

PORTUGAL: THE BIRTH OF A NATION



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ESCOLA BÁSICA E SECUNDÁRIA DE MURALHAS DO MINHO, VALENÇA

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D. Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal, was born in 1109.

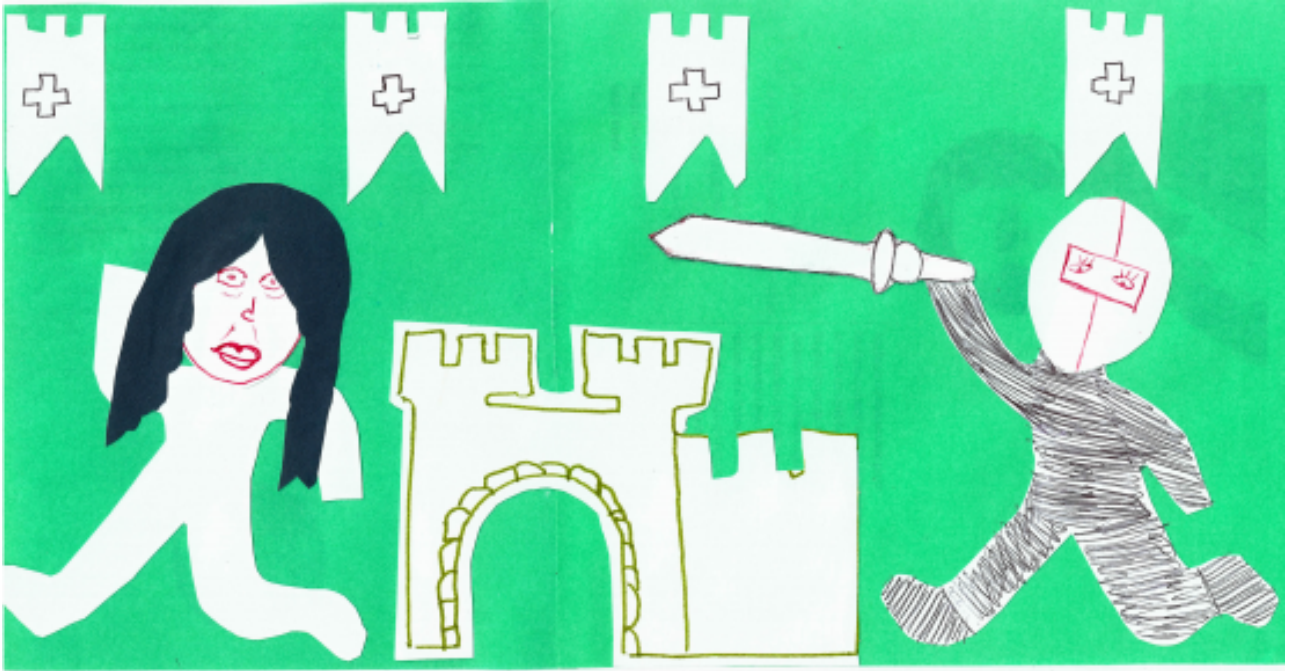
He was a courageous and brave fighter who endured many battles to obtain the independence of Condado Portucalense and conquer land to the Moors.



Henry of Burgundy helped king Alfonso VI of Castile conquer Galicia from the Moors. As a reward, he was given the hand of Teresa de Leon, and became Count of Portugal.

Henry and Teresa had several sons, but the only one to survive childhood was Alfonso Henriques. He was three years old when his father died.

Teresa ruled the county for sixteen years, but her loyalty to the Spanish king led to a rebellion.



Afonso Henriques was set out to take control of the county, and proclaimed himself Prince of Portugal after the Battle of São Mamede.

He defeated his mother near the town of Guimarães, in June of 1128. Countess Teresa was imprisoned and exiled. She died in 1130.

In 1139, Afonso Henriques won a battle over the Moors, and declared Portugal a separate kingdom, with himself as king.



In October 5, 1143, Portugal was officially recognized as an independent kingdom.

Afonso Henriques continued to conquer land from the Moors, and by 1147 he recaptured Lisbon with the help of English, Flemish, German, and French crusaders.

Portugal became Europe's first state to reach the limits of its territorial expansion, which remain unchanged to this day.



In August 1415, a Portuguese fleet sailed across the Strait of Gibraltar and stormed the Muslim port of Ceuta, in Morocco, one of the most strategic strongholds in the whole Mediterranean. Its capture astonished Europe.

Ceuta marked the beginning of Portuguese expansion, the threshold of a new world.



The Portuguese were impelled by a desire to do great deeds.

In 163 years, they pushed faster and farther across the world than any people in history. From a standing start they worked their way down the west coast of Africa, rounded the Cape, and reached India in 1498; they touched Brazil in 1500, China in 1514, and Japan in 1543.

The kings and their sons lived, fought, and died by an honour code that would accompany the Portuguese across the world.

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