moreover, as far as King Manuel I saw, it also encompassed his mother, as can be read in the instructions that he wrote to his daughter on 17 March 1521, reminding her of the models that she should strive to follow:

“Of all these things, my lady daughter, I beseech that you take great care and recall that which you must do and accomplish, such that you are deserving of the love that I have for you, and I say this to you so that through your actions, in the first place, you earn the blessing of Our Lord, and that of your grandmothers, the Queen of Castile and my own mother, who were such virtuous and excellent princesses, as well as my [blessing] and that of your mother.” [“De todas estas cousas Señora filha vos peço e encomemdo muyto que tenhaes muyto cuidado e lembrança pera as averdes de fazer e compryr como merece o muito amor que vos tenho e volas digo em tal maneira que por elas primeiramente ganhes a bençam de Noso Señor, e despois de vosas avós a rainha de Casteela e minha may que tam vertuosas e ecelentes princezas foram, e asy a minha e ha de vossa mãy.”]³⁵

One may assume that the Infanta took all the objects she inherited from her mother’s wardrobe to Savoy, but these are not easy to identify by the descriptions provided in the inventory. The Portuguese version goes further in this respect since the Infanta’s officials who wrote it knew symbolic and iconographic features that provide specific information and point out the maternal origins of some objects. Particularly the objects from the dowry that bore the *divisa das maravilhas* [sign of the daisies], numbering five in total: a silver plate, a silver clock, two books of hours of the Virgin Mary, and a gold cask. *Maravilhas*, marigolds, and daisies were popular and scientifically imprecise names given to daisy-like plants from the botanical *Asteraceae* family, which Beatrice’s mother used as her emblem.³⁶

Besides these objects and the mentioned above girdle that Isabel had given her younger sister, the dowry also included objects that related to Beatrice’s life as an infanta of Portugal: two silver fonts, both engraved; three jugs of gilded silver; a sweets box in gilded silver; and a parchment book, all of which featured the arms of Portugal and Castile. And, thus, almost certainly from her mother’s house.

35 Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, 51–VIII–1, no. 2410: Instruzione del Re di Portogallo Emanuele a Beatrice Duchezza di Savoya sua figlia in lingua portoghese e dal medesimo sottoscrita. Marzo 17, f.7, and José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho, Pais e Nobres. Cartas de Instrução para Educação de Jovens Nobres. Séculos XVI–XVIII. Centro Inter-Universitário de História da Espiritualidade, Porto 2009, 265.

36 See Miguel Metelo de Seixas/João Bernardo Galvão-Telles (coord.), Peregrinações Heráldicas Olisiponenses. A freguesia de Santa Maria de Belém, Lisbon 2005, 332–336.

In Iberia, women's coats of arms were shaped in lozenge divided vertically in half, the right representing the paternal arms and the left blank until marriage. Furthermore, just as Beatrice inherited from her mother the objects described in the inventory as bearing Castile and Portugal's arms, the objects she had taken to Savoy with the Avis royal coat of arms were extended with the arms of Savoy, added to its right-hand side. The Portuguese inventory refers to two gilded silver fonts, two silver washbasins, two engraved golden wine pitchers, a table jug in gilded silver applied inside and out, all pieces made of precious metal and featuring elaborate decorative motifs, with the escutcheons of the houses of Avis and Savoy side by side on coloured enamel.

Enamel allowed for a cheap and quick alteration, in both technical and symbolic terms, of objects that otherwise would require a lengthy and expensive production process while simultaneously safeguarding genealogical features of the visual culture at the court in Lisbon. It is worth noting that the pieces enhanced with the Portuguese and Savoyard's coats of arms were used at the dining table, an inherently public ceremony held according to a strict series of rules and with a shown off performative sense. Moreover, the transfer of objects and people through marriage often wrought significant changes to how interpersonal relationships were conducted and the institutional and ceremonial workings of the courts. In this sense, the objects bearing the *divisa das maravilhas* and the Castilian and the Portuguese coats of arms are exciting when we examine their agency staged through a process of metamorphosis and reuse, making them acquire other layers of meaning and transforming them into something else altogether.³⁷

The ruling period of Charles III remains the less studied by Italian historiography. However, it has been argued that Infanta Beatrice's arrival fostered the creation of courtly environment devices in Savoy, and the "visual heritage, taste and artistic culture of the Infanta became active elements in the image of the Savoyard court through the recontextualisation of the use, expression and representation" of many of the objects that she took with her to Turin, and which the inventory describes.³⁸

The Savoyard documentation and chronicles recounting Beatrice's 17 years as Duchess reveal how the dowry objects were actively used to create her image of power and, by the same token, that of the duchy.³⁹ Given that there are no surviv-

37 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford 1988, and Janet Hoskins, *Agency, Biography and Objects*, in: Chris Tilley/Webb Keane/Susanne Küchler/Mike Rowlands/Patricia Spyer (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture*, London 2006, 74–84.

38 Carla Alferes Pinto, *The Dais and the Artistic Objects in the Proxy Marriage of Infanta Beatrice of Portugal, Duchess of Savoy: Textiles, Ceremony, and Dissimilarity*, in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 51/4 (2020), 1083–1110.

39 Pinto, *The Dais*, 2020, and Pinto, *The Otherness* (forthcoming)

ing objects from that period, the description provided by the inventories, particularly the Portuguese version, is crucial to connect. Because, first, to understand the meaning of Portuguese and Castilian symbolic iconography, one would have to be equipped with the wealth of knowledge and information that the Savoyard chroniclers did not possess. Second, after being integrated into the Savoy court ceremonial the pieces shed the rhetoric that linked them to the Duchess and her lineage becoming agents of the Savoyard image, as can be seen from the description of the festivities held to mark the baptism of Emmanuel Philibert.⁴⁰

In this context, it is possible to list specific characteristics that dovetail with the conclusions drawn from the study of other Portuguese inventories from the same period. These include a specific 'normalisation' of the exotic, expressed in pieces with an Asian provenance, which, despite generalised allusions through terms such as "India", were fully integrated into the proper protocol and mixed with other pieces of Portuguese or European origin.⁴¹ Some objects suggest the Iberian heritage and visual culture, especially in the Arab domain periods. Moreover, there is evidence of access to Portuguese, Spanish, and other European markets to acquire specific goods. It should also be noted that despite Beatrice's much-vaunted education, there is no mention of books (apart from the Books of Hours) in the inventory. Does this mean that she did not have any or that their value did not deserve the trouble of inventorying and evaluating them? The fact that shoes and underwear are also absent makes it challenging to agree with the first hypothesis.

At this point, there is no plausible explanation for these discrepancies in any of the documentation mentioned above. These inconsistencies confirm that even documents whose function was to provide the most accurate reflection of a specific situation are, first and foremost, inherent in the circumstances in which were written, the expertise of those who wrote them, and the agency of the critical players who wielded authority within their redaction.

This chapter sought to demonstrate that sixteenth-century dowry inventories are a type of their own. Going further from just assessing the objects' value, they portray everyday microcosms of life at aristocratic courts and how objects manifest their agency, sparking power, and gender discourses. Such bureaucratic and rhetorical devices so densely packed with content benefit from being analysed in their various aspects. For that reason, they acquired prominence and continue to play an important role in studies relating to the history of consumption, the circulation of objects and their artistic agency, and women's empowerment at the courts that received

40 Pinto, *The Otherness* (forthcoming).

41 Hallett/Senos, *De Todas*, 2018, 355–375.

them. As such, this text aimed to provide a methodology and argue the advantages of addressing dowry inventories as a comprehensive device, resulting from the interpretation of its various versions and the collation with other sorts of documents. It expands the interest in the study of inventories by proposing the biography's reconstruction of the Portuguese and Savoyard versions of the dowry as a method for analysing inventories and their comparison and interpretation, thus contributing to enhancing knowledge about the gathering processes and the objects encompassed.