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AUTHOR'S NOTE

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- 1 Portuguese expeditions to Africa in the 15th century were preceded by thoughts of death, imaginings of death and fear of death. The danger and deadly risk of these expeditions were weighed before they began¹. As Gomes Eanes de Zurara wrote of sailors contemplating the circumnavigation of Cape No in the vicinity of Bojador, “since the hazarding of this attempt seemed to threaten the last evil of all, there was great doubt as to who would be the first to risk his life in such venture”. They also wondered “what profit can result to the Infant from the perdition of our souls as well as of our bodies? [...]”. Sailors were convinced that venturing beyond that cape and sailing along an empty, uninhabited and unfriendly land would be suicidal, both because of the climate and because of the impossibility of returning to Portugal (de Zurara 1899 vol. 1: 31, 1960: 69, 1981: 67-68).
- 2 The barrier was overcome, however. The Portuguese circumnavigated the dangerous cape and learned how to sail back. Furthermore, as the knight Diogo Gomes, one of the bold ones, wrote in his memoirs, their imaginings of the unknown land had been mistaken. Beyond the empty coast there was an area of wonderful greenery, with “such a number of peoples, as is not to be believed” (Gomes 1959: 27)².

- 3 The lands and peoples the explorers discovered were other than had been thought, but death did indeed turn out to be a constant accompaniment of expeditions. People died on account of the climate, the difficulties of sailing, and from many other reasons they could not have imagined before the expedition began. Death came to both sides, the European and the African, that were brought into contact as a result of the expeditions of discovery.
- 4 The purpose of this article is to describe the events that resulted in death and to analyse attitudes toward death, ways of reacting to death, the causes on both the European and African sides, and the consequences of the death of an individual or group for those who remained alive. As in the case of all other manifestations of early European-African contacts, it is much harder for us to understand and analyse the phenomena on the African side than on the European. One reason is the type of source material available; all the texts we have were written by Europeans. There are descriptions in these of the deaths of Africans, but the authors did not analyse—because they could not analyse—the consequences of these deaths for African society, nor the manner in which Africans experienced the deaths of persons close to them, nor the manner in which they were commemorated. Yet in spite of the one-sidedness of the source materials, certain conclusions concerning African culture would seem to be possible.
- 5 In the earliest period of Portuguese expeditions to Africa, particularly in the decade in which the circumnavigation of Cape Bojador was begun (1434), the expeditions were military in nature. They were led by knights and squires from Henry the Navigator's entourage who wanted to acquire fame and the recognition of their patron, as well as war spoils. Initially, the expeditions were considered an extension of the *reconquista*, the continuation of the battle with the Moors, and even as a sort of crusade (de Zurara 1960: 167, 1981: 308; Malowist 1964: 11-40). The knights landed from caravels and attacked the local population, took their goods and took people into slavery. In these struggles, both Portuguese and Africans perished.
- 6 In 1436, on the Rio de Ouro (to the south of Cape Bojador), two of Prince Henry's squires landed. They were members of an expedition led by Captain Afonso Gonçalves Baldaia, and were supposed to catch a prisoner to serve as a source of information for the explorers. They saw and attacked a group of 19 persons. In the fight, one of the squires received a spear wound in the leg and the other wounded one of the Africans, but they did not manage to take anyone prisoner. These events were described by the chronicler de Zurara (1960: 75, 1981: 76). It is characteristic that Diogo Gomes, a knight from Prince Henry's circle who wrote later, claimed that in revenge for the wounding of one of the young men, the second had killed the African (the "Saracen", he wrote) (Gomes 1959: 17). Thus in the second, later description, the services of the brave squire were increased. Gomes considered the killing of an opponent to be highly laudable. The change in the events described reveals the mentality of the knights participating in the expeditions. Killing an opponent was considered to be proof of military efficiency and was worthy of commemoration. De Zurara's description seems more credible than Gomes's. But de Zurara, in a further part of the chronicle, relates very numerous instances of attacks on Africans and the killing of Africans. If killing was not the chief aim of the attackers, it was the inseparable consequence of falling upon Africans for the purpose of robbing them and abducting them into slavery.
- 7 In 1441, Nuno Tristão, after reaching the Rio de Ouro, led a group of knights to land. The Portuguese moved off at night and came upon a camp of sleeping Berber nomads. They

surrounded the camp and attacked with cries of “Portugal” and “Saint James”. The surprised nomads defended themselves with their spears. Nuno Tristão himself engaged in hand-to-hand combat with one of them; the African fought bravely and did not give way until he was killed. Three others were also killed, and ten Africans—men, women and children—were taken into captivity. De Zurara (1899: 48, 1960: 84-85, 1981: 94) considered that “it is not to be doubted that they would have slain and taken many more, if they had all fallen on together at the first time”.

- 8 Among Nuno Tristão’s ten companions, the exertions of Gomes Vinagre, a youth from Prince Henry’s court, who can be identified as the Diogo Gomes (*ibid.* 1960: 85, n. 2) who later wrote his reminiscences of the expedition, were particularly worthy of mention, as were those of Prince Henry’s squire, Gonçalo da Sintra, who later died in a fight with the Moors on the island of Tider. We’ll write more about him below.
- 9 Successive Portuguese expeditions proceeded similarly. In 1443, during an expedition of the same Nuno Tristão to the south of Cap Blanc, near the island of Arguin, the Portuguese caught sight of 25 boats. At the sight of the newcomers, the Africans in the boats began to flee in such haste that in the confusion several were drowned. Others the Portuguese managed to take into captivity (*ibid.* 1899: 59, 1960: 94, 1981: 110). In 1444, an expedition led by Lançarote and Gil Eanes attacked a village of Berber fishing people, the Azenegs, on one of the islands in the bay of Arguin. The villagers, seeing the strangers, ran out in front of the huts with the women and children. The Portuguese, “shouting out St. James, St. George, Portugal, at once attacked them, killing and taking all they could”. The Africans fled in fright; some drowned in the sea. De Zurara (1899: 66, 1960: 99, 1981: 120-121) comments as follows: “And at last our Lord God, who giveth a reward for every good deed, willed that for the toil that they had undergone in his service, they should that day obtain victory over their enemies, as well as a guerdon and a payment for all their labour and expense; for they took captive of those Moors, what with men, women, and children, 165, besides those that perished and were killed.”
- 10 Human hunting continued during the expedition, and cost further mortalities among the Azenegs. Near the island of Tider, the Portuguese attacked a dozen or more boats full of people: “and, moved with pity, although they were heathen who were going in these boats, they sought to kill but few of them. But it is not to be doubted that many, who in their terror forsook their boats, perished in the sea [...] they took fourteen; so that those who were captured in those two days, apart from some who were killed, were in all forty-eight”, wrote de Zurara (1899: 73-74, 1960: 104, 1981: 134). Gil Eanes encouraged his crew to further efforts. More prisoners were caught, but then the Portuguese encountered the resistance of around 300 “Moors” and after that battle they stopped hunting. The caravels sailed to Cap Blanc, where they captured Azenegs again. A fight ensued and 14 persons were taken, “apart from some who were killed”. Having so much the advantage in armour and fighting skills, none of the Portuguese perished (*ibid.* 1960: 107, 1981: 138-139), but their plundering raids and snatching of slaves caused many deaths among the Africans, who were killed in battle or perished in flight.
- 11 De Zurara (1899: 85, 1960: 111-112, 1981: 151) writes that he was glad of the baptism of those Africans who were transported to Portugal and of the saving of their souls. He noted, however, that many of them soon died, since “their bellies began to swell, and for a time they were ill: until they were accustomed to the nature of the country; but some of them were so made that they were not able to endure it and died, but as Christians”. Death in Portugal was often the fate of slaves, even those who were very well cared for,

not only on account of the different climate and food, but also because of their psychological state and despair (*ibid.* 1960: 110-111, 1981: 146-147, 149). The crew of the caravel captained by Dinis Dias, part of an expedition of many caravels in 1445, caught a youth and his sister by the Senegal River. The boy was offered to Prince Henry, who had him baptised, instructed in the faith, and taught to read and write. The boy was so gifted that “many Christians there be who have not this knowledge as perfectly as he had”. Prince Henry wanted to send him back to Africa with a Christian mission, but the youth died before reaching maturity (*ibid.* 1899: 179, 1960: 179-180, 1981: 339).

- 12 After a period of surprise attacks, the Portuguese raids in Africa began to meet with organised resistance. In 1445, Prince Henry placed the above-mentioned Gonalo da Sintra at the head of an expedition. De Zurara (1899: 87-91, 1960: 113-116, 1981: 155-162) devotes a separate chapter of his chronicle to his death. Da Sintra’s task was to reach as far as Guinea, that is, to the “Land of the Blacks”.
- 13 However, after reaching Cap Blanc, he decided, against the advice of his companions, to catch slaves. He headed the caravel to the island of Arguin, but the locals had been forewarned. In an abandoned village, the Portuguese found only a single girl. They moved on thus toward the neighbouring island of Tider. The expedition’s interpreter, a slave of Azeneg descent, took advantage of the occasion to flee to his people. Thus the Azenegs were not only forewarned, they had been given exact information about their opponents; only they didn’t believe what the runaway interpreter told them, so one bold fellow went to the caravel and gave it to be understood that he wanted to sail to Portugal. He was kept under guard but during the night he managed to escape and was able to confirm the interpreter’s story. In spite of these events, Gonalo da Sintra, accompanied by twelve of his best men, took a boat to one of the islands. The stay on the island lengthened due to the incoming tide. When the tide turned, the Portuguese wanted to return to the caravel, but were suddenly attacked. The fight, according to de Zurara, was unequal. “The enemy were 200 in number and our men but twelve, without hope of succour, they were very easily overcome.” The Portuguese fought bravely, causing losses among the enemy, but they could not overcome the enemy’s advantage. Gonalo da Sintra and seven of his companions perished. De Zurara gives the names of four of them: they were Prince Henry’s two pages, Lopo Caldeira and Lopo de Alvelos, his stirrup-bearer Jorge, the caravel’s pilot, Alvaro Gonalves, and three nameless sailors from the ship’s crew. “And in truth”, adds de Zurara, “I wish to make no difference between them, for they all died fighting, without one of them turning back a foot; and although the youths of the Household and the equerry knew how to swim and so to escape, [from other sections of the chronicle, we know that da Sintra did not know how to swim—MT] yet they would never abandon their captain, but they bravely received burial around him”. He did, however, treat the fallen very differently, in omitting the names of the sailors, persons of lower social position. He ends his description of the deaths of these eight people with a sentence of Latin prayer: “*Habeat Deus animam quam creavit et naturam quod suum est*” (*ibid.* 1960: 116, n. 3, 1981: 162). Five persons of the party managed to return to the caravel. After such losses, the caravel returned to Portugal.
- 14 The same events were described a little differently by Diogo Gomes. According to him, da Sintra and his companions landed on the island of Tider and attacked the “Saracens-Azenegs”, who ran away in panic. Gonalo da Sintra, pursuing some women, ran into the water, where they threw mud at him until he couldn’t see. Then the men fell on him and

killed him. The remaining Portuguese returned to their caravel and sailed home (Gomes 1959: 23).

- 15 The difference in the descriptions of these events would seem to be less important than the similarity. In both cases, we are dealing with the narrative of the death of specific persons, mentioned by name. De Zurara mentions several of them; Gomes remembered only the leader. No one noted the names of the sailors.
- 16 Gonçalo da Sintra's death made a large impression on the chronicler, but the fallen knight did not fit the category of model hero. He did not follow Prince Henry's instructions; he preferred to catch slaves than sail to Guinea. In Prince Henry's court, the causes of this setback and the death of the leader and seven members of the expedition were analysed. De Zurara (1960: 116-118, 1981: 163-167) collected and quoted the conclusions that were drawn. According to the chronicler, it was necessary to: follow instructions, keep guard on hostages and interpreters, not trust strangers—regardless of the reasons given for their visit to the caravel, listen to the advice of one's companions, not go on land if it was known that the enemy had precise information, and finally, pay attention to the tide, particularly if one didn't know how to swim.
- 17 These conclusions did not protect the Portuguese from further losses. The next expedition in 1445 proceeded like the earlier one. Slaves were caught and those resisting were killed (*ibid.* 1960: 139, 145, 150, 1981: 218, 236-238, 255). However, after some initial successes, the expedition ended in defeat. The Portuguese sailed by boat to this same island of Tider, landed and spread out over the terrain, seeking prey. They were then attacked by a number of Berbers, who were well prepared to fight. The Portuguese retreated toward their boats and in the panic some of the men managed to sail away in two boats, but the third boat, which had been pulled up onto the shore, could not be pushed into the water. Those who knew how rushed into the ocean and escaped by swimming. Abandoned by their comrades, the seven who remained on land perished in the fight (*ibid.* 1960: 153-154, 1981: 264-268). De Zurara (1960: 155-156, 162, 1981: 269-272, 287-288) prays for their souls, expresses his sorrow, reminds his readers that the cause of their death was their lack of caution, but he does not mention their names. He calls instead for vengeance.
- 18 The response to this defeat was an expedition of fourteen caravels under the leadership of Lançarote. After hesitations and consultations, the "Moors" were attacked on the island of Tider. The expedition was very well armed; the division of more than three hundred men had bows, crossbows, pikes, and, of course, swords. They also had a crusader banner (*ibid.* 1960: 167, 1981: 308). The Portuguese dispersed the group of Africans they encountered. Some of the Africans escaped by swimming, eight were killed, and four were captured. Among the Portuguese, heavy wounds were received by a "man from Lagos", who had wanted to distinguish himself and attacked the enemy a bit too boldly. He died on the ship, on the way back to Portugal. "May the Lord God receive his soul into the company of the saints", de Zurara prays for him (1899: 165, 1960: 168, 1981: 309-310).
- 19 Another group of caravels set off a little later than the previous ones, and also attacked the Moors on Tider. The Moors fought very bravely, because they fought "in defence of their women and children, and still more for the salvation of their own lives". Twelve Africans died in the fight, others were forced to flee. In the pursuit many more were killed, and 57 were taken prisoner. After this victory, the plundering of the villages and killing of resisters began (*ibid.* 1899: 170, 1960: 171-172, 1981: 321-323).

- 20 Thus in 1445, the centre of Berber opposition (the Azeneg fishing people, perhaps supported by the nomads of the Sahara) was the area around Arguin, and particularly the island of Tider. More Africans died there, but the first Portuguese were also killed.
- 21 During one of the expeditions to the Saharan coast inhabited by Berbers, an event of such cruelty occurred that it made an impression even on de Zurara, who usually accepted the death of locals as a natural consequence of the expedition. The Portuguese landed in the vicinity of the cape called at the time St. Anna, halfway along the coast between Arguin and the mouth of the Senegal. They captured a number of prisoners and wanted to lead them away, but one woman refused to walk, threw herself on the ground and resisted even though she was pulled by the hair and legs. It was decided to tie her up and return for her on the morrow, after the hunting for slaves was finishing. It turned out, however, that they lacked the time to return for the woman, and she was left in the wilderness to a certain and cruel death (*ibid.* 1960: 205, 1981: 413-415).
- 22 Through Nuno Tristão's expedition to the "Land of the Blacks" and Dinis Dias's expedition to Cape Verde in 1444, the Portuguese reached coasts inhabited by Sub-Saharan Africans (da Mota 1947: 315-316; de Zurara 1960: 120-125, 1981: 171-177). It was there that Gomes Pires, after a raid in the vicinity of Arguin, decided to sail. This opened a new stage in the Portuguese's struggle with the Africans. The inhabitants living to the south of the mouth of the Senegal were much more numerous than the Berber Azenegs and better organised, in chiefdoms and early forms of states (Boulegue 1987: 37-75; Tymowski 2009: 10-11, 128-135). They could thus put up very stiff resistance to the attacking Portuguese. The explorers called attention to the better armed "Guineans" and to the strong build of their bodies—which made them very dangerous in battle (Gomes 1959: 27, 29; de Zurara 1960: 122-124, 147, 180-181, 206, 212, 1981: 175-177, 244, 340-344, 417-419, 435-436). These Africans fought both collectively and individually; even the women defended themselves, evoking admiration for the strength and determination of their resistance (*ibid.* 1960: 242, 1981: 495-496). But most important was the fighting organisation of the Africans, their ingenious operations and ambushes (*ibid.* 1960: 207-209, 1981: 420, 425, 427). Seeing such organised defence, the Portuguese often withdrew without fighting (*ibid.* 1960: 189, 206, 209, 1981: 365-366, 418, 427-428). They met too with a new danger, from poisoned arrows—a weapon that evoked considerable fear (*ibid.* 1960: 189, 206, 212, 243, 1981: 365-366, 418-419, 436, 496-497; Gomes 1959: 29). Abducting people from the "Land of the Blacks" was more dangerous and less fruitful than abducting them from among the Berbers. The greatest mark was made by the death of Nuno Tristão in 1446 and the death of the Danish knight Valarte in 1447. De devotes considerable space to these events, describing them in great detail.
- 23 The chronicler bids farewell to Nuno Tristão, one of the most outstanding captains of the early period of expeditions, with unusual emotion. It is probable that the chronicler was making use of a report of the unfortunate expedition of 1446 drawn up by Aires Tinoco, the ship's writer of Nuno Tristão's caravel (de Zurara 1960: 237, n. 1; Coutinho 1949: 1-4; Dias Dinis 1949: 407; Duarte 1952: 645-654). The report was official in character, however, and de Zurara (1899: 252-253, 1960: 237, 1981: 482-483) supplemented the text with the expression of his sentiments. "And of a surety I could not pass it by without tears, did I not know, almost by divine forecast, the eternal delight his soul tasteth [...]"
- 24 According to de Zurara, in life Nuno Tristão was a "noble knight". He perfectly understood the desires and intentions of Prince Henry, as he had been raised since childhood in his home. After telling of the knight's death, de Zurara writes of his

immortal soul and of the heavenly praise deserved by all who died in Africa in the service of God. The introduction to the chapter on Nuno Tristão's death is thus a valediction to the knight, a testimony to his earthly services and immortal fame, and also an expression of hope for his reward in heaven. Only after this part, does the detailed description of the expedition begin (de Zurara 1960: 38-241, 1981: 484-491; da Mota 1946: 22-65).

- 25 Nuno Tristão, after sailing around Cape Verde, reached the mouth of a river which has been identified as the Salum. Two boats were dropped into the water from the caravel, 22 people climbed in and travelled up the river. They had not yet reached land when they were surrounded by 12 boats carrying around 70-80 Guineans—doubtless from the Serer tribe—armed with bows and arrows. One of the boats got ahead of the Portuguese and landed on the bank, and the occupants then shot at the Portuguese from the shore. Other boats surrounded the Portuguese on the water. The Portuguese were in danger of poisoned arrows from all sides. Four died in the boats; others, including some who were injured, made it back to the caravel. But the arrows kept coming so thick that they couldn't draw anchor to sail away. In the end, the anchor line was cut, the empty boats were abandoned, and the caravel escaped. Of the 22 in the boats, only two survived. The rest died from the poisoned arrows "for that poison was so artfully composed that a slight wound, if it only let blood, brought men to their last end". Among the dead were Nuno Tristão and the knights João Correia, Duarte de Holanda, Estevão de Almeida, Diogo Machado—all nobly born, young and raised in Prince Henry's court—"and seamen and others of the ship's company". Of seven persons who remained on the caravel, two were wounded when they tried to raise the anchor and later died. Five were saved, including two from the boat's crew, a total of seven persons. Among these were the cabin boy, who was very skilled in the art of sailing; Prince Henry's page, the above-mentioned Aires Tinoco, who was acting as ship's writer; a young Guinean, who had been enslaved at some time and was participating in the expedition; and two very young boys, assistants to the fallen squires. These seven persons, headed by the two inexperienced youths (the cabin-boy and the writer) sailed for two months, and, in spite of the enormous difficulties, managed to reach Portugal. They brought Prince Henry news of the death of Nuno Tristão and the other members of the crew, causing him great sorrow. The bodies of the dead, including that of Nuno Tristão, had been thrown in the sea. De Zurara consoles himself and his readers with the thought that between being buried on land or in the sea, where the body finds its grave "in the bellies of fish", there is no difference.
- 26 At the Final Judgement, it is our deeds that will count. Referring to the papal bull of 19 December 1442, which granted a pardon to those who perished in Africa, de Zurara (1899: 253-257, 1960: 240, 1981: 488-490) expresses his certainty that Nuno Tristão will be saved.
- 27 During the next expedition, in 1446, Alvaro Fernandes reached Cabo dos Mastos, between Cape Verde and the mouth of the Salum. This was territory settled by the Serers who had killed Nuno Tristão. The Portuguese approached a village and the inhabitants came out preparing for battle. Among them was a warrior distinguished by his stature, armed with a spear and a large shield. Alvaro Fernandes guessed that the man was the village chief, and decided to kill him. He attacked the man suddenly, piercing him with his lance. He then took the man's shield and lance, later bringing them to Prince Henry as a trophy. But the Portuguese did not dare to attack the village and returned to the caravel. They sailed then along the coast and reached the mouth of a river that is harder to identify, doubtless somewhere between Casamance and Cacheu. As usual, they set off by boat up the river and were attacked by several boatloads of Guineans. Afraid of poisoned arrows

and spears, they fled toward the caravel, but when one of the African boats got ahead of the others in pursuit, the Portuguese turned about and attacked. In the fight, Alvaro Fernandez was wounded in the thigh. But having by now experience of such wounds, he quickly pulled out the arrow and washed the wound with urine, then with olive oil and an antidote he had with him. Although he was sick for several days, he did not die (*ibid.* 1960: 241-243, 1981: 493-497).

- 28 One other expedition, composed of nine caravels, set off for Africa in 1446. Several of the caravels sailed to the mouth of a river situated to the south of Cape Verde. It might have been the Rio Grande (currently one of the branches of the mouth of the river Geba) or the Casamance, or even the Gambia. 15 persons landed, with Diogo Afonso at their head. When the venturers pushed into the dense forest, they were set upon by Guineans armed with bows and arrows and spears. Five Europeans were killed on the spot, among whom—as de Zurara notes—were two Portuguese and three foreigners. Two persons were wounded. The chronicler does not mention any losses on the African side. One of the captains of the caravels, an experienced participant of other expeditions, came to the aid of the combatants. The Portuguese retreated, fighting as they withdrew. De Zurara lists the names of four other knights whose actions were worthy of mention in this struggle.
- 29 The danger was so great that it was decided to return to the caravel and leave the bodies of the killed, “among the thickness of the trees, and their souls departed to see the things of the other world; and may it please God, if they are not yet in His holy kingdom, to take them to Himself” (*ibid.* 1899: 265, 1960: 246-247, 1981: 503-504). The chronicler’s lofty words contrast with the sad and down-to-earth necessity of abandoning the bodies. The fallen were certainly not prominent members of the expedition, since de Zurara does not even give their names, concentrating instead on those who fought successfully and got away with their lives.
- 30 The expedition’s participants, wanting to avenge themselves for the defeat, decided to attack the “Moors” on the way back, and took 48 prisoners in the area around Arguin. One of the caravels sailed to the Canary Islands, where two women were seized. A battle ensued in which Diogo Gonçalves particularly distinguished himself, killing seven Canary Islanders with a crossbow, including one of their “kings”. One of the two captured women died on the caravel before the ship reached Portugal (*ibid.*).
- 31 In the final chapters of the chronicle, de Zurara describes the Portuguese attempts to establish trading contacts with the Africans. The change in behaviour was recommended by Prince Henry, who saw a lack of prospects for further plunder (*ibid.* 1960: 255, 1981: 527-528; Gomes 1959: 25; Ca da Mosto 1966: 11-13). These attempts were initially unsuccessful. Trade was often begun, but it happened that battle erupted nevertheless. During one of these conflicts, a certain Portuguese was heavily wounded and died a few days later on the ship, on the return voyage (de Zurara 1960: 189, 249-251, 256, 1981: 365-366, 508-513, 530).
- 32 Another victim of conflict with the Africans was the Danish knight Valarte, who had come to Portugal to fight with the Moors. With Henry the Navigator’s approval, he went to Africa in 1447. His caravel reached the land of the Serers on the Salum River (da Mota 1946: 298-301).
- 33 There had been bloody fighting in the area earlier. Valarte had the task of making peaceful contacts with the local chief or king. He carried with him a letter from Prince Henry on matters of faith and there was an interpreter on the caravel. After reaching the

place, Valarte held talks with a local chief named Guitenya, who recognised the higher authority of a paramount chief named Boor (*ibid.*: 302-304; de Zurara 1899: 280-284, 1960: 257-262, 1981: 533-543; Tymowski 2008: 61-74). Thus Valarte had reached the peripheral area of some Serer chiefdom. He wanted to show the letter to this Boor, but he was told that a war was going on in the interior of the country and contact with him was impossible. Valarte managed, however, to begin a trade in elephant ivory with Guitenya. Yet the inhabitants of the village, collected at succeeding councils and rallies, were unable to agree on their further behaviour toward the newcomers. Two persons, named Satam and Minef, who enjoyed prestige among the locals, appeared and were against the contacts. Minef was probably a priest. In turn, a cousin of Guitenya's, Amallam, supported the idea of trade, but he wanted his relative to be supplanted by himself. While Guitenya was on the spot, he was able to guarantee the Portuguese's safety. Unaware of the complexity of the situation, Valarte asked him for more elephant ivory. When Guitenya went hunting, the locals inclined to the opinion of Satam and Minef. For their ambush, they chose a moment when the boat with Valarte and his Portuguese companions had come a bit too close to the beach and come aground. There was no question of the Portuguese making a fast getaway. One of the crew members managed to throw himself in the water and swim to the caravel. Looking back, he saw one of the Portuguese had already been killed and Valarte and his remaining companions were still fighting. No one ever saw them again. The captain of the caravel, Fernão Afonso, decided to return at once to Portugal.

- 34 De Zurara describes the negotiations, trade, and death of Valarte and other members of the expedition very precisely. Doubtless he made use of the report written after the ship's return, including, clearly, the story of the swimmer who escaped death. In spite of the exactness of the description, de Zurara noted only the name of Valarte and of the captain, who did not die.
- 35 The others who perished remain nameless. The name of the Danish knight and the circumstances of his death were given later by Diogo Gomes (1959: 31) and João de Barros (1945: 63-65).
- 36 The catastrophe of the Valarte expedition, described so extensively, ends the information in de Zurara's chronicle about the deaths of Portuguese and other Europeans in their service and about the deaths of Africans during the early voyages of discovery, between 1434 and 1447. A comparison of de Zurara's chronicle with the descriptions of other early expeditions and the narratives of their participants testifies to the one-sidedness of the chronicler. He transmits a great deal of information to us, but it concerns almost exclusively death as a result of battle between Europeans and Africans. He gives, additionally, a few pieces of information about the deaths of slaves who were overcome by their afflictions.
- 37 Even in the narrative and reminiscences of the knight Diogo Gomes, who personally participated in expeditions to Africa, other causes for death are given besides battle. Gomes (1959: 29, 31) does indeed admire and praise the plunderers; he writes about those who fell. The killing of an opponent was a service worthy of recognition. But he adds other causes of death in Africa—diseases and the unbearable climate—which de Zurara doesn't mention at all. Gomes (1959: 33-45) describes in detail the expedition in 1456 on the Gambia and Rio Grande in which he himself participated (da Mota 1946: 470-449 [rivers' identification]). It was the time of trade already, and not of battle. According to Gomes (1959: 31, 35, 43), the conflicts had been calmed even with those African leaders

who were known to have killed Portuguese previously. During Gomes' expedition, two caravels anchored close to the mouth of the Gambia, and he, on a third, sailed up the river to Cantor, the last place before the rapids that a caravel could reach (da Mota 1946: 481-484). The trade, talks and collecting of information lasted a fairly long time. People on Gomes' vessel were very tired from the heat, thus the caravel sailed back toward the remaining two. It turned out that on one, ten people had already died, the captain was very ill, others were ill, and only three persons were healthy. On the other caravel, anchored closest to the mouth of the river, five people had died (Gomes 1959: 41).

- 38 The caravels were small ships. Their crews numbered 20 to 30 persons (de Zurara 1960: 239, 1981: 486; the crew composed by 29 persons)³. The losses caused by illness, described by Diogo Gomes, were thus very great, larger even than in the case of battle.
- 39 The Venetian Alvise da Ca da Mosto (1966: 96; English quotation 1937: 66) also wrote about diseases as the cause of death. In his account of a second journey in 1456, in the part concerning sailing up the Gambia, he mentions the death of one of the sailors, "who had been prostrated many days by fever". This death grieved the crew greatly. The sailor was buried on an island in the river, and as his name was Andrea, the island was named St. Andrew's Isola di Sancto Andrea). Ca da Mosto (1966: 101-102) wrote about fevers, high temperatures and diarrhoea as diseases caused by the heat and unaccustomed food. During the voyage on the Gambia, 11 days after sailing from the mouth of the river, many sailors were suffering from these diseases.
- 40 It is hard to believe that the crews of the expeditions described earlier by de Zurara did not struggle with the same diseases and ensuing deaths. Perhaps the plundering raids were shorter than the trading expeditions, but the number of days spent on the Gambia given by Gomes and Ca da Mosto were also not great. It is more likely that for de Zurara, death in battle was laudable and noteworthy, while death as a result of disease was not glorious, so he didn't write about it.
- 41 Ca da Mosto, like Gomes, was not so one-sided. He also noted the deaths in battle, although as a merchant he tried to avoid armed conflicts. Faced with aggression he tried to run away, and defended himself only in the case of necessity. During the first voyage, in 1455, he also reached the river Salum and the area settled by the Serers. Nuno Tristão had died in a fight with these people, as had Valarte. The Serers had consistently refused proposals to make trading contacts.
- 42 It was the same in the case of Ca da Mosto's expedition. After reaching the Salum, it was decided to send the interpreter to land. It was known that his task was dangerous. A boat carried him to the beach and retreated to deep water. Then many armed Africans came out of the woods. After a short conversation with the interpreter, they fell upon him and killed him. A terrified Ca da Mosto (1966: 77-78), seeing that trade with these people wasn't possible, sailed away as fast as he could. The caravels headed south and reached the Gambia. A scouting party was sent out in a boat, with the order to flee in the case of danger. Poisoned arrows were particularly feared. The boat was approached by a canoe carrying 20-30 Africans, who restricted themselves to observing the arrivals. The next day, the three caravels set off up the river and were surrounded by 15 large canoes with around 130-150 armed men, who began to shoot arrows at the caravels. The ships replied with shots from four bombards, but no harm was done to the attackers. The crossbow, however, was a mortal weapon. One of the Africans, shot in the chest, fell dead, but the fervour of the attackers was not damped. Since the crossbows were causing them further losses, all the canoes attacked the smallest caravel, trying to separate it from the others.

These others, however, came to its succour and repulsed the Africans. Ca da Mosto does not mention the death of any of the Europeans. When the battle subsided, the interpreters began to shout to the Africans, explaining the peaceful intentions of the newcomers. One of the canoes approached the caravels. The Africans stated that they already knew about the newcomers and about their trade on the Senegal. They knew that they bought slaves, who then disappeared. They believed thus that the newcomers were cannibals and did not want to have any contact with them, but rather wanted to kill them all (*ibid.*: 83-85). Given the situation, the caravels sailed back to Portugal.

43 Thus Africans also died in battle at the hands of Europeans who, as merchants, did not want to fight but were forced to do so. This was the result of the erroneous and horrible—but justified given the aggression of the earlier expeditions—news about the Europeans that was circulating among the Africans.

44 In Diogo Gomes' reminiscences, in addition to the descriptions of the above instances of death in battle or as a result of illnesses, there is a description of a situation which did not end in death, but in which death was very close. Gomes saw the great waves of the sea current and tide strike the caravel so hard that the anchor was torn away. The crew members were deeply worried, but fortunately the caravel did not go down and no one drowned.

45 The description of a situation that ended with the sinking of the ship was left by a merchant from Bruges, Eustache Delafosse, who sailed to West Africa in 1480. A ship that sailed before Delafosse's vessel was carrying a certain Henry, factor of Thomas Perrot, another merchant from Bruges. Beyond Cap Blanc, this ship sailed into a very bad maelstrom ("*gouffre*") and sank. The crew made it to land in a *chaloûpe* and headed toward the Rio de Ouro, but there they perished in a battle with the Moors.

46 E. Delafosse (1992: 20) managed to avoid the maelstrom. It is puzzling that in the other sources we analyse, there are no descriptions of maritime disasters, the sinking of caravels and the associated deaths.

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48 The source materials quoted above are thus certainly not exhaustive, and are in varying degrees one-sided. It is hard to determine which cause killed most Europeans. It can be supposed that in the earliest period of expeditions, the time of plundering raids, death most often occurred in battle. When the intensity of fighting diminished and then the fighting stopped, other causes of death increased and predominated. On the European side, these were diseases produced by the difficult climate and different food. In the early period, the Africans—like the Europeans—died primarily in battle. If they were taken into captivity, they also died on account of diseases and the difference of food and climate in Portugal. Another cause of death was the poor psychological state of the abductees, their feelings of despair and longing for their families. As to the deaths of slaves on the caravels on the trip to Portugal, where these feelings were strongest, we have only isolated pieces of information (de Zurara 1899: 265, 1960: 246-247, 1981: 503-504; Saunders 1982: 14; Russell 2009: 315-328). Judging by the stress and terrible conditions of such journeys, with the crowding of the prisoners, such deaths must have been frequent, but they were not interesting to the authors of the sources and, from their viewpoint, not worth noting.

49 The death of a human being is experienced in various manners, depending on many factors. Above all, the deaths of persons on one's own side are treated differently than the

deaths of persons of the opposing side. The contrast between one's own and the others was in this case very strongly felt. Secondly, the death of a famous person was treated differently than the death of a person who had no social position, fortune or prestige.

- 50 The deaths of famous knights, commanders of expeditions or ship captains were most extensively described: for instance, the deaths of Gonçalo da Sintra, Nuno Tristão and Valarte. In these cases, the death described was the death of an individual, specific, worthy person. This individualism corresponds to the change in mentality occurring in the late middle ages, which has been described and analysed in the literature concerning European attitudes toward death (Alexandre-Bidon 1998; Braet & Verbeke 1983; Lauwers 1999: 771-787)⁴.
- 51 But this individualism concerned prominent individuals; other persons died anonymously and collectively. The attitude to their death was very traditional.
- 52 De Zurara tried to elevate and ritualise the death of outstanding persons. He offered prayers for them and expressed the certainty that they would achieve eternal life in heaven. He increased the circle of persons mentioned by name to knights and squires. As chronicler of the expedition he was very sensitive to the manner in which these peoples' deeds were commemorated. The lack of graves and tombs for the heroes was a painful problem for him. Some of the dead, due to the circumstances, had been abandoned on the field of battle and their bodies could not be recovered. Other bodies could not be transported to Portugal and were thrown in the sea. De Zurara consoled himself and his readers then with the idea of the eternal souls of the fallen. The most important form of commemoration became, in this situation, de Zurara's chronicle itself. On its basis, the heroes' deeds and deaths were remembered by authors of later, 16th century, works: Valentim Fernandes (1938: 48, 126), Duarte Pacheco Pereira (1956: 32-34, 36, 74)⁵ and above all, the great Portuguese historian of exploratory expeditions, João de Barros (1945: 38-39, 59-60).
- 53 Although also individualised, the manner of commemorating the sailor Andrea, participant in the expedition of the Venetian, Ca da Mosto, in 1456 was different. He was buried on an island which was named after his patron saint. Ca da Mosto was by cultural formation a more modern person than de Zurara or Diogo Gomes, as was shown in his attitude to the death of the sailor, who was not a prominent person. Gomes, whose mentality was closer to that of de Zurara, does not give the names of sailors who died of fever; he only gives their number, treating their deaths collectively. On the other hand, he mentions the name of the captain, who was badly ill but still alive. Eustache Delafosse mentions only the factor Henry among the crew of the caravel that was lost, although this was not necessarily a case of treating the crew differently: doubtless Delafosse, as a foreigner, did not know anyone but the said Henry by name.
- 54 In the first phase of African expeditions, death was usually violent. There was no time for the dying to prepare for it, no time for contemplation or for the usual gestures of custom and culture. The dying were not surrounded by the living, saying farewell and holding up hopes of a better world. The late medieval *ars moriendi* could not be realised, either by the dying or by his companions (Tenenti 1952; Włodarski 1987, 1991). Only certain elements of it can be seen in the deaths that occurred as a result of illness and in the farewell to the sailor André. The extended description of the circumstances of death, the valediction to the fallen and prayer for their souls in de Zurara's chronicle thus fulfilled the role—besides having other significance—of at least partially restoring the expected words and gestures of the late medieval culture of dying.

- 55 The chronicler and other authors of accounts expressed numerous feelings related with the deaths of their own people. The feeling of sadness reigned above all, and was often accompanied by tears, the above-mentioned desire to commemorate the fallen dead, admiration for their heroism, fear, anger, the desire for vengeance, and finally the elevation of the death through prayer⁶. In one instance, de Zurara (1960: 154, 1981: 267) expresses more violent feelings—rage and hatred toward those who killed Nuno Tristão. Once he even accuses the “Moors” of cannibalism.
- 56 Death also entailed legal consequences. In this area, we are primarily aware of privileges granted by Portuguese rulers to the widows and children of men who served in Africa. There are no traces of compensation for the losses of poor people. The first instance of such a privilege being granted—compensation for the widow of the knight Pedro Anes Encerrabodes, who died in “Guinea” in the service of the king—was noted in the codex of Portuguese documents concerning expansion in Africa, and is dated 12 December 1453. Afonso V awarded a pension (*teença*) to the widow⁷. In sum, from 1453 to 1500, six privileges were inserted in the codex; the king thereby granted to widows or descendants of knights fallen in Africa either a yearly monetary pension or rights to part of the revenues collected earlier by the deceased from rural estates and royal towns⁸.
- 57 The feelings of pride of those participating in African expeditions were strengthened by papal bulls and by Sextus IV’s brief of 11 September 1481 granting complete pardon to all who died “in Mina Castle in Ethiopia”⁹.
- 58 The death of Africans was experienced by Europeans differently. Above all, it was the death of “a stranger”, an “other”. In the first phase of discovery, it was precisely the Portuguese who brought death, and such killing was regarded as a service and an honour. The deaths of Africans, from the viewpoint of the Portuguese, were anonymous and collective and had to remain thus as the Europeans lacked information about their opponents. This lack of information strengthened the sense of the strangeness and otherness of the Africans. In the descriptions, the number of Africans captured is given, and then the number of those killed. Often the number is replaced by the statement that “many were killed”.
- 59 Killing was not the Portuguese’s goal, only a manner of breaking the resistance of the Africans. The goal was originally to catch slaves, that is, live persons. But on account of the chivalric nature of Zurara’s chronicle, a certain form of individualisation of the deaths of Africans occurs in it. This concerned those who fought bravely for their family, clan or village, who defended their people and bought with their own deaths the time for the others to flee. In Zurara there are descriptions of individual combat with such brave Africans—both Azenegs and Sub-Saharan Africans. Their heroism was honoured the more in that killing such an opponent increased the service of the Portuguese knight. In observing Africans going out to battle in an organised fashion, the Portuguese sought out those who were better armed, whose bearing made them worthy of notice, who appeared to enjoy authority. They then attempted to attack and kill these in first order—both as a battle tactic and in a sort of acknowledgement of the worth of such an opponent.
- 60 Merchants behaved differently. Ca da Mosto (1937: 57, 1966: 80) noted: “[...] we had come thither to trade in the country peacefully and with their approval, which would be more fittingly accomplished by tact than by force.” Therefore he tried to avoid fighting, and to flee from attacks. He fought when flight was impossible. In an armed conflict on the

Gambia, the Venetian, in spite of the heat of the battle, carefully observed the behaviour of the Africans, including their reaction to the death of one of their own.

- 61 Another merchant, Eustache Delafosse (1992: 34), travelled 25 years later, when relations with the Africans had been regulated. Although he observed instances of plundering, which were still occurring, he himself made no such raids nor did he have any intention of killing anyone. The merchants' goals were different than the knights' goals, but above all their methods of operating in Africa were entirely divergent.
- 62 We do not know about the attitudes of Africans to Europeans from direct African sources. We can imagine them from the actions of the Africans and from what European authors have written. We know of two typical African reactions to an unexpected raid: flight or fight. The Azenegs from the Saharan coast of West Africa primarily tried to flee from their assailants. Often the men faced the attacks to give the women and children time to escape. This was a spontaneous reaction, unorganised, the result of an instantaneous decision. In defending themselves, the men of course tried to kill the attackers, but their possibilities were limited. The difference in arms and organisation gave the Portuguese an enormous advantage. From the events on the island of Tider, the conclusion can be drawn that after a certain time the Berbers decided on organised battle. They gathered a few hundred warriors, perhaps both Azeneg fishermen and nomads from the desert, and were victorious against succeeding Portuguese expeditions, killing a number of attackers. We do not know what the Berbers' losses were, although they must have been considerable, in spite of the victory. However, such a mobilisation of all forces could only last a short period. The inhabitants of the coast still had to flee before danger and de Zurara (1960: 142, 146, 164, 172, 192-193, 1981: 230, 241, 296, 322, 375-377) writes of the depopulation of certain areas.
- 63 In contrast to the peoples of the Saharan coast, who lived within the framework of family and segmentary organisations, the population of Sub-Saharan Africa had created (although not on all areas of the Guinea coast) chiefdom organisations with varying degrees of centralisation and early state organisations. In many cases, Sub-Saharan Africans reacted at once to the arrival of the Portuguese in an organised manner. The aim was to kill, or at least to drive off, the newcomers. After a few years—or an even shorter period—of battle, certain peoples, such as the Wolofs, Mandings or Akans, agreed to form trading contacts. Others, including primarily the Serers, rejected all offers of trade and meetings for a very long time and fought furiously against the new arrivals.
- 64 The reason was the unfavourable news about the Portuguese that was spreading in Africa. Often the news preceded the arrival of the Europeans to one or another stretch of the coast. From the viewpoint of the Africans, the newcomers should be killed because they were dangerous and aggressive. It was even imagined that they were cannibals. Therefore, the Africans also became aggressors. Europeans were, for them, not only foreign but monstrous and evil. The will to fight was intensified by the settlement situation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The denseness and continuity of settlement was greater there than in the Sahara; escape to another area was not out of the question, but would involve conflict with other peoples. This was the context of the Africans' courage and uncompromising attitude in battle, as noted by the authors of the accounts, and chiefly by Ca da Mosto.
- 65 On the reactions of Africans to the death of their people we have very meagre information. Some is provided by Ca da Mosto (1937: 34, 59, 1966: 47-48, 83), a penetrating observer of the people with whom he wished to trade. The African warrior was

characterised, in the Venetian's opinion, by "contempt for death". When one of them was killed by an arrow from a crossbow, the others were interested in the unfamiliar missile, not in their fallen comrade. This was a reaction to death during the course of battle, but a general knowledge of African culture allows us to suppose that in extended families and clans, the death of one or several of their members was very deeply felt. In these cultures, great weight is attached to the cult of dead ancestors and to the ties binding the living with the dead. African peoples observe numerous ceremonies concerning death and burials. In the case of battles between Europeans and Africans in the 15th century, the bodies of fallen Africans remained on the field of battle. After the retreat or departure of the Europeans, the local people could recover the body and remove it without difficulty for the performance of the appropriate burial ceremonies.

- 66 The situation in the case of the death of a captured African was entirely different. Such a death—onboard ship on the way to Portugal, or later, in Europe—occurred in the person's complete isolation from his society, and was thus particularly lonely and tragic.
- 67 We are unable to analyse the effect of Africans' deaths on the functioning of their societies in Africa. We can only make hypotheses based on deductions. Most likely, the deaths of young warriors and of the women and children who did not manage to escape were particularly destructive for small clan societies and village communities: especially as the abduction of people into slavery was a social loss similar to death. Such people disappeared from their own societies. This was the case for the Berber Azenegs and for those Sub-Saharan peoples who lived in segmentary organisations, formed of independent villages. The loss of a dozen or even of a few persons was a catastrophe for such a small society. The sources confirm this in relation to the Azenegs. Some of their terrains were depopulated.
- 68 The death of warriors in the armies of chiefdoms or early states was not an exceptional circumstance, however. It was written into the operating methods of such organisations. Ca da Mosto (1937: 33-34, 1966: 47-48) writes about the numerous and bloody wars conducted by the Africans amongst themselves, and parts of de Zurara's chronicle confirm the picture (de Zurara 1960: 259, 1981: 536). For this reason, the deaths of warriors in the armies of chiefdoms and early states was not destructive, but rather a natural event. In African cultures, the social functions and responsibilities of a fallen warrior were taken over by his extended family.
- 69 Among the causes of death of Europeans during the early expeditions to Africa there was one which ensued from relations between Europeans, and was related to European-African relations only indirectly. This was death as a punishment for persons breaking the Portuguese law—the royal monopoly on trade with Africa. The monopoly resulted from the Portuguese discoveries, from their being first to reach Africa, and had been confirmed by papal bulls¹⁰. Foreigners, such as Ca da Mosto, could legally go to Africa only in the service of Henry the Navigator, and after his death in the service of the Portuguese rulers. In addition to the general monopoly, the Portuguese crown also introduced a ban on trading in certain goods, for instance, weapons. Attempts were quickly made to break the monopoly and bans, but such actions were punished by the confiscation of the goods and the death of the traders. Diogo Gomes (1959: 53, 55) tells of a certain merchant, named Prado, who had been trading in Africa illegally and was caught. He was transported to Portugal, where the king condemned him to death by torture. According to W. Blake (1967: 203), Prado was a Castilian merchant.

- 70 The royal document of Dom Afonso of 6 April 1480 ordered the Portuguese captains of caravels to capture anyone trading illegally in Africa and to throw the goods and ship's crew into the sea¹¹. Delafosse, a merchant from Bruges, was more fortunate. His ship was caught somewhat earlier, in January 1480, on the Mina coast, along with two Portuguese caravels which were also trading illegally. He wasn't drowned, but his goods were confiscated, and, as a prisoner, he was ordered to continue trading—only on behalf of the royal treasury. Several of the more important persons from the three captured caravels were treated similarly. The rest of the crew and the poor people were put in one of the captured caravels, given a little water and biscuit, one sail and an anchor, and sent to sea. Their chances of surviving were negligible, but according to Delafosse (1992: 28), they did manage to return. After a period of trading, Delafosse (*ibid.*: 52-54) himself and several other persons were transported to Portugal, tried and condemned to hang. They managed, however, to escape from prison.
- 71 Sometimes offenders transgressing the royal monopoly or ban on trading in certain goods were granted clemency, as is proven by the document of João II of 31 July 1490. The king waived the death penalty for a certain Afonso Rodrigues, condemned earlier for trading in gold and slaves in Sierra Leone¹².
- 72 Other documents containing information about death in the context of Europeans' relations with Africans are the pardons for persons who killed their own or someone else's slave¹³. As it would appear from these documents, slaves in Portugal, as well as those who remained in Africa, were protected by law from murder—either by their owner or by a third party. Regardless of the degree of this protection and the pardons of those guilty of murder, there was a fundamental difference between considering the killing of an African to be natural, as in the time of the earliest expeditions, and granting a certain degree of protection to an African once captured. Probably such legal protection did not arise at the moment of a person's capture or purchase, but existed from the moment of his or her baptism.
- 73 Baptism removed the person from the collective of "strangers" and "others", to whom no responsibility was felt, and brought him or her into the fold of society's "own", whose members, even of the lowest social condition, were treated differently.

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NOTES

1. Like most historians, in considering attitudes to death, I have adopted the approach of J. HUIZINGA (1996, ch. 5), A. TENENTI (1952, 1957), P. ARIÈS (1974, 1975), M. VOVILLE (1976: 120-132), R. CHARTIER (1976: 51-75).
2. “*ubi est tanta multitudo gentium, quod impossibile est credendum*”.
3. General remarks, P. CHAUNU (1969: 284-288).
4. See note 1.
5. For English translation, see PACHECO (1937: 70).
6. Sadness, DE ZURARA (1960: 154, 241, 1981: 267, 490); CA DA MOSTO (1966: 96). Tears, DE ZURARA (1960: 161, 237, 1981: 285, 483). Desire for revenge, DE ZURARA (1960: 155-156, 162, 1981: 269, 287-288). Horror, CA DA MOSTO (1966: 78). On the subject of fear, TYMOWSKI (2005: 43-61).
7. *PORTUGALIAE MONUMENTA AFRICANA* (hereafter *PMA*), 1993: vol. I, 39, doc. 10 of 12 December 1453.
8. *PMA* 1993: vol. I, 118, doc. 39 of 17 July 1462; 322, doc. 152 of 10 July 1484; 386, doc. 190 of 23 March 1487; *PMA* 1995: vol. II, 41, doc. 20 of 5 May 1490; 86, doc. 47 of 22 April 1492.
9. *PMA* 1993: vol. I, 286, doc. 131 of 11 September 1481. DE ZURARA (1960: 88-90, 1981: 99-101); describes Henry the Navigator’s mission to Rome in 1442 to request pardons for explorers dying in Africa. De Zurara then refers to Pope Eugene IV’s bull of 19 December 1442 acknowledging the pardons. DE WITTE (1954: 441-445); JORDÃO (1869-1873: vol. I, 21).
10. *PMA* 1993: vol. I, 60-73, doc. 15, Nicolas V’s bull of 8 January 1455; 74-75, doc. 16, Callistus III’s bull of 26 February 1455; 81-83, doc. 20, Callistus III’s bull of 13 March 1456; 275-284, doc. 129, Sixtus IV’s bull of 21 June 1481.
11. *PMA* 1993: vol. I, 253, doc. 115 of 6 April 1480.
12. *PMA* 1994: vol. II, 55, doc. 29 of 31 July 1490.
13. *PMA* 1993: vol. I, 185, doc. 80 of 17 December 1472; 380-381, doc. 186 of 24 January 1487; 412-413, doc. 210 of 10 June 1488; 414, doc. 211 of 10 June 1488.

ABSTRACTS

The purpose of this article is to describe the events that resulted in death and to analyse attitudes towards death, ways of reacting to death, the causes of both sides, and the consequences of the death for those who remained alive. The problem is the one-sidedness of the source material. Firstly, the available source (chronicles, travel reports, few documents and court records) are exclusively European. Second, the attitudes towards death were different in knights' environment than in the environment of merchants. In turn, in the documents we can find testimony of legal consequences of the death of the Portuguese in Africa.

As to the Portuguese, the death of famous persons was treated differently, than the death of the persons who had no social position. Above all, the death of persons on one's own side is treated differently than the deaths of persons of the opposite side. The deaths of Africans from the viewpoint of the Portuguese were anonymous and collective. In the first phase of African expeditions death was usually violent. There was no time for the dying to prepare for it, no time for contemplation or for usual gestures of custom and culture. The late medieval *ars moriendi* could not be realized. Africans—on the contrary—could organized the appropriate burial ceremonies for their own died persons. But the death of captured slaves occurred in the person's isolation and was particularly lonely.

Le présent article a pour objectif de décrire et d'analyser les causes de la mort des personnes appartenant aux deux parties du contact euro-africain, leurs attitudes et leurs réactions envers la mort, ainsi que les conséquences de la mort pour ceux qui sont restés en vie. Le caractère unilatéral des documents-source pose problème. Premièrement, les sources dont nous disposons (chroniques, récits de voyages, rares documents et dossiers judiciaires) sont exclusivement européennes. Deuxièmement, l'attitude face à la mort était différente dans les milieux chevaleresques et dans ceux des commerçants. Les documents témoignent à leur tour des conséquences juridiques de la mort des Portugais en Afrique. Ces derniers considéraient de manière différente la mort des personnes de haut rang et celle des personnes en bas de l'échelle sociale. Et surtout, ils faisaient la différence entre la mort de leurs hommes et celle des Africains. Cette dernière était, dans les récits portugais, anonyme et collective.

Dans la première phase d'expéditions en Afrique, la mort était souvent violente. Les Portugais n'avaient pas le temps de préparer le mourant au décès, de s'adonner à la contemplation ou aux gestes prévus par la coutume et la culture. Ils ne pouvaient pas réaliser *ars moriendi* du Moyen-Âge tardif. Contrairement aux Africains qui, eux, pouvaient organiser des cérémonies funéraires coutumières. S'il s'agissait de la mort des esclaves transportés à bord de caravelles au Portugal, elle était particulièrement solitaire et tragique.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Afrique de l'Ouest, Portugais, expéditions européennes, contact culturel, mort, mentalité, XV siècle

Keywords: West Africa, Portuguese, Europeans Expeditions, Cultural Contact, Death, Mentality, 15Century

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