

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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Lisbon Royal Academy of Science II (1779-1820)

During the three decades in question, the Lisbon Academy of Sciences (ACL) naturally underwent several phases. With the Vintism movement, it sought to adapt to the challenges of the first liberal experience, contributing to public debate on convening the Cortes. However, its institutional nature and funding were criticised in a session of the Sovereign Congress on 9 January 1823. It continued to engage in intense publication activity, producing sources and memoirs, although no longer with the brilliance and vigour of earlier eras, such as the *Memórias Económicas* [Economic Memoirs] and *Memórias de Literatura* [Literary Memoirs]. With the deaths of António Ribeiro dos Santos (1818), António Caetano do Amaral (1819), and José Francisco Correia da Serra (1823), and the departure of João Pedro Ribeiro to Porto, the Portuguese literature class was diminished, particularly in terms of its founding members or those who had driven what could be considered the golden age of the ACL in terms of sources and historical studies (1789-1814). The class still included notable figures, historians and scholars such as Friar Francisco de São Luís, the lecturer in Diplomats Francisco Ribeiro Dosguimães, Francisco Manuel Trigoso de Aragão Morato, and Joaquim José da Costa de Macedo, all of whom participated in various historical commissions. Sebastião Francisco de Mendo Trigoso, director of the *Colecção de Notícias para a História e Geografia das Nações Ultramarinas* [News Collection for the History and Geography of the Overseas Nations], sought in particular to extend the inquisitive spirit of the work of Ribeiro dos Santos and Francisco Borja de Garção Stockler on the Portuguese discoveries, with some support from isolated works by Costa de Macedo. Following in the footsteps of João Pedro Ribeiro, Dosguimarães continued to teach Diplomats at the Torre do Tombo (where Alexandre Herculano would become his student), and Trigoso de Aragão Morato sustained the scholarly study of Portuguese institutions. Figures such as Fr. Francisco de São Luís and D. Francisco Alexandre Lobo studied the themes of national language and literature, central to the ACL's own definition of its purpose. Another line of research, that of legal and legislative sources and institutions, was pursued with enthusiasm by João Pedro Ribeiro and José Anastásio de Figueiredo.

However, the collective effort to enquire into private, local, and regional civil and ecclesiastical archives, attempted between 1788-1795, and particularly the continued production of historical texts, such as those that



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

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<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

still arouse vivid interest within the academic community today (in the case of the *Memórias de Literatura*), had ceased to be possible for several reasons. One such reason was the almost constant political and military instability between 1820 and 1851. Another was the diminishing role of patronage, on the part of the king, the royal family, and the president of the ACL (by virtue of the position, a prince of royal blood), in light of civil dissensions such as those that occurred during the reigns of King João VI, King Pedro IV, and King Miguel I: the sovereign could no longer act as the institution's protector and financier during the years of civil war, financial and economic crises, and the politicisation of public debate—whether political and historical or academic and intellectual. Vintism, the first Portuguese liberal experiment, appeared to view unfavourably the existence and funding of such a cultural institution, so clearly associated with the Ancien Régime and with an aristocratic, elitist concept of an academic body. This contrasted with other cultural and civic bodies, such as the University of Coimbra, Lisbon's political clubs, and cultural associations of various kinds. This interpretation is confirmed by the session of the Sovereign Congress on 9 January 1823, when parliamentarians João Vitorino and João Maria Soares Castelo Branco stated that "all academic establishments had been born under the breath and protection of absolute power, to which the members, more than anyone else, burned incense" and that "the scholars of the academies were the foremost promoters of this same despotism" (Luís R. Torgal and Isabel N. Vargues, *A Revolução de 1820 e a Instrução Pública* [The Revolution of 1820 and Public Instruction] 1984, pp. 233 and 242). Lastly, the absence of a permanent headquarters for the ACL until 1833 and its constant relocation could not positively contribute to the stabilisation of historical work or the establishment of a documental and bibliographic collection to support continued historical research. It is evident that the irregularity of collective publications of a historical nature and the constant changes in the nature of the collective titles printed by the Academy would make it difficult to produce the kind of innovative and progressive historical and methodological work that had occurred in 1789-1814. The times of revolution, regeneration, and liberal implementation would not permit it, with other cultural and scientific priorities asserting themselves, both politically and culturally.

Thus, it is clear that this period, while stimulating vocations and orientations (though not necessarily methodological revolutions) in Portuguese historiography from 1788-1795, was followed by a period of stagnation in the quality of the institution's historiographical production, and the decline of the ACL's role as a vanguard in historical studies in Portugal between 1826 and 1846. This period of stagnation remains one of the key enigmas in the study of 19th century Portuguese historiography. How does one explain the evolution (or regression) of historical studies from the late 18th and early 19th centuries to the time of Alexandre Herculano's *História de Portugal*, whose first volume was published in 1846? Despite continuing to act as the guardian of historical work in Portugal during the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, according to its role as an official academic body supported by royal patronage (as had been the case with the *Real Academia da História* during its period of greatest brilliance), the ACL, due to financial and other difficulties, was not always able to attract the historians who stood out for bringing scientific innovations to historiography. Portuguese official



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

historiography involved other institutions besides the ACL. The search for a political and institutional memory of the state, which aimed to provide documental support, was ensured by erudite and diplomatic investment through the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which financed the *Quadro Elementar...* (1842-1854), as well as other works by the Viscount of Santarém, which were of a geographic and cartographic nature, manifestly supported by official patronage and proposing a narrative essentially focused on dynastic unity and the overseas experience. The liberal political culture assumed the appropriation of national historical memory as one of its main challenges, and was swift to mobilise human and scientific resources to give Portugal a more readily assimilable image in foreign scientific and diplomatic forums, especially through the publication of texts in French and English. In this regard, history, geography, and cartography developed symbiotic relationships, though with tenuous scientific boundaries, following a tradition that had already existed within the ACL. Meanwhile, in a speech on 21 January 1843, Costa de Macedo still invoked the example of the patriarchs of 1788-1795 when referring to the *Colecção de Notícias para a História e Geografia das Nações Ultramarinas (História e Memórias...* [History and Memoirs...] 2nd series, vol. I, part II, 1844, p. III) and the *Efemérides Náuticas* [Nautical Ephemerides], which consisted of collections of texts and data with no impact or methodological innovation whatsoever, merely perpetuating a tradition that had long since lost any real virtue except for self-congratulation. However, Costa de Macedo did place particular emphasis on the Moral and Political Sciences, which indicated a clear (albeit difficult to achieve) desire for real changes in the use of historical and scientific knowledge for the regeneration of society and politics, which had long been delayed.

The most enduring publication from this period was *História e Memórias*, with the publication of several editions. However, it predominantly amalgamated works from members of all three classes and mostly reproduced partial studies rather than comprehensive historical visions. Other renowned collections, such as *Efemérides Náuticas* and *Diário Astronómico* [Astronomical Diary] (65 volumes, 1788-1809 and 1820-1862) and the *Colecção de Notícias para a História e Geografia das Nações Ultramarinas* (7 volumes, 1812-56), enjoyed various literary editors and some degree of longevity—especially the former—though they must still be analysed more closely both in terms of their critical contributions and disciplinary connections in order to better delineate their conception and the place attributed to historical studies. This requires the systematic organisation of the bibliographic and thematic information contained therein and in other significant collections from the period.

Although, from the first Chartism (1826) to the Regeneration (1851), important national and foreign historians emerged who remain crucial references to that period, the ACL neither integrated nor assimilated them through its own initiative unless they were already full members, as was the case for some of the active members of the Portuguese literature class (after 1834, the moral sciences and fine arts class). However, the issue should not be reduced to a mere demographic explanation. In a country where civil war politicised all sectors of activity (the academic field being no exception), forcing individuals to adopt a clear line of conduct (neutrality was possible but difficult) and to act accordingly, whether by going into exile, going into *hiding*,



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

accepting public office, or taking up arms, the Academy neither knew nor was able to continue being the nursery for new historians and researchers of historical subjects. By 1833, as Lisbon was taken by liberal troops, the ACL had become a pale shadow of its former golden age. It had become disconnected from its international counterparts, which were likely uninterested in exchanging texts, printed works, and academic degrees with an association representing a country embroiled in a fierce and inhumane civil war. However, despite the continued efforts of the royal couple, Queen Maria II and King Ferdinand II (who would soon become president of the institution), to restore its former glory by providing a headquarters and material resources so that the ACL could once again devote itself to the study of the sciences, arts, and letters for the national good—according to the programmatic intentions of Correia da Serra—the profound social, ideological, and political fractures that characterised the first half of 19th century Portugal, and particularly the stagnation of projects and methods within the class of moral sciences and fine arts, made it very difficult to revive the historical productivity of earlier times. Joaquim José da Costa de Macedo, the perpetual secretary between 1833 and 1855, played a crucial role in revitalising international contacts and restoring the institution's prestige as the foremost academic centre, as well as in reconciling members who had been divided by ideological conflicts since 1820 (see his speeches from 1838, 1843, and 1854). Costa de Macedo, who cultivated scientific friendships with French scholars, was attentive to the methodological innovations emerging from Germany, France, and Britain in the field of history, but he was never able to introduce these innovations into his own historical discourse or that of the ACL; after all, he was more of a scholar than a historian. Around him, among the other full, free, and corresponding members of the class, there were other scholars, both laymen and clerics, men educated in an intellectual and historiographical Ancien Régime, who could have played a more significant role in the development and innovation of Portuguese historical studies, had this been seen as a priority for the institution or the established intellectual community—especially within the ACL and the University of Coimbra. In other words, they could have sought to adapt to a new era or fostered the institutional pursuit and integration of young historiographical talent. Despite the prevailing idea during this period of seeking to reconcile the official culture of liberalism with Portuguese historical heritage, aligning it with the academic scholarly tradition and the enhancement of historical memory and the demands of public opinion, well beyond the academic sphere, the opacity and elitist nature of the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* (ACL) made it difficult for outsiders to access the institution. This is an interpretation that only the results of a prosopographical study could confirm or refute. However, the initial findings of a systematic analysis of several hundred members suggest the persistence of a majority of clerics, titled nobles, royal officials, professors from the University of Coimbra, and mostly Portuguese men, up until the statutory liberalisation of 1852 and the consequent broadening of the membership base. The number of full members was very limited (24 in total, and sometimes even fewer), and there were clear limitations on the hierarchical progression from corresponding to free and, finally, to full members. The division into sections and their concrete work would only emerge with the new blood that Alexandre Herculano brought into the institution from that date onwards.



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

Until this point, innovation emerged in an isolated manner through younger professors and librarians such as Coelho da Rocha, Alexandre Herculano, Cunha Rivara, and others. The main exception was Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, supported by the vice-president of the Academy, Fr. Francisco de São Luís. For instance, it would not be the ACL to publish the first modern collection of documentary synopses and Portuguese diplomatic documents, the *Quadro Elementar...* and the *Corpo Diplomático...*, in 1842 and 1846, but rather the Portuguese government through the Viscount of Santarém in Paris. Likewise, it would be Heinrich Schaefer, Ferdinand Denis, and Alexandre Herculano who would publish histories of Portugal worthy of the name through private publishers in Hamburg, Paris, and Lisbon between 1836 and 1839 and again in 1846. Similarly, it was not the ACL that published historical texts on traditional Portuguese courts, national institutions, or recent political events, as was the case with works by the same Viscount of Santarém, Coelho da Rocha, and José Liberato Freire de Carvalho during the years 1827 to 1841. Furthermore, although José Liberato did eventually become a full member of the class of moral sciences and fine arts (though he was not by the time of his death), neither Schaefer nor Coelho da Rocha became members of the association; Denis became a member only much later on, and Herculano even resigned as a corresponding member due to disagreements regarding the controversy around the miracle of Ourique.

Such examples, although isolated, appear to point to a consistent issue within the ACL during the period between 1834 and 1851: at that time, history was not a priority field for innovation and methodological renewal, as the country lacked the stability, funding, and drive needed to channel these resources into the institution. Portugal was out of step with the cultural priorities of other parliamentary monarchies in Europe. The works presented within the ACL continued to be characterised by the old sectoral analyses found in the *Memórias de Literatura* of 1792-1814. While the latter had been innovative at the time of their publication at the end of the 18th century, naturally they could not remain so forty or fifty years later. Even debates and publications on Portuguese literature—one of the Academy's primary objectives—had now fallen into the hands of literati and historians such as Ferdinand Denis, Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, and Alexandre Herculano, in books published in Paris and Lisbon, and in prestigious periodicals such as *O Panorama* and the *Revista Universal Lisbonense*. The spirit of this new generation clearly stood in stark contrast with that of the much older full members of the class of moral sciences and fine arts, such as Tomás António de Vila Nova Portugal, Francisco Recreio, and even José Liberato—intellectuals with very different doctrinal orientations, which is symptomatic of a particular intention within the ACL to *fuse* conflicting ideological positions rather than to bring together academic figures attuned to new ideas. By failing to assimilate these values, with their overflowing energy and new visions, the class and the ACL distanced themselves dangerously from the new era. They were unable to influence it or to create a platform where old and new historiographical references and scholars could learn from one another and develop new historical languages and tools. Although military peace had been restored (there were no longer political assassinations or acts of political guerrilla warfare, as in the 1830s), prior to Herculano (with the sole exception of the Viscount of Santarém in 1821-22, and only in relation to diplomatic



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

documents), a resurgence was not observed in the search for unpublished sources by civil and ecclesiastical archives across the kingdom, as had happened between 1788 and 1794. The *aula de diplomática* [Diplomatics discipline], that long-standing project of Fr. Manuel do Cenáculo, brought to life with remarkable dynamism by João Pedro Ribeiro, was not producing enough students to generate a collective demand for historical documents, as was the case with the *École des Chartes* in France (with the publication of the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*). The *Colecção de Livros Inéditos* [Unpublished Books Collection](1790-1824), like other historical collections of the ACL, did not maintain a pace of publication comparable to that of its French counterpart, which continued to publish new volumes every year. The history and publication commissions for the traditional Portuguese courts, the only noteworthy ones in the class of Portuguese literature/moral sciences and fine arts from the 1810s to the 1840s, consisted of very few members—the same members were always involved, and there was no logical renewal of these groups with younger individuals properly trained in palaeographic studies.

Therefore, the Academy did not serve as a bridge between its historical studies class and the pedagogical and archival institutions that could have most benefited from new research—the University of Coimbra, the *aula de diplomática*, and the central archive of the Torre do Tombo. Unlike in France, the figure of the academic historian was not associated with the teaching of historical content, the constant challenge of publishing texts in specialised regular press, or the debate of historical matters in the national parliament. In liberal France, a historian like Guizot and a philosopher like Cousin took on a prominent political and intellectual role, which clearly signalled a society that was passionately engaged in history and the debate of ideas: dedicated resources and reinforced efforts were allocated to the recovery and preservation of the past, in monuments and documents. In contrast, the academic historian expected to drive historical and scientific innovation within the ACL was disconnected from the aspirations of new audiences, both popular and cultivated, who regularly enjoyed the gratification of new discoveries in philology, archaeology, and geography, as was the case in France, Britain, and the German-speaking world.

Thus, the ACL had distanced itself so much from the debates within Portuguese society at large (unlike during earlier periods, such as the adoption of the cortes in 1820) that the central issue of Casamansa (Guinea) in 1839-1841 appears not to have been touched upon within its ranks, despite drawing the attention of key members such as Fr. Francisco de São Luís, the Viscount of Santarém, Herculano, and even the parliamentarian Oliveira Marreca. The corporative attitude towards Herculano's innovative project *História de Portugal*, particularly regarding the miracle of Ourique issue, is telling of the institution's lack of an innovative spirit. Meanwhile, both in Portugal and abroad, new associations were emerging to generate reflections and historical discourse on geography, history, and the overseas territories. Examples include the *Sociedade Marítima e Colonial de Lisboa*, the *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, and the *Société de Géographie* in Paris, where historians and geographers like Lopes de Lima, the Viscount of Santarém, Avezac, and Varnhagen published and debated texts with much greater regularity and dynamism than what was offered by



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

the simple publication of sources proposed in the three volumes of the *Colecção de Notícias para a História e Geografia das Nações Ultramarinas* (1836-1856).

It may even be said that the so-called "Macedo Question", which pitted Herculano against the perpetual secretary Costa de Macedo between 1854 and 1857 (thus beyond the chronological scope of this article), was motivated not only by personal prestige but, more significantly, by opposition to outdated methods of organising and cataloguing the ACL's bibliographic collection, as well as its funding, publishing processes, and the timely processing of minutes and decisions made in assemblies. Although Herculano's opposition to the lack of scientific and innovative historical work published by the Academy following its statutory reforms of 1834 and 1840 is largely unacknowledged, it is likely that he envisioned a role for the ACL similar to that of French, German, and British academies at the time: centres for debate, publication, and the confrontation of ideas and historical documents, with the aim of understanding the past and planning for the future—another of the programmatic ideals of the 1780 statutes, reiterated by Correia da Serra. This required a reorganisation of the statutes, which were revised in 1851, and, above all, a kind of palace revolution in which Costa de Macedo resigned as a member and perpetual secretary of the ACL in 1855 and was retired from his position as chief guardian of the Torre do Tombo in 1857. Only thus were Herculano and a group of companions and disciples (Rebelo da Silva, Mendes Leal, and Oliveira Marreca, among others) able to restore the ACL to a level of operational capacity and prestige that it had not experienced for some time, which would characterise it as a centre of excellence throughout the final third of the 19th century and influence at least the first third of the 20th century. While Costa de Macedo resurrected the Academy from the ashes in 1833, Herculano did the same for Portuguese historiography via the ACL between 1852 and 1857, even though he refused to teach in the *Curso Superior de Letras*, created under the institution's aegis in 1859. Let us see how by examining two sets of factors. Herculano, as librarian of Ajuda and Necessidades and vice-president of the Academy, was entirely devoted to the continuation of the *História de Portugal* and the *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica*, in a *Regeneração* partially inspired by his ideas of progress and reconciliation. He also influenced the academic statutes, which would remain in force until 1935, and the *Curso Superior de Letras*, which would lead to the professionalisation of historians/researchers, sharing their time and funding their work through specific training and academic careers (for example, with the foundation of the *Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* in 1911).

In short, the years 1820 to 1851 were characterised by the ACL's transition towards a liberal society, in which history was valued not only as a tool for knowledge but also as entertainment, instruction, and leisure, leading to the growing need for a press that could regularly and accessibly disseminate the most up-to-date information on the works of historians and novelists. Despite the royal patronage of Queen Maria II and King Ferdinand II (and later King Pedro V), the intermittent civil wars ultimately weakened the ACL as a site for scientific and methodological debate on the role and functions of historical knowledge. Many of the leading historians of the time tasted the bitter realities of exile, armed conflict, and deprivation. The ACL's role as a conciliator and peacemaker was important in keeping alive the flame of Portuguese historical studies from the

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

18th century, but it was not dynamic enough to attract new methods, new historians, publishers, and novelists, who truly shaped the historical spirit of the era.

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Daniel Estudante Protásio



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