

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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BAIÃO, António Eduardo Simões (Ferreira do Zêzere, 1878 – Lisbon, 1961)

António Baião was born on 10 October 1878 in Alqueidão de Santo Amaro (Ferreira do Zêzere municipality) and died in Lisbon on 21 May 1961. He was the son of António Simões Baião and Emília Cotrim de Carvalho Baião, landowners.

He attended primary school in his hometown and secondary school at the Jesuit school of São Fiel (Louriçal do Campo) and in Santarém. He attended the School of Law at the University of Coimbra, graduating with a bachelor's degree on 12 June 1900 at the age of 22. Between 1894 and 1900, when he studied in Coimbra, he was a contemporary of Emídio Navarro, Afonso Lopes Vieira, and Laranjo Coelho. He was a secondary school teacher in Santarém from 1900 to 1902.

However, his intellectual existence only truly began on 18 December 1902, the day he joined the National Archive of Torre do Tombo, after being appointed second curator (Raúl Rego, 'O Dr. António Baião', in Arnaldo Henriques de Oliveira, *Catálogo da... biblioteca do Dr. António Simões Baião* [Catalogue of Dr António Simões Baião's library], p. III.

For almost half a century, from 1902 to 1948, António Baião's life was closely intertwined with that of the Torre do Tombo. There, he blossomed as a researcher and scholar and quickly rose to become the institution's first curator and director, on 23 June 1906 and 10 March 1908, respectively. In the following years, he published studies on Herculano and the Viscount of Santarém, which were instrumental in his admission as a corresponding member (1913) and full member (1920) of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, an admission that was supported by the opinions of Gama Barros, Leite de Vasconcelos, David Lopes, and Cândido de Figueiredo.

Over the following decades, he became Vice-Secretary General of the Academia das Ciências and director of the *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica*. A founding member of the Academia Portuguesa de História, which was re-founded in 1936, he served as 2nd Vice-President, 1st Vice-President, and Acting President. Furthermore, he combined his duties as director of the national archive with those of administrative auditor for the Lisbon district and technical education for several years.

It was through direct contact with documents, and the organisation of historical materials (especially those from the Inquisition's registry offices), many of which arrived at the Torre do Tombo Archives in successive



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waves, that Baião developed a refined methodological, critical and archival spirit that was indispensable for his research. As the most senior official in charge of Portugal's central historical archive, with in-depth knowledge of its institutional and documentary history and as a member of the Academia das Ciências, he continued his previous efforts to bring out unpublished material and to interpret and enhance the existing bodies of documents in the Torre do Tombo. These endeavours had already been made by custodians such as the Viscount of Santarém and Cardinal Saraiva, historians such as Francisco Varnhagen and Alexandre Herculano, and diplomats such as João Pedro Ribeiro. Proof of this can be found in the pages he wrote with Pedro de Azevedo in a text about the archive, whose subtitle 'Its history, constituent bodies and organisation' does not mention his personal eagerness to discover an immense mass of monuments, of which he was a faithful custodian and enthusiastic chronicler.

In addition, he made a name for himself with his studies on the Inquisition and the profiles of several of his predecessors at the head of the Torre do Tombo, specialising in what he called the Academy's infancy (especially the work of João Pedro Ribeiro) and the historical work of Alexandre Herculano. For this purpose, he used the collections of the Torre do Tombo and the Academia das Ciências, as well as Herculano's personal documents. Once again, he points to these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century figures, crucial in the emergence of a historical science greatly enriched by palaeography and diplomacy, as living examples for the twentieth century.

In the midst of an extensive bibliography, including a juvenile book of poetry (1896) and the first historical work dedicated to the illuminator Duarte Fernandes, in Anselmo Braamcamp Freire's *Arquivo Histórico Português* [Portuguese Historical Archive] (1903), four types of work can be listed.

These are academic opinions, such as those he wrote about the admission of Fortunato de Almeida and Martinho da Fonseca to the Academia das Ciências in 1917 and 1921; library catalogues, such as those of the Viscount of Santarém (1913), Pedro de Azevedo (1919), and Jaime Moniz (1922); and the historical eulogy of his predecessor in the chair of full member of the Academia das Ciências, Braamcamp Freire himself (1925). Finally, the profile and work of various custodians and historians at the Torre do Tombo: those of Damião de Góis, Manuel da Maia, the Viscount of Santarém, Cardinal Saraiva, Herculano, Varnhagen and Gama Barros, works that extend chronologically from 1909 to 1949 and highlight the commitment of these figures to the preservation of documents and to historical studies.

We can thus have a glimpse of the experience and profound dedication to academic life and research of António Baião to the extent that Raúl Rego said of him in 1967 that 'for the people of the 20th century, the National Archive is António Baião' and that at the Torre do Tombo and the two academies he headed, he was always guided by 'calm direction, serene action' ('O Dr. António Baião', *ibidem*, p. IV).

It is also in the dense catalogue of his library, made up of almost 3,300 items (unfortunately dispersed in a public sale), that we can see Baião's complex world of intellectual interests and academic social life, for whom erudition, palaeography, diplomacy and Portuguese sources seem to have known no secrets.

He could more appropriately be called a researcher than a historian – perhaps following in the footsteps of



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one of his masters, Braamcamp Freire, who refused the latter designation. António Baião located, ordered, published and compared texts and editions rather than elaborating concepts and outlining interpretations of facts in the light of historical science. In him, the documentalist, the scholar and the archivist rarely dared to innovate, to seek to summarise the facts and subsequent readings of them. This would be the work of others at a later date, using different tools and scientific purposes.

Baião's works are based on an in-depth knowledge of the documentation and a wise evocation of the contexts, mentalities, and characters. They are decisive milestones in the subjects covered, such as the beginnings of expansion in the Indian Ocean, inquisitorial processes, and the work of Portuguese historians and diplomats.

However, he never went beyond a certain factualist limitation, which can be seen, for example, in his contribution to the *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo* [History of the Portuguese expansion in the world], of which he was one of the editors. In the twenty or so pages dedicated to the governorship of Francisco de Almeida, Afonso de Albuquerque, and João de Castro, he limited himself to reproducing the essential facts and transcriptions from bibliographies that he himself had mastered, referring, moreover, to works of his own authorship (*História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo*, [History of the Portuguese expansion in the world], vol. II, 1939, chapter IX, pp. 101-127). The same is true of the volumes of *Episódios Dramáticos da Inquisição Portuguesa* [Dramatic Episodes of the Portuguese Inquisition], in which he attempts to narrate the misadventures of national cultural figures with the Holy Office, without, however, going beyond a sometimes almost anecdotal record: see what he wrote in volume I about the son of the chronicler Rui de Pina and about the canon and poet Baltasar Estaço (Lisbon, *Seara Nova*, 1972, 1st ed. 1919, pp. 17-19, 63 et seq.).

Unlike other earlier Portuguese scholars and documentalists – João Pedro Ribeiro, José Agostinho de Macedo, Inocêncio Francisco da Silva, and Teófilo Braga – Baião appears not to have cultivated or enjoyed polemics, epistolary, or public conflict. He was part of a collective movement to reunite and rediscover national culture and historical science with the facts, documents and figures of the past, a movement where he seems to have integrated perfectly, apparently indifferent to the regimes that followed one another outside the archives and academia – monarchy, First Republic, military dictatorship, Estado Novo. In short, he coexisted intellectually with his academic ancestors and predecessors and with his peers and contemporaries dedicated to the same endeavours.

However, we must not forget his role as a precursor to historians such as Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão and António Henrique de Oliveira Marques. Baião was probably one of the most distinguished researchers of his time in this field, especially in terms of his contributions to the knowledge of historians and works from the years between 1834 and 1877. His biobibliographical studies on João Pedro Ribeiro, the Viscount of Santarém, Cardinal Saraiva, Herculano, Varnhagen, and Costa de Macedo provide a wealth of factual and documentary information, all the more important given that some of these figures – Ribeiro and Costa de Macedo, for example – are still lacking an integrated study of their journeys, thoughts, and works. Even those

figures who have been the subject of historiographical and cultural reflection still lack a comparative analysis of social lives and methodological and political divergences intertwined and dissected. This reflection will have to be based (among many others) on the work of António Baião.

Active bibliography: com Pedro de Azevedo, *O Arquivo da Torre do Tombo. Sua história, corpos que o compõem e organização*, Lisboa, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo/Livros Horizonte, 1989 (1ª ed. Lisboa, Academia de Estudos Livres, 1905); *Episódios Dramáticos da Inquisição Portuguesa*, 3 vols., várias edições (as primeiras de 1919, 1924 e 1938); *A Infância da Academia (1788-1794). Visita aos arquivos do reino: correspondência a tal respeito de João Pedro Ribeiro, Santa Rosa de Viterbo, etc.*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 1934; «A política de D. Francisco de Almeida, de Afonso de Albuquerque e de D. João de Castro. Outros governadores e vice-reis de mais eficiente acção (1505-1580)», *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, vol. II, Lisboa, Editora Ática, 1939, capítulo IX, pp. 101-127; *Gama Barros e a sua grande colaboradora*, Coimbra, 1949 *Herculano Inédito*, Lisboa, 1955 (separata das *memórias da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*) e *Herculano Inédito. Quadros biográficos do grande historiador (dezassete)*, separatas da revista *Ocidente*, do mesmo ano.

Passive bibliography: «Baião, António Eduardo Simões», *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, Lisboa/Rio de Janeiro, vol. 3º, pp. 1031-32; Arnaldo Henriques de Oliveira, *Catálogo da importante e interessantíssima biblioteca do Dr. António Simões Baião... prefaciado pelo distinto jornalista e bibliófilo Dr. Raúl Rego*, Lisboa, s.d. [1967]; *Elogio do Dr. António Baião*, Lisboa, Academia Portuguesa de História, 1969.

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