

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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CASTILHO, Júlio de (Lisbon, 1840 – Lisbon, 1919)

The first-born son of poet António Feliciano de Castilho's second marriage to Ana Carlota Xavier de Vilhena, he inherited the title of Viscount from his father, becoming the 2nd Viscount of Castilho by decree of 1 April 1873. Júlio de Castilho and his siblings were brought up in their father's high intellectual environment, which included Alexandre Herculano, Bulhão Pato, D. António da Costa, Almeida Garrett, Luís Augusto Palmeirim, Filipe Folque, among other leading cultural figures of their time. The erudite environment in which he moved and the privileged social status he enjoyed, dominated by a love of literature and the arts, decisively shaped his intelligence and sensibility. He added personal annotations to the invaluable library he inherited, supplemented by new acquisitions. To the family's art collection, he added his engravings and canvases, an expression of the artistic talent he was also gifted with, featuring an oil portrait of his father, one of the manifestations of the cult he paid to his memory throughout his life.

After his high school studies, he completed his academic training with the Higher Degree in Humanities in Lisbon, founded by decree in 1858 and letter of law in 1859, although classes only began in January 1861. This postponement was greatly influenced by 'the political instability that existed for almost the entire first half of the century' 'and a certain attraction to the study of experimental sciences' (Sérgio Campos Matos, *O Curso Superior de Letras* [The degree course in Arts], pp. 367-388, 370). In the end, it was decided that it was their responsibility to train young people for university admission, to train secondary school teachers and capable candidates for public administration posts, thus combining scientific training with vocational training. Júlio de Castilho must have been one of the first students, making his debut with his dissertation *Comparação da literatura de Itália com a de Portugal nos fins do século XV* [Comparison of Italian and Portuguese literature at the end of the 15th century], thus fulfilling a pedagogical requirement (Xavier da Cunha, 'Júlio de Castilho estudante do Curso Superior de Letras, *In memoriam*, p. 37-47). His professional achievements throughout his life were an exemplary fulfilment of the objectives of the innovative academic institution.

Admitted as an amanuensis clerk at the National Library in 1869, he joined the staff as a 2nd officer in 1872, and from then on, he worked his way up until he became a Conservator in 1884, a status he retired from in 1911. The stable professional position he held was compatible with his appointment to prominent positions in the political-administrative sphere. He soon became known for the quality of his contributions to



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

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journals and newspapers, as well as the works he published, which made him a highly regarded figure. Due to the convergence of these factors, corroborated by his family origins, he was chosen to be the Civil Governor of the District of Horta, in Faial (1877-1878), where he left as a mark of his few months in office a remarkable text addressed to parish priests on their duty to dedicate themselves to the primary education of rural populations in order to counteract widespread illiteracy and thus curb emigration (Ernesto Rebelo, in *Arquivo dos Açores* [Azores archives], vol. VIII, 1982, pp. 91-93). Júlio de Castilho thereby expressed one of the concerns of liberalism, a regime of which he was a convinced and sincere supporter and in which he participated as a 'monarchist without compromise' (Conde de Bretiandos, 'O Homem'[The Man], *In memoriam*, p. 141). This mission resulted in the works *O Archipelago dos Açores* [The Azores archipelago] (1886) and *Ilhas Occidentais do Arquipelago Açoreano* [Western Islands of the Azorean Archipelago] (1886). He was also appointed to the same position in the district of Ponta Delgada, but never took office. The sudden end of his first appointment and the fact that he was not appointed to the second was due to the instability of the political-party rotation that the country had entered into. He took up a diplomatic post when he was appointed Consul General of Portugal in Zanzibar (1888). His profile as a public man was combined with that of a 'tireless and anonymous philanthropist', a 'propagandist of noble and healthy doctrines' (Matos Sequeira, *Elogio histórico* [Historical Eulogy], p. 370). In a society full of prejudice, 'incoherence and shameful compromises', he remained a 'Catholic without deviation' (João Vacondeus, *In memoriam*, p. 133), with a practice that had repercussions on social concerns. The most significant was the lecture *Cristianismo e o Operariado* [Christianity and the Labour Force], given in 1897, in the wake of Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* on the condition of the workers in the context of the pontifical document's innovative themes.

His integrity, manifested in his political and religious positions, his knowledge of public administration and the open view of the world he had acquired through his positions, coupled with an already considerable literary work of renowned merit, as we will see below, may have contributed to D. Carlos inviting him, in 1906, to teach Portuguese History and Literature to Prince Luís Filipe. The texts of these lessons have reached us (Tomás de Melo Breyner, 'O visconde de Castilho mestre de um príncipe' [The viscount of Castilho, master of a prince], *In memoriam*, pp. 167-176).

As mentioned above, Júlio de Castilho became known for his vast and varied body of work. He made his debut at the age of 13 with *Primeiros versos* [First verses] in an almanac in 1854, without ever ceasing to cultivate the poetic genre, which he used in other literary fields, with its greatest expression in *As Manuelinas* [The Manuelines], an evocative 16th-century songbook, 'where the salty breeze of the 1500s permeates' (Matos de Sequeira, *Elogio Histórico* [Historical Eulogy], p.373). In terms of prose, he was a biographer, playwright, novelist, memoirist, translator, Latinist, and philologist. He also proved to be a polemicist when he intervened in the 'Questão Coimbrã'[The Coimbra question], in connection with the debate on Good sense and good taste with the booklet, '*O Senhor António Feliciano de Castilho e o Senhor Antero de Quental*' [Mr.António Feliciano de Castilho and Mister Antero de Quental] (1865), a text in defence of his father. But



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the greatest tribute to his father was the *Memórias de Castilho* [Memoirs of Castilho], published in two volumes. This work of filial devotion is the genesis of what would become his role as an olisipographer. As part of his research into erecting a monument to his father's memory, he wrote *Lisboa Antiga: O Bairro Alto* [Old Lisbon: The Bairro Alto] (1879), an evocation of the area where his father had lived and he had been born. Due to the great interest it aroused in the public, the work was reissued and expanded, becoming the first of several volumes, entitled *A Lisboa Antiga / Bairros Orientais* [The old Lisbon/ Oriental Neighbourhoods], completed in 1890. He went on to publish *A Ribeira de Lisboa* [The Lisbon riverside] (1893), in which he traced the city's centuries-old history from the riverfront to the Santos-o-Velho neighbourhood. These studies consecrated him as the founder of olisipography, as he was the first researcher to systematically and extensively analyse the history of Lisbon.

Despite his limited view of historical issues and poor archival research, Júlio de Castilho reveals an evocative capacity that far surpasses these imperfections. His discourse on Lisbon is a symbiosis of literary erudition and poetic evocation, as he 'knew how to decipher its mossy walls, interpret its secular life and teach its glorious past' (António Baião, *Anais das Bibliotecas, Arquivo e Museus Municipais* [Annals of Municipal Libraries, Archives and Museums], p. 65). In describing the neighbourhoods, he would unearth the streets, palaces, churches, names of people, relevant events, and experiences, which he picked up in his readings, exhaustively dispelling any doubts, which gives the whole work great solidity. He had the art of recreating the history of Lisbon in a 'continuum' of evocations, which explains why it is still today 'a valuable source for knowledge of the city's political, social, archaeological, toponymic, and cultural history' (Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, 'Júlio de Castilho – Olisipógrafo' [Júlio de Castilho- Olisipographer]). He had the art of building a comprehensive view by integrating a great diversity of individual aspects, which allows us to say that Júlio de Castilho was a historian who was both erudite and a disseminator, accessible to the average reader. This also explains why he was a source of inspiration for further studies of Lisbon. According to Luís Pastor de Macedo, 'Castilho's first disciples were three: Gomes de Brito (...) creator of toponymic studies, Eduardo Freire de Oliveira, in the notes accompanying the municipal documentation he published, and João Pinto de Carvalho' (Fernando Castelo-Branco, 'Olisipografia'[Olisipography], in *Dicionário da História de Lisboa* [Dictionary of the History of Lisbon]). However, two other great names in olisipography, Augusto Vieira da Silva and Gustavo Matos de Sequeira, have admitted that they received their impetus and enthusiasm for the study of Lisbon from him. Perhaps without intending to, Júlio de Castilho was a master who paved the way for olisipography and created disciples. He was a full member of the Associação dos Arquitetos e Arqueólogos Portugueses, a corresponding member of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, a member of the Instituto de Coimbra, the Gabinete Português de Leitura de Pernambuco, the Instituto Vasco da Gama de Nova Goa, and the Association Littéraire et Artistique Internationale of Paris.

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DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

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