

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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



Aires [de Magalhães Sepúlveda], Cristóvão (Ribandas, Goa, 1854 - Lisbon, 1930)

He was born in Ribandas, Goa, on 27 March 1854 and died in Lisbon on 10 June 1930 with the rank of retired cavalry colonel. He became a lecturer at the War Academy. After studying for the first few years in India, he came to Portugal due to the influence of the Count of S. Januário, governor of that territory at the time, and at the expense of a stipend from the Agricultural Chambers of Goa. The poet Tomás Ribeiro was the one who guided Cristóvão Aires in his first steps when he arrived in Portugal. When he was in the East, the author of *D. Jaime* had the occasion to appreciate the blossoming of his talent, which went on to give the country thousands of pages of national history, notably in the field of army studies.

Cristóvão Aires joined the 5th Battalion of Hunters as a volunteer in November 1872, becoming a second lieutenant in 1876 and a colonel in 1911. He was transferred to the Army Reserve in 1913. He was married to Maria do Carmo, sister of the writer and poet Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho. His family life with this writer brought him into contact with a literary salon that included prominent intellectuals of the time, such as Gonçalves Crespo. He completed the infantry and cavalry course at the Army School, where he was always honoured and belonged to the general staff of his branch. He then enrolled in the Undergraduate Degree in Arts and Humanities, achieving high grades in Literature, Philosophy, and History.

He became involved in politics, joined the Partido Regenerador [Regeneratist Party] and was elected a member of parliament three times. He held the positions of Civil Governor of Bragança and Public Prosecutor of the 2nd War Council of the 1st Division. His historical eulogy at the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa [Lisbon Academy of Sciences] was delivered by his successor, Professor Mosés Bensabat Amzalak.

Cristóvão Aires was devoted to journalism and was a member of the editorial staff of the *Jornal do Comércio e das Colónias* [Journal of Commerce and the Colonies], of which he was to be director for many years. Recalling his origins, he defined his background: "Indian by birth, I love India as my cradle; Portuguese by blood, I bear the surname of one of the heroes of the great epic poem of our race."

The printed work left by this historian covers almost every branch of literature, and he collaborated with various literary magazines. Poet of the *Indianas* and the *Novos Horizontes*, he was a short story writer in his *Longínquas*. He revealed himself, instead, as a valuable essayist in his *História do Exército* [History of the Army], where he stood out as a conscientious and impartial historian. Cristóvão Aires combined his critical



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

spirit with the quality of an indefatigable researcher. The volumes of *Provas* that document his *História* are valuable sources for today's researchers. However, we must emphasise the absence of indexes, which would facilitate and enhance the consultation of this critical study.

The term *organic history* that appears in his work (*História Orgânica e Política do Exército Português* [Organic and Political History of the Portuguese Army]) was proposed by a government authority – the President of the Cabinet, Serpa Pimentel (who was also Minister of War) who, in a ministerial order published in army order No. 18 of 10 May 1890, alluded to it. The ministerial order stated the need for a “written history of its glorious deeds, its organisation, its effective and brilliant mission in the material and moral progress of the country” and, for this reason, the initiative to “draw up a military history of the country” was taken. Therefore, the author's concept of military history refers to an organic and civilisational history of nations, countries, states, or human development. He, thus, conceptualised military history as a sector of historical science in its global sense, associated with other branches of history, namely economic, social, religious and cultural. Therefore, it combines with a single history at the scientific level or, if we wish, is one of the sectors of a global whole.

We should emphasise that the enormous length of the *História Orgânica e Política do Exército Português*, in its numerous volumes, offers, in volumes X to XIII, unpublished studies of great importance for shedding light on the events related to the French invasions, which took place between 1801 and 1811, in Portuguese territory, dealing with the broadest range of topics related to the action of the French and English armies in Portugal.

By way of example, we would like to highlight the subject of the engineering that was part of Junot's army in the invasion of 1807. There, we find information on the history of the Portuguese Legion in Napoleon's service, biographies of Beresford and Soult, studies on Portuguese freemasonry at the time of the invasions, the defences of Lisbon and the Lines of Torres Vedras. Among this precious collection, Junot's Diary in Portugal stands out, i.e., the set of letters sent by this military leader to Napoleon from 10 October 1807, when he and his army were still on their way to Lisbon, until 7 June 1808, when the Convention of Sintra took place, and Junot left Portugal. This set of documents was published in French and should be highlighted among the studies that Cristóvão Ayres has left us in his extensive and valuable work.

In his *Teoria da História da Civilização Militar* [Theory of the History of Military Civilisation], he tries to show “how the great eras of humanity have been memorable periods of struggle”, corresponding to the following individuals: Seven I and Ramses II, with Nebuchadnezzar, with Cyrus and Darius I, with Themistocles, with Alexander, with Epaminondas and Xenophon, with Marius and Julius Caesar, with Charlemagne, with Gonçalo de Córdova, with Afonso de Albuquerque, with Charles V, with Gustavo Adolfo and Turenne, with Frederick II, with Napoleon I, with Moltke, with Kuroki' (4th ed., 1915, p. 8). The concept of progress is very present in his narrative: “... The innate instinct of sociability, common to other animals, the interest in securing and protecting the acquisitions already made and the family already constituted, lead him [man] to congregate with units of collective strength, and thus, security and peace are established through mutual respect and



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

mutual conveniences. Once this state of security has been acquired, trade relations are naturally forged; products are exchanged between towns that offer different merchandise according to their particular skills, the raw materials they have at their disposal, or even the particular crops in their soil. The artistic instinct which, like that of conservation, reproduction and religion, has been apparent since the earliest beginnings of humanity, gradually develops and, from scale to scale, from step to step, produces true wonders!" (p. 12).

As for the *Dicionário Bibliográfico da Guerra Peninsular* [Bibliographical Dictionary of the Peninsular War], it is an extremely rich repertoire for those who are interested in historical studies of that period. It contains authors who devoted themselves internationally to studying events with major repercussions in our country, as well as many others related to the Napoleonic epic. For example, it cites, among many others, all the studies by historians such as Cláudio de Chaby, Chateaubriand, Luz Soriano, Latino Coelho, the author of the *História Política e Militar de Portugal 1874-1893* [Political and Military History of Portugal 1874-1893], and José Estevão's parliamentary speeches. Cristovão Aires was a member and general secretary of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, a member of the Instituto de Coimbra, the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid, and the National Committee for the celebrations of the Peninsular War that took place in 1908.

Active bibliography: *Indianas e portuguesas, 1870-1875*, Porto, 1879; *Novos Horizontes, 1875-1880*, Lisboa, 1882; *Íntimas*, 1885; *Lantejoulas (contos)*, Lisboa, 1880; *O Conde de Schonberg*, Lisboa, 1892; *Esbôço histórico do Regimento de Cavalaria 7*, Lisboa, 1893; *História da Cavalaria Portuguesa*, 4 volumes, Lisboa, 1880-1894; *A evolução orgânica do exército, memória apresentada à Academia Real das Ciências servindo de exórdio à História do Exército Português*, Lisboa, 1894; *Organização militar dos árabes na Península*, Lisboa, 1901; *Fernão Mendes Pinto. Subsídios para a sua biografia e para o estudo da sua obra*, Lisboa, 1904; *Fernão Mendes Pinto e o Japão, pontos controversos Discussões. Informações Novas*, Lisboa, 1906; *Para a história da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, Coimbra, 1927; *Dicionário Bibliográfico da Guerra Peninsular*, dirigido por Cristóvão Ayres de Magalhães Sepúlveda, 4 volumes, vols. I e IV, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, pp. 77 (volume I) e 71 (volume IV), Lisboa. Imprensa da Universidade, 1924 e 1930.

Passive bibliography: *Arquivo Histórico Militar Arquivo Particular Cristóvão Aires, 1808 – 1908*. Fundo 28, Catálogo, Lisboa, 2001; "Cristóvão Aires de Magalhães Sepúlveda", *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. I, Lisboa, Editora Enciclopédia, s.d., pp. 685-686; Vicente, António Pedro, "Militares que foram historiadores em Portugal" in *Portugal Militar. Da Regeneração à paz de Versalles*, XIII Colóquio da História Militar, Lisboa, Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, Palácio da Independência, 2003, pp. 111-113.

António Pedro Vicente

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P, in the scope of the projects UIDB/04311/2020 and UIDP/04311/2020.

U LISBOA

UNIVERSIDADE
DE LISBOA



FACULDADE
DE LETRAS

CH

CENTRO
HISTÓRIA
UNIVERSIDADE
DE LISBOA

fct

Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia



REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

SUPPORTED BY:

BNP

BIBLIOTECA
NACIONAL
DE PORTUGAL



FUNDAÇÃO
LUSO-AMERICANA