

# Afonso IV of Portugal

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**Afonso IV**<sup>[a]</sup> (Portuguese pronunciation: [ɐˈfõsu]; 8 February 1291 – 28 May 1357), called **the Brave** (Portuguese: *o Bravo*), was King of Portugal and the Algarves from 1325 until his death. He was the only legitimate son of King Denis of Portugal by his wife Elizabeth of Aragon.

## Contents

- 1 Early life
- 2 King of Portugal and Algarve
- 3 Later life
- 4 Ancestry
- 5 Marriage and descendants
- 6 Notes
- 7 References
- 8 Bibliography

## Early life

Afonso, born in Lisbon, was the rightful heir to the Portuguese throne. However, he was not Denis' favourite son, the old king preferring his illegitimate son, Afonso Sanches.<sup>[1]</sup> The notorious rivalry between the half brothers led to civil war several times. On 7 January 1325, Afonso's father died and he became king, whereupon he exiled his rival to Castile, and stripped him of all the lands and fiefdom given by their father. From Castile, Afonso orchestrated a series of attempts to usurp the crown. After a few failed attempts at invasion, the brothers signed a peace treaty, arranged by Afonso's mother Queen Elizabeth.<sup>[2]</sup>

In 1309, Afonso IV married Infanta Beatrice of Castile, daughter of King Sancho IV of Castile by his wife María de Molina. The first-born of this union was Infanta Maria of Portugal.

## King of Portugal and Algarve

In 1325 Alfonso XI of Castile entered a child-marriage with Constanza Manuel of Castile, the daughter of one of his regents. Two years later, he had the marriage annulled so he could marry Afonso's daughter, Maria of Portugal. Maria became Queen of Castile in 1328 upon her marriage to Alfonso XI, who soon became involved publicly with a mistress.<sup>[2]</sup> Constanza was imprisoned in a castle in Toro while her father, Juan Manuel, Prince of Villena, waged war against Alfonso XI until 1329. Eventually, the two reached a peaceful accord after mediation by Juan del Campo, Bishop of Oviedo; this secured Constance's release from prison.

**Afonso IV**



Afonso in *Genealogy of the Kings of Portugal* (António de Holanda, 1530–1534)

### King of Portugal and the Algarve

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Reign</b>       | 7 January 1325 – 28 May 1357                         |
| <b>Predecessor</b> | Denis  |
| <b>Successor</b>   | Peter I  |
| <b>Born</b>        | 8 February 1291<br>Lisbon, Kingdom of Portugal       |
| <b>Died</b>        | 28 May 1357 (aged 66)<br>Lisbon, Kingdom of Portugal |
| <b>Burial</b>      | Lisbon Cathedral, Portugal                           |
| <b>Consort</b>     | Beatrice of Castile                                  |
| <b>Issue</b>       | See descendants                                      |
| <b>House</b>       | House of Burgundy                                    |
| <b>Father</b>      | Denis of Portugal                                    |
| <b>Mother</b>      | Elizabeth of Aragon                                  |
| <b>Religion</b>    | Roman Catholicism                                    |

The public humiliation of his daughter led Afonso IV to have his son and heir, Peter, marry the no less aggrieved Castilian infanta, Constanza. Afonso subsequently started a war against Castile,<sup>[2]</sup> peace arriving four years later, through the intervention of the Infanta Maria herself. A year after the peace treaty was signed in Seville, Portuguese troops played an important role in defeating the Moors at the Battle of Río Salado in October 1340.

## Later life



Inês on her knees in front of King Afonso

Political intrigue marked the last part of Afonso IV's reign, although Castile was torn by civil war after Alfonso XI died. Henry of Trastámara challenged the new King Pedro of Castile, who sent many Castilian nobles into exile in Portugal. Afonso's heir, Pedro, fell in love with his new wife's lady-in-waiting, Inês de Castro. Inês was the daughter of an important noble family from Galicia, with links (albeit illegitimate) to both the royal houses of Castile and Portugal. Her brothers were aligned with the Trastámara faction, and became favorites of crown prince Pedro, much to the dismay of others at the Portuguese court, who considered them Castilian upstarts. When Constance of Peñafiel died weeks after giving birth to their third child, Pedro began living openly with Inês, recognized all her children as his and repudiated the idea of marrying anyone other than Inês herself. His father refused to go to war again against Castile, hoping his heir's infatuation

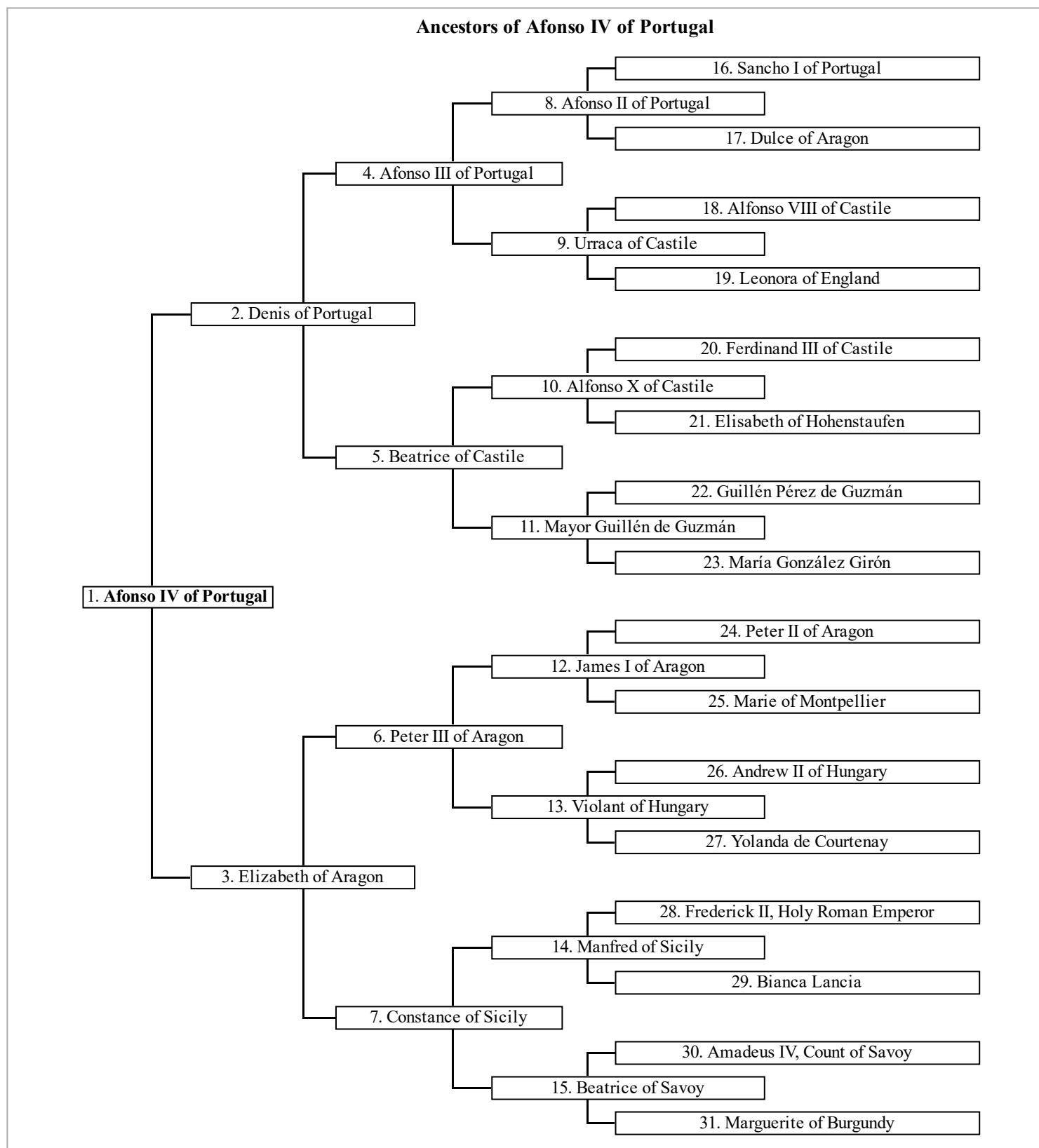
would end, and tried to arrange another dynastic marriage for Pedro.

The situation became worse as the years passed and the aging Afonso lost control over his court. His grandson and Pedro's only legitimate son, future king Fernando of Portugal, was a sickly child, while Inês' illegitimate children thrived. Worried about his legitimate grandson's life, and the growing power of Castile within Portugal's borders, Afonso ordered Inês de Castro first imprisoned in his mother's old convent in Coimbra, and then murdered in 1355. He expected his son to give in and marry a princess, but the heir became enraged upon learning of his lover's decapitation in front of their young child. Pedro put himself at the head of an army and devastated the country between the Douro and the Minho rivers before he was reconciled to his father in early 1357.<sup>[3]</sup> Afonso died almost immediately after, in Lisbon in May.

Afonso IV's nickname *the Brave* alludes to his martial exploits. However, his most important accomplishments were the relative peace enjoyed by the country during his long reign and the support he gave to the Portuguese Navy. Afonso granted public funding to raise a proper commercial fleet and ordered the first Portuguese maritime explorations. The conflict with Pedro, and the explorations he initiated, eventually became the foundation of the Portuguese national epic, *Os Lusíadas* by Luís de Camões.

The dramatic circumstances of the relationship between father and son and Inês de Castro was used as the basis for the plot of more than twenty operas and ballets, as well as the "Nise lastimosa" and "Nise laureada" (1577) by Jerónimo Bermúdez, 'Reinar despues de morir' by Luís Vélez de Guevara, "Inez de Castro" by Mary Russell Mitford, and *La Reine morte* (The Dead Queen) by Henry de Montherlant. The story with its tragic denouement is immortalized in several plays and poems in Portuguese, such as *The Lusíadas* by Luís de Camões (canto iii, stanzas 118-135), and in Spanish, including *Nise lastimosa* and *Nise laureada* (1577) by Jerónimo Bermúdez, *Reinar despues de morir* by Luís Vélez de Guevara, as well as a play by French playwright Henry de Montherlant called *La Reine morte* (The Dead Queen). Mary Russell Mitford also wrote a drama based on the story entitled *Inez de Castro*. *Inês de Castro* is a novel by Maria Pilar Queralt del Hierro in Spanish and Portuguese.

# Ancestry



# Marriage and descendants

On 12 September 1309,<sup>[4][5]</sup> Afonso married Beatrice of Castile, daughter of Sancho IV of Castile, and María de Molina,<sup>[4][6]</sup> and had four sons and three daughters. Afonso broke the tradition of previous kings and did not have any children out of wedlock.<sup>[b][c][d]</sup>

- Maria (1313 – 18 January 1357),<sup>[5][9][5]</sup> was the wife of Alfonso XI of Castile,<sup>[8]</sup> and mother of the future king Peter I of Castile. Due to the affair of her husband with his mistress Leonor de Guzmán "it was an unfortunate union from the start, contributing to dampening the relations of both kingdoms";<sup>[10]</sup>
- Afonso (1315–1317), heir to the throne, died in his infancy.<sup>[5][8]</sup> Buried at the disappeared Convento das Donas of the Dominican Order in Santarém;<sup>[11]</sup>
- Denis (born 12 February 1317), heir to the throne, died a few months after his birth,<sup>[5][8]</sup> and was buried in Alcobaça Monastery;<sup>[11]</sup>
- Peter (8 April 1320 – 18 January 1367), the first surviving male offspring, he succeeded his father.<sup>[5] [8]</sup> When his wife Constance died in 1345, Queen Beatrice took care of the education of the two orphans, the *infantes* Maria and Ferdinand, who later reigned as King Ferdinand I of Portugal;<sup>[12]</sup>
- Isabel (21 December 1324<sup>[5]</sup> – 11 July 1326), buried at the Monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha in Coimbra;<sup>[8][11]</sup>
- John (23 September 1326 – 21 June 1327), buried at the Monastery of São Dinis de Odivelas;<sup>[8]</sup>
- Eleanor (1328–1348), born in the same year as her sister Maria's wedding,<sup>[5]</sup> she married King Peter IV of Aragon in November 1347 and died a year after her marriage succumbing to the Black Death.<sup>[13][8]</sup>

## Notes

- a. English: *Alphonzo* or *Alphonse*, or *Affonso* (Archaic Portuguese), *Alfonso* or *Alphonso* (Portuguese-Galician) or *Alphonsus* (Latin).
- b. "We assume that after the marriage of dona Beatriz and don Alfonso IV, married life was harmonious (...) based on the fact that D. Afonso IV did not have any bastard children, thereby breaking a long family tradition" (loose translation)<sup>[7]</sup>
- c. "Perhaps since he had so many problems with those of his father, D. Afonso did not have any illegitimate children." (loose translation)<sup>[8]</sup>
- d. "There are no known bastard children of the king. Two possible explanations could be the ties of profound esteem, friendship and respect that existed because he had been raised and had lived from a very early age with his future wife or, perhaps, because he wanted to avoid that his heirs had the same problems that he had had with his bastard brothers". (loose translation)<sup>[5]</sup>

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2. *Spain and Portugal*, Graeme Mercer Adam ed., J. D. Morris, 1906 (<https://books.google.com/books?id=NdgCAAAYAAJ&pg=PA560>)
3.  One or more of the preceding sentences incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Hannay, David (1911). "Alphonso s.v. Alphonso IV.". In Chisholm, Hugh. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. **1** (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 733.
4. Sousa 1735, p. 312.
5. Rodrigues Oliveira 2010, p. 217.
6. Rodrigues Oliveira 2010, p. 215.
7. Lourenço Menino 2008, p. 356.
8. Sotto Mayor Pizarro 1997, p. 201.
9. Sousa 1735, pp. 317 y 322.
10. Rodrigues Oliveira 2010, p. 218.
11. Sousa 1735, p. 315.
12. Rodrigues Oliveira 2010, pp. 228-229.
13. Rodrigues Oliveira 2010, pp. 217, 220.

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|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Afonso IV of Portugal</b><br><b>House of Burgundy</b><br><b>Born:</b> 8 February 1291 <b>Died:</b> 28 May 1357 Capetian dynasty |  |                                |
| <b>Regnal titles</b>   |  |                                |
| Preceded by<br><b>Denis</b>  | <b>King of Portugal and the Algarve</b><br>1325–1357 | Succeeded by<br><b>Peter I</b> |

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