

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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ALBUQUERQUE, Mário Corrêa-Telles de Araújo e (Viseu, 1898 – Lisboa, 1975)

Mário de Albuquerque was the son of D. Isabel Maria da Conceição Ribeiro de Almeida, from Penafiel, and Alexandre Corrêa-Telles de Araújo e Albuquerque, from Albergaria-a-Velha, in the district of Aveiro. The latter had been a well-known figure at the university in Coimbra, where he became known by the nickname Xandre. He had gained a degree in Law, and practised as a notary, as well as becoming Vice-President of the City Council and chief executive for the district of Estarreja. A member of the Progressive Party, in 1908 he was elected as a Deputy to the Portuguese Parliament in 1908, moving to Lisbon, where he produced the newspaper *O Liberal*. He fought a duel against Afonso Costa, and after the proclamation of the Republic he was dismissed from all the positions he held. He took part in the raids by Paiva Couceiro, and in the end emigrated to Brazil, where he settled in Rio de Janeiro; there he engaged in numerous legal and literary activities, particularly as a journalist, essayist and critic. After the fall of the Republic in 1926 he returned to Portugal, where the participation of the monarchists in the Estado Novo led him to become a parliamentary Deputy once again, in 1935. He died two years later, while still holding that position. His wife had accompanied him into exile, leaving their only son, Mário, in the care of his paternal grandparents, Bernardino Máximo Álvares Tavares da Silva de Araújo e Albuquerque and D. Luísa Delfina Corrêa-Telles, who had a decisive influence in his upbringing. They lived in Albergaria-a-Velha, where Mário's grandfather had been for two decades the President of the town council. He attended the liceu (secondary school) in Aveiro where he made friends with fellow pupils who would become notable members of Portuguese society, such as the future Archbishop of Évora, D. Manuel Trindade Salgueiro, and the doctor and artist João Carlos Celestino Gomes. He concluded his liceu education by winning the prize for best pupil, and went on, in 1916, to the University of Coimbra, enrolling simultaneously in Historical and Geographical Sciences and in Law, courses which boasted a number of notable professors. All his life he remained friends with some of them, such as António de Vasconcelos, José Alberto dos Reis, Carneiro Pacheco, Magalhães Colaço, Fezas Vital, and Paulo Merêa. He graduated in 1921 and 1922, with a mark of 17 out of 20 in both courses, going on immediately to a career in Law. The death of his grandparents, both in February 1923, caused him to join his parents in Brazil. Returning to Portugal the following year he resumed his practice in Law, and later started on a doctorate in Historical Sciences, while at the same time entering the Escola Normal Superior. On 19



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June 1930 he applied to be examined for his doctorate, in line with a legal requirement that obliged selected candidates to defend additional submissions before the examiners. These were to be included in the same volume with the main dissertation. Apart from him, only one other candidate in the area of History was affected by legislation. The collection was called *O Significado das Navegações e Outros Ensaios* [The Meaning of the Overseas Voyages and Other Essays]. The public examinations took place in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, on 14 and 16 December 1930, before a panel chaired by Cameiro Pacheco, with Oliveira Ramos and Agostinho Fortes as examiners. According to the newspapers of the time the event was witnessed by a large audience, with the dissertation provoking a lively and brilliant debate. The theses he defended set out to contest various established ideas, showing a historical approach that rejected a fragmentary, sectorial or purely erudite vision of the Discoveries, in sharp contrast to the usual Positivist schema, while making a critical analysis of the connection between the different interpretations and their respective theoretical, or simply doctrinaire, foundations. Sensitive to the debate around the division of history into periods, Mário de Albuquerque put forward an explanation of a global character, attempting to put the Portuguese Discoveries into a comparative historical perspective. He proposed a “conjunctural architecture” (p. 15), not entirely free of inspiration from the “often very confused work, *The Decline of the West*” (pp. 233, 282) by Oswald Spengler, whose ideas he attacked, unpicking their contradictions (p. 236) or rejecting, often ironically, its classifications (“Faustian man must have been moulded in the dolls’ factories of Nuremberg”, p. 284). In an often bruising style, he warned of the complexity of the Expansion, sharply denouncing the critical illogicality of using a single explanatory factor, starting with the “ultra-romantic” (p. 23) thesis of António Sérgio. He methodically laid out Sérgio’s propositions, refuting them in light of the sources and of the mentalities of the times. António Sérgio replied (Paris, 1932) in a text later published in Volume IV of his *Essays*. While never expressly naming his critic, Sérgio accused him of being a reactionary making allegations lacking any historical basis, relying on declarations of principle about the way in which interpretive ideas about reality were formulated. At the time the matter rested there, in the absence of any response by Mário de Albuquerque. The intrinsic value of the latter’s objections was quickly forgotten, extinguished by the habitual reach of Sérgio’s positions amongst intellectuals and academics. Outstanding amongst his theses were those on the history of Portugal, such as *O claro génio lusíada* and *O mito da decadência*, both for their critical elements and their innovative characteristics, contributing to a full anthropological definition of the Portuguese, and demolishing preconceptions about the “false idea of Portuguese decadence”. In his essay on *O Simbolismo do Escudo Nacional* he put forward original interpretive ideas. In the remaining theses, *O Falso Helenismo da Renascença*, *A Renovação Científica do Século XVI* and *As linhas Políticas da Arquitectura*, we find the same concern with defining concepts and questioning received ideas, an approach that informs the whole of his activity as a university lecturer. Just a few months after receiving his doctorate, on 29 April 1931, he gained the state teaching diploma (fifth group)



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from the Liceu Pedro Nunes, with 16 marks out of 20. His move into secondary school teaching, however, was brief, with a year as an associate teacher in the Liceu Sá da Bandeira (Santarém), and the Liceu Passos Manuel (Lisbon). The retirement of Francisco de Paulo Reis Santos allowed him to obtain a position as an interim assistant lecturer in the Lisbon Faculty of Letters (15 November 1932) teaching the course in General History of Civilization and practical research, which post he held until 1947. A few months earlier, in Almada, on 18 June 1932, he had married D. Maria Manuela Joana Ferreira Côrte-Real de Albuquerque, with whom he had five children. Their two boys, Rui and Martim, took degrees and doctorates in law, devoting themselves to history as teachers and researchers in the historical-juridical sciences section of the Faculty of Law, in Lisbon. In 1936, he was appointed with the status of full professor to the chair in Brazilian Studies, which he taught until 1961, when he went on to organize the History of Medieval Culture, alongside Brazilian Literature, where he succeeded Oliveira Lima and Manuel de Sousa Pinto in a subject that was taught in all sections of the Faculty. In the syllabus he developed they discussed the originality and historical evolution of Brazil, its present and future importance, its literary and linguistic influence in bilateral relations, not neglecting the study of Oliveira Viana's preoccupation with Arianism or the ideas of Gilberto Freyre, whom he regarded as profoundly influenced by North American sociologists in his theses on the formation of Brazil. But many other subjects created an arrangement of teaching based on the model then in vogue of the professor, principally as the exhibitor of knowledge, giving less emphasis to criteria related to scientific specialization. So he also tackled a wide range of material, such as History of Oriental Antiquity, History of Classical Antiquity, History of the Discoveries and Modern and Contemporary History, as well as the so-called Auxiliary Historical Subjects. In 1946, because of Orlando Ribeiro's absence on a foreign delegation, the governing council also gave him the course in Lisbon Studies, which he taught until 1957, to the approval of his large audiences and the Lisbon City Council, which always gave the highest praise to the competence and brilliance of his lecturing. During this period he also became a City Councillor (1949-54) and contributed to programmes for national radio (1946-60), giving more than two hundred talks on Portuguese topics. He also ran the magazine *Rumo*, which aimed to "stimulate, strengthen and build the work of national identification", as we read in the first edition (p. 9); some five or six were published in all, all in 1946. The contributors included Raul Lino, Ferreira de Almeida, Durval Pires de Lima, Delfim Santos, Luís Cabral de Moncada and João Ameal, amongst others. In 1951 he was invited to the International Congress of Columbus Studies, in Genoa, to mark the fifth centenary of his birth. His contribution was noted, and he was nominated Vice-President of the seventh section of the Congresso Luso-Espanhol para a Progresso das Ciências, held in Malaga at the end of the same year. From 1959, and practically up to his retirement, he taught the course in the History of Contemporary Portugal at the Course in Portuguese Language and Culture, for foreigners. Simultaneously he sat on juries examining the various courses in degrees in History and in Pedagogical Sciences, and also the juries for Degrees in Historical and Philosophical Sciences, and



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in Geographical Sciences. He also took part in the governing bodies for teachers of Romance and Germanics studies, and History and Philosophy. He was president of the admissions jury for the Faculty and set state exams for the Veiga Beirão Commercial School. To this hectic teaching activity was added, from 1934, his involvement, as secretary and lecturer, in the Vacation Courses at the Faculty of Letters, which started that year, held in the Conde de Castro Guimarães Museum, in Cascais. This initiative was a notable success, and continued for almost two decades, thanks to his dedication in preparing an eclectic and wide-ranging programme that included excursions, study visits, concerts of Portuguese music, and which enjoyed the support of important figures in national culture. Over the years successive generations of students, some of whom became notable individuals in the intellectual and political world, passed through his classes. From the records of his teaching programmes we can discern conceptual and methodological concerns with history, open to debate, with finding lines of continuity and of rupture, with different conceptions of the world and of mankind, and with political, social, institutional, economic, religious, cultural and artistic aspects. His global and all-inclusive vision, attempting to grasp the complexity of the evolution of reality, while rejecting one-sided and simplistic explanations, were not always appreciated or understood by students, but later many came to recognize the explanatory dimension of his work. Whether in the *História Geral da Civilização*, at the beginning of his career, or later, in the *História da Cultura Medieval* or in his *História Moderna e Contemporânea*, he raised the problem of periodization against the different systematizations of history: he commented on Nietzsche, discussing the problem of the selection of facts and calling attention to the new methodologies in the study of civilizations; he analysed medieval and modern conceptions of the world and of mankind, their economic and social aspects, the political and juridical characteristics, their religious, artistic and literary tendencies; he discussed the continuities and the ruptures, the quantitative and qualitative transformations in the location and scale of phenomena, their repercussions and projection in the field of ideas; he questioned the possibilities of a global history in the face of national histories; he deepened concepts and tackled themes such as the problem of historicism, the question of subjectivity and objectivity, the problem of the interdependence of historical phenomena. The critical exploration of the various theses on the formation of modern nationalisms and imperialisms made up a substantial part of his lectures, as he devoted special attention to the formation of national awarenesses and to the appearance of the concept of the fatherland, while taking in the theory of nationalities and the conceptions of empire, and their theorizers. The concept of the “morphology of cultures” and the critical exposition of various theories of the life and death of civilizations reflected the polemic around a cyclical conception and the concept of decline defended by Spengler, whom he refuted in his doctoral essays, and the challenge and response model of Arnold Toynbee. His admiration for the role elites seen as a “creative minority” was particularly in evidence in a lecture he delivered at the Lisbon Geographical Society, on 12 November 1955. The occasion was to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Mouzinho de Albuquerque, regarded by the speaker as an “epic



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hero”, not merely a warrior, but “a representative of culture in the face of the tumultuous forces of nature and savagery, and a definer of ideas and of cities” (p. 17). The attention he devoted to the problems of Portuguese language and culture are evident in his speeches in the national Assembly, and in his lectures in Brazilian Culture. Always faithful to the monarchy and to the ideals of the Integralismo Lusitano, with António Sardinha as his principal doctrinal point of reference, Mário de Albuquerque took advantage of the Estado Novo’s openness to monarchists, serving as a Deputy from 1938 to 1945 and 1949 to 1957. Amongst other subjects he drew attention to the situation of the National Library and the Navy Museum, at the time lacking proper facilities; he advocated the integration of the collection of the Viscount da Esperança (known as the Manizola Library) into the Faculty of Letters; he supported the reform of art teaching, by raising it to a higher level with the idea, daring at the time, of creating a Faculty of Fine Arts to equal the Faculty of Letters; he started a debate on a bill to reform the system of spelling, in line with the Luso-Brazilian accord on 1941. However, the tension between the monarchists and the Estado Novo sharpened when he was barred from presenting his propositions to the congress of the União Nacional in 1955. As President of the Central Committee of the Causa Monárquica, he came into conflict with Marcello Caetano, his friend and former co-religionist, then Ministro da Presidência. He completed his term in parliament, but never sat as a Deputy again, making a definitive break with the regime. On 9 March 1968 he reached retirement age. On the eve of his retirement he gave his final lecture at an official session chaired by Virgínia Rau, then director of the Faculty of Letters, before a vast audience of students and teaching staff. He died in his Lisbon home, on 5 January 1975, and was buried in the family tomb in Albergaria-a-Velha. There remained from his student days his monocle, immortalized in the portrait by João Reis, and memories of brilliant talent amongst the youngsters of his time. He was colour blind. He had remarkable oratory skills. His work ranged over the whole field of university studies and not just his published work, as was the case with many of his fellow academics. In his lectures we always find the same conceptual matrix: a globalizing and problematizing history, linking the questioning of concepts and the challenging of givens with solid information and daring hypotheses.

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APOIOS:

