

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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Portuguese Academy of History I (1936 – 1974)

With an interrupted history of one hundred and fifty years, the Real Academia da História Portuguesa [Royal Academy of Portuguese History] re-emerged from the ashes on 19 May 1936, bearing the new designation of Portuguese Academy of History. From 18 March 1937, the Portuguese Academy of History undertook its primary mission, which was to collaborate in the Double Centennial celebrations, according to the "... highly distinguished note from His Excellency the President of the Council which establishes the double Centennial Commemoration of the Foundation and Restoration of Nationality (1939-1940)" in an admirable programme. In fact, when Article 39 of Title V of the Rules of Procedure of the National Board of Education, contained in Decree 26.611 of the Ministry of National Education, published in the first series of the Official Government Gazette (D.G.) no. 116 of 19 May 1936, founded the Portuguese Academy of History, thought was given to the crucial importance of the institution for the commemoration project. The inauguration of the reborn Academy was scheduled for 1 December of the same year. However, it was postponed until the following year, when its statutes were published by Decree 27.913 of the same Ministry in the first series of D.G. no. 177 of 31 July 1937. They had been drawn up considering "... the organisation of the Royal Academy of Portuguese History, founded by King John V...". This same affiliation was assumed by the first President, António de Vasconcelos, who stated in his speech on 2 April 1938, "... the birth of this Portuguese Academy of History will carry on the glorious traditions of its predecessor, the Royal Academy of Portuguese History, which emerged in the 18th century at a very interesting and vibrant time, protected by the dedicated and effective action of great King John... We are, thus, confident that the current Portuguese Academy of History, beginning its life with no less enthusiasm, vigour and efficiency than that which animated the initial years of the Royal Academy of Portuguese History, and with copious fruits that are already showing signs of promise, will nevertheless have a long life and provide important services to Portugal in this century and in those to come...".

The king relied on the great enthusiasm of D. Manuel Caetano de Sousa, a Theatine with a vast historical, literary and theological culture, to give substance to this institution. He was joined by the Marquis of Alegrete, Fernão Telles da Silva, the Count of Ericeira, Francisco Xavier de Meneses, the Count of Villamayor, Manuel Teles da Silva, Martinho de Mendonça de Pina e de Proença and also D. António Caetano de Sousa. The



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foundation occurred on 8 December 1720, and the 1st Director, D. Manoel Caetano Sousa, was appointed along with four censors: the Marquis of Fronteira, the Marquis of Abrantes, the Marquis of Alegrete and the Count of Ericeira. The Secretary was the Count of Villamayor. On 22 December, the statutes were presented and approved, divided into ten chapters where, in addition to its organisation and members, it was established that "the Academy shall have a seal and company... the seal shall be composed of the shield of the Royal Arms, and below it the figure of Time bound by chains, and this title: Sigillum Regiae Academiae Historiae Lusitanae. The Company shall be the simulacrum of Truth, as represented by the Ancients, with the following: Restituet omnia", and it was this Company to which the Portuguese Academy of History returned.

The main characteristic of the goal established by the Royal Academy was the imposition of a method, without which the work would not be accepted as scientific. To this end, the following were defined as prerequisites for subsequent activity: "gathering manuscripts"; "summoning writers" and obtaining the protection of the Royal Power, "because without it the archives cannot be opened, nor can that which they contain or what is buried therein be discovered...".

Beginning with the distribution of specific tasks, a draft of a questionnaire was then drawn up to be sent to Town Halls, Parishes, Monasteries and Archives, on the basis of whose answers each academic would work. They would report back to the rest of their peers on this work at scheduled meetings. This was followed by a discussion of the problem, and only once a consensus had been reached would the author be able to write his text. The text was required to be presented in a pure and clear style and not in the form of an Annals. It was to be divided into subjects and only within each was it to follow a chronological order. And, considering that "geography and chronology are the two eyes of history", in the case of doubts relating to geography, everyone shall conform to what is established by the experts. As regards chronology, the era of Christ shall be followed; the Hegira is deemed to be in 622; the acclamation of King Afonso Henriques in 1139; the law of King John I for use of the era of Christ, in 1422". Finally, the descriptions of cities, towns and other places was to be as follows: in ecclesiastical history "they shall be described in their present state... in secular memoirs the place shall be described as it was at the time to which the achievements refer...". The title of each of the works was to be thus: Memoria para a Historia Ecclesiastica de Portugal do Arcebispado de &c [Memoir for the Ecclesiastical History of Portugal of the Archdiocese of &c]. In the secular: Memorias para a Historia de Portugal que compreendem o Governo de....do anno de....até o anno de....dedicadas a El-Rey D. João V, nosso Senhor, aprovadas pela Academia Real da Historia Portuguesa, escritas pelo Academico F...[Memoirs for the History of Portugal that comprise the Government of....from the yearuntil the yeardedicated to our Lord King John V, approved by the Royal Academy of Portuguese History, written by the Academic F...]. The final scheme of the overall works to be prepared - Historia Ecclesiastica destes Reynos, e depois tudo o que pertencer a toda a Historia delles, e de suas conquistas [Ecclesiastical History of these Kingdoms, and then everything belonging to their entire History and conquests] - would be as follows: Dedication to the king; Prologue, where "everything necessary for an understanding of the Memoirs shall be explained, with



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information on the printed books and manuscripts... place, year and name of the Printer, and the type of volume and number of pages". This would be followed by the "alphabetical index of the abbreviations of the authors' surnames and works ...", followed by the "Chronological Table". - The work shall be divided into "Books, chapters, paragraphs and numbers, and these shall run successively from the first to the last paragraph of one or more volumes..." - The years "shall be noted in the margins, as shall the authors, referenced books and documents...". - "Only those events that are inseparable from it shall be addressed in a given history, and in the margins of the Ecclesiastical Memoirs the authors of the Secular Memoirs shall be cited, and in the latter the authors of the Ecclesiastical Memoirs...". Any doubts of a theological or legal nature to arise were to be communicated to the director and censors "... so that they could be distributed among the Academics, who are intended for this purpose". Finally, it was established that "There shall be no exposition or notes separate from the Memoirs at the end of the Books and Chapters, since all doubts shall be addressed in the same context, with the freedom offered by this kind of History, without obliging those who read it to look elsewhere for the resolution of issues".

The subsequent sessions of the Royal Academy, which always relied on the contributions of the appointed academics, saw a considerable increase in the questions, doubts, clarifications and even heated debates. However, none of the Histories were completed. Nonetheless, the diligence of some of these men is conveyed through the letters, catalogues and notebooks, in short, in the "papers" handed over to the censors for analysis... most of which were printed at the time. Others awaited further processing and were used when Father Luís Cardoso organised the so-called "Parish Memoirs". It is also a fact that the institution grew, benefiting from full royal protection in the form of rents, favours and ease, of which the free entry into the Archives or the Academy being entrusted with the Protection and Preservation of Ancient Monuments are examples. The activity of the Royal Academy remained highly dynamic for more than half a century, and the work of its members paved the way for a scientific history. Furthermore, having been founded to write history, the Royal Academy would also play a fundamental role as a publisher, with the privilege of being exempt from external censorship! Its last public act was in 1777, on the Queen's birthday when, as was the tradition, it gave its official speech before Queen Maria. From then on, its existence was omitted, even though it had not been extinguished.

Emerging from the still smoking ashes, its continuator, the Portuguese Academy of History, would play an equally important role, especially in terms of publications. The respective Setting up Committee, appointed by the Minister of Education, was composed as follows: Afonso de Dornelas Cisneiros, António Eduardo Simões Baião, António Garcia Ribeiro de Vasconcelos, Caetano Maria de Abreu Beirão, Luiz Teixeira de Sampaio, Manuel Maria Múrias Júnior and Possidónio Mateus Laranjo Coelho. This Committee met on five occasions, always in the Minister's office and under his chairmanship. During these meetings, various practical matters were discussed, including the choice of academics to be appointed, and the plan for the insignia, necklace and commemorative medal. Five months after work had begun, on 22 December, the Minister of Education,



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Carneiro Pacheco, appointed the respective Council, in compliance with Article 5 of the new Academy's statutes, which was published in Official Gazette no. 302 of 28 December. It consisted of all the members of the Setting-up Committee, but now distributed by positions:

President: António Garcia Ribeiro de Vasconcelos; Vice-Presidents: Luiz Teixeira de Sampaio and António Eduardo Simões Baião. Secretary- General: Afonso de Dornelas; Vice Secretary-General: Pedro Tovar de Lemos (Count of Tovar); Censor: Manuel Maria Múrias Júnior; Palaeographer: Possidónio Mateus Laranjo Coelho. In compliance with Art. 24 of the same Statutes, the Minister also appointed the first twenty five founding member academics, including those elected for the Council: Abel Fontoura da Costa, Alfredo Pimenta, António Augusto Esteves Mendes Correia, Augusto da Silva Carvalho, Carlos Malheiro Dias, Damião Peres, Fernando Martins de Carvalho, Francisco Rodrigues, Henrique de Campos Ferreira Lima, Joaquim Bensaúde, Jordão Apolinário de Freitas, José Leite de Vasconcelos Pereira de Melo, José Maria de Queiroz Veloso, José Maria Rodrigues, Júlio Dantas, Luís Teixeira de Sampaio, Manuel Paulo Merêa, Marcelo José das Neves Alves Caetano and Reinaldo dos Santos. Augusto Botelho da Costa Veiga, Augusto Vieira da Silva, Caetano Beirão, José Justino Teixeira Botelho and Serafim Leite would be appointed at a later stage. Also by statutory provision, the Portuguese Academy of History was to include 10 Brazilian Academics. To such end, Afonso Celso de Assis Figueiredo (Count Afonso Celso) Afonso d'Escragnole Taunay, Artur Guimarães de Araújo Jorge, Francisco José de Oliveira Viana, Gustavo Barroso, Júlio Afrânio Peixoto, Manuel Cícero Peregrino da Silva, Max Fleiuss, Pedro Calmon Moniz de Bittencourt and Rodolfo Garcia were appointed.

Accomplishing the mission entrusted to them, the academics soon became concerned about the importance of preparing publications, and a meeting of the entire Academy was planned to discuss the possibilities, resulting in a proposal for publications to be presented, which would be sent to the Ministry on 26 March. At the same time, António de Vasconcelos sent the following telegram to the President of the Council: "I congratulate Your Excellency on your very bright idea for the solemn patriotic celebration of the 100th anniversary of the foundation and restoration of Portugal in the next 1939-1940 biennium, both of which converge in the same meaning of national independence. The draft programme is highly impressive and very timely, and all Portuguese citizens should join ranks with the government, cooperating effectively in this new and essential undertaking of the Estado Novo [New State]. In the certainty that my words also express the thoughts and wishes of my colleagues of the Portuguese Academy of History, I take the liberty to congratulate Your Excellency and express, on their behalf, the desire for cooperation, particularly in the historical publications referred to in the programme - António Ribeiro de Vasconcelos, President of the Portuguese Academy of History.

Thus began the life of the Portuguese Academy of History where, shortly afterwards, three founders were elevated to the category of "honorary members": Carlos Malheiro Dias, José Leite de Vasconcelos and José Maria Rodrigues. David Lopes, Luis Barbosa Xavier da Costa and Rui Pinto de Azevedo were chosen to fill



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the positions left vacant. At a later stage, the national supernumeraries were assigned: Aarão Lacerda, Alberto Feio Soares de Azevedo, Alfredo Botelho de Sousa, António Barbosa, António Ferreira de Serpa, Domingos Maurício Gomes dos Santos, Francisco Manuel Alves, Gastão de Melo de Matos, Gustavo Adriano Matos Sequeira, Henrique Quirino da Fonseca, Luiz José de Pina Guimarães, Manuel Heleno, Manuel Lopes de Almeida, Mário Brandão, Mendes dos Remédios and Moisés Bensabat Amzalak. The following Brazilians were chosen for the same category: Basílio de Magalhães, Gilberto Freyre, Jónatas Serrano, Roberto Simonsen and Tobias do Rego Monteiro. In the words of the President, "... With all the positions filled by Portuguese and Brazilian academics and supernumeraries, the Academy will most certainly be actively involved in helping the government to make the double Centennial commemorations in 1939-1940 a success ." Among the various commemorative proposals advanced, that of Afonso de Dornelas is worthy of mention, which consisted of "... obtaining the reproduction of the existing stamps in official and private archives and libraries...". He suggested that "... we should immediately look into how to organise a reproduction workshop... which was fully approved". As a result, forces were joined to ensure that "... in the commemoration of the centennials, the Academy could stage a reproduction exhibition of Portuguese stamps from the foundation of the nation, at least until King John IV". The proposal was approved by order of the Minister on 9 May and communicated to the Academy by Official Notice no. 322 from his office on 13 May of the same year. The goal was accomplished and the collection may still be found at the Portuguese Academy of History today. This is how these men of high intellectual calibre and historical knowledge worked and who, surrounding the President, gave shape to the commemorations project, whose specific programme was read out to the Academies of Science, Fine Arts and History in May of the same year by the Minister of Education. Afonso de Dornelas, Secretary General, was present and, at a council meeting on 20 May, he told the remaining members what this programme demanded of the Academy:

"- Monumental publication of diplomatic and iconographic documentation relating to the foundation of nationality and the restoration of independence;

- Historical and political studies on the same facts;
- Archaeological and ethnographic studies of interest to the history of Portuguese nationality;
- Popular edition of a revised "History of Portugal".

Meanwhile, President António de Vasconcelos had been appointed member of the National Centennial Commission on 11 April. Many requests were also forwarded to the Academy, which was consulted on matters of the most diverse nature (The Banco de Portugal requested instructions on the "issue of banknotes, the design of which is based on people or facts that have contributed preponderantly to the events that shall be commemorated". The request was later fulfilled and communicated in an Official Notice dated 6 July of the same year). In short, the machine was up and running and urgently required capable and hard- working secretarial staff. This request is illustrated in various official notices, as well as in the budgets, which also record the funds needed for the purchase of furniture. Also present in almost every form of contact is the need



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to find decent headquarters, a goal that neither António de Vasconcelos and his team nor the successive Presidents have yet managed to achieve! But the Academy's greatest activity was undoubtedly its publications. On learning that the President of the Council had approved the proposed editorial programme, in a meeting on 12 August, the Academic Council expressed its delight at this decision, which gave "... the Academy the power to initiate its action with a series of important works, deciding "... to request the collaboration of all the academics, inviting them to produce monographs ...". In accordance with the government's proposal, it was later approved that not only monographs were to be produced, but also collections of sources and iconography relating to the History of Portugal. To begin, Duarte D'armas' Livro das Fortalezas do Reino [Book of the Kingdom's Fortresses], the Livro do Armeiro-Mor [Book of the Armorer-Major], and António Godinho's Livro da Nobreza [Book of Nobility] were suggested.

Reading through the correspondence sent and received by the Academy over the course of these months, it is possible to sense the enthusiasm with which these men embraced the task. Numerous proposals were received, and lists were sent to the minister for approval. This is reflected in the budget changes that rapidly made new resources possible. For example, the budget approved for 1938 set aside 60 contos for the launch of publications, but this amount would rise to 150 contos in 1939. In order to coordinate the work, the appointment of an executive committee was proposed and accepted, which was to consist of five members and "... meet without delay...". In the words of the President, "... It is good that the Commission should be empowered to call upon any specialised technician... There are undoubtedly advantages in establishing harmony between this Commission and the other already appointed for the other publications. The Secretary General may serve as a bridge between the two... .. If this proposal is accepted, ipso facto the following shall be appointed: Manoel Paulo Mereia, President; Count of Tovar, Vice-President; A. Botelho da Costa Veiga, Damião Peres, [voting members]; Ruy de Azevedo, secretary". The appointment was immediately communicated to the illustrious academics. It should be noted that the Brazilian academics, who were equally enthusiastic about the celebrations, were always included throughout this entire process. On behalf of all, Pedro Calmon wrote on 3 December, "... within the same plan of work, the Brazilian academics shall decide on the collaboration with which they intend to honour the centennial celebrations". Moreover, relations with Brazil had been fostered since the inception of the re-founded Academy, and the objectives were reciprocal. An example of this is the Official Notice from the Brazilian government which, on 22 September, invited the President to take part in the ceremony commemorating the first centennial of the foundation of the Historical and Geographical Institute in Rio de Janeiro.

It may be said that in 1939 the Academy was cruising steadily. The academics met systematically, both in Council and in ordinary sessions. In the case of the former, there were 12 meetings, at which the progress of the publications to which the Academy had committed for the commemorations was always analysed. On 21 March, the Council approved the cover design for the respective publications. As for the 13 ordinary sessions, all of which were chaired by António Baião, and with Afonso de Dornelas as secretary, they are a prime



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illustration of the debate of ideas that has characterised the Academy's work since its inception. It would be extremely interesting to analyse the clashes between Ruy de Azevedo and Alfredo Pimenta, for example, which were evident at several of these meetings, however they are beyond the scope of this essay. In short, other aspects of the Academy's life have been portrayed, and all that matters now is to note the list of publications that was prepared and announced at the session on 15 November. For the Commemorations of the Foundation of Nationality, the following were prepared: "Documentos Medievais Portugueses [Portuguese Medieval Documents] published by Rui Pinto de Azevedo; Relatório acerca da localização da batalha de Ourique [Report on the location of the Battle of Ourique], by Lieutenant-Colonel Augusto Botelho da Costa Veiga; As origens do executor testamentário [The origins of the Executor of Wills], by Manuel Paulo Merêa; Memórias do Mosteiro de Pombeiro [Memoirs of the Pombeiro Monastery] published by António Baião; Os forais medievais vimarenenses [The Medieval Charters of Guimarães] by Alfredo Pimenta; Memórias do Mosteiro do Paço de Sousa [Memoirs of Paço de Sousa], published by the same academic; Crónica da fundação do mosteiro de S. Vicente de Lisboa [Chronicle of the foundation of the St Vincent Monastery of Lisbon] by Afonso de Dornelas. Commemorating the Restoration of Independence - Embassy of the Count of Vidigueira, Marquis of Nisa

- Original letters addressed to him by the Portuguese Government; Letters from the Governors of the Alentejo Province to King John IV and Letters from His Majesty King John IV, all published by Possidónio Mateus Laranjo Coelho; The Surrender of the Castilian Garrisons in 1640, by Captain Gastão de Melo de Matos; José Pinto Pereira, Administrator of the General Treasury of India and Overseas Counsellor to King John IV, by Captain Charles Ralph Boxer; Figures and Episodes of the Restoration, by António Rodrigues Cavalheiro and Luiz Pastor de Macedo; Letters from King John IV to King João da Costa (Count of Soure), by António Rodrigues Cavalheiro; Europe and Philippine Rule in Portugal, by António Rodrigues Cavalheiro and Luiz Vieira de Castro; People of the Islands in the Restoration War, by João Cabral do Nascimento; Portugal's Diplomatic Action at the Congress of Westphalia, by Eduardo Brasão and Brazil and the Restoration of Angola, by Gustavo Barroso".

Meanwhile, academic life continued to display vitality, as can be seen in the minutes of the session on 4 September. They show that, on that date, the President of the Republic had already been presented with "... the first three published volumes... and the medal commemorating its foundation, by which act the Royal Academy of History was revived...". At the same session, chaired by Caeiro da Mata, he mentioned, as may be read in the respective minutes, "...the exceptional significance of how the President of the Council of Ministers had received copies of the same volumes and the aforementioned medal. Likewise, the Minister of National Education expressed words of praise for the Academy's activity, which pleased him greatly, as he had had the good fortune of being its resurrector". On 23 October, another step was taken towards normalising the institution and its academics by approving a diploma and an identity card.



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This was to be the last meeting of the Council in 1940, which can only be explained by the busy schedules of its members during this key period of the Commemorations in which the great Portuguese World Exhibition was held (23 June to 2 December). Many academics were involved, including the Secretary General, who was director of the Pavilion of the Portuguese in the World. However, the ordinary sessions kept up the pace of the previous year. In 1940, the projected publication plan, which was fully met, had the total sum of 350 escudos at its disposal, and the following works were published: *Cartas dos Governadores da Província do Alentejo a El-Rei D. João IV* [Letters from the Governors of the Alentejo Province to King John IV]; *Cartas dos Governadores da Província do Alentejo a El-Rei D. João IV e a El-Rei D. Afonso VI* [Letters from the Governors of the Alentejo Province to King John IV and King Afonso VI]; *Cartas dos Governadores da Província do Alentejo a El-Rei D. Afonso VI* [Letters from the Governors of the Alentejo Province to King Afonso VI]; *Cartas de El-Rei D. João IV para Diversas Autoridades do Reino* [Letters from King John IV to Several Authorities of the Kingdom]; *O Manuscrito de Valentim Fernandes e Cartas de El-Rei D. João IV ao Conde da Vidigueira (Marquês de Niza) Embaixador em França* [Valentim Fernandes' Manuscript and Letters from King John IV to the Count of Vidigueira (Marquis of Nisa), Ambassador in France].

And the life of the Portuguese Academy of History remained dynamic beyond the initial goal that led to its refoundation. As determined by its statutes, the publication of an annual Bulletin was launched, which has continued up to the present day, as was the systematic publication of Annals. More Academics were appointed, a request was made for an extension of the Council's mandate, which was granted by Manuel Lopes de Almeida, Under-Secretary of State for National Education, on 22 February 1941, more projects emerged, decisions were taken, other publications were approved, committees were appointed and the Statutes were reformulated and discussed. In 1945 a new President was appointed - Caeiro da Mata. He remained in office until 1963, and was then replaced by Laranjo Coelho, who was followed in 1966 by Manuel Lopes de Almeida. António Silva Rego took up the post in 1972, and was continued by Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão between 1975 and 2006. The Presidents of the Republic are inherently its Presidents of Honour.

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Manuela Mendonça