

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**GALLIS, Joaquim Alfredo** (Lisbon, 1859 – Lisbon, 1910)

The author of two volumes that continued the work *História de Portugal. Popular e Ilustrada* [History of Portugal. Popular and Illustrated] by Manuel Pinheiro Chagas, subtitled *Um reinado trágico* [A tragic kingdom] and dedicated to the times of King Carlos I, Joaquim Alfredo Gallis was born on 17 November 1859 and died on 24 November 1910. He was a journalist, novelist, short story writer, translator and historian. According to various sources, he made his first contribution to the press in 1881, in the periodical *As Instituições* [The Institutions], for which he wrote political and social chronicles, short stories and poems under his own name and also under one of his most used pseudonyms (Rabelais). In 1877, at the age of 18, he joined the factory services of the *Arsenal da Marinha* [Navy Arsenal] as a clerk. His father Francisco Augusto Gallis had worked 39 years for this institution (he retired as a note-taker and section chief). In 1877 he joined the *Capitania do Porto de Lisboa* [Captaincy of the Port of Lisbon] and was promoted to 1st class clerk in 1894.

He wrote for periodicals on an ongoing basis (*As Instituições* [The Institutions]; *A Ilustração Portuguesa* [Portuguese Illustration]; *O Universal* [The Universal]; *Tempo* [Time]; *Nova Alvorada* [New Dawn]; *Ecos da Avenida*; *Jornal do Comércio* [Echoes from the Avenue; Journal of Commerce]; *Diário Popular*; *O Manuelinho d' Évora* [Popular Journal; The Manuelinho d' Évora]) or episodic, such as the *Correio Paulistano* [São Paulo Mail] of São Paulo, for which he was a correspondent in 1893, publishing the political chronicles "Correspondência de Lisboa" [Mail from Lisbon], signed by Rabelais.

He was the editorial secretary of *Brasil-Portugal: Revista Quinzenal Ilustrada* [Brazil-Portugal: Illustrated Fortnightly Magazine] and a member of the *Associação dos Jornalistas de Lisboa* [Lisbon Journalists' Association] founded in 1896. In 1895 he wrote four articles in the *Universal* on the organisation, problems and virtues of journalism, urging fellow professionals to create an association to defend their common interests. He took part in the works of the *Liga Liberal* [Liberal League], a political movement founded by Augusto Fuschini after the *Ultimatum* of 1890, and held public office: as well as being a clerk at the *Arsenal da Marinha*, he was a secretary to the civil governor of Lisbon and an administrator of the municipality of Barreiro.

He specialised in naturalist novels — writings that would show a direct observation of nature and a rigorous analysis of the stories of real people, in a straightforward fashion that refrained from abstractions. Between 1901 and 1904, he published the 12 volumes of *Tuberculose Social* [Social Tuberculosis] with the aim of denouncing the vices and evils of society. Just like tuberculosis can attack any of the body's organs, so "morality can be tuberculous in any of its multiple and complex manifestations" (*Chibos* [Snitches], 1901, p. 9). It was the writer's job not only to tell the sick about their illness, but also to show the healthy the causes of the

disease and their share of the responsibility for spreading it.

He also dedicated himself to sensualist, licentious, erotic and pornographic novels, with explicitly sexual depictions and descriptions. These books sold by the thousands and were strongly advertised in newspaper (as "Books for Men" or "The Bachelor's Library").

A distinguished journalist and writer that was both highly regarded and spurned, Joaquim Alfredo Gallis was well known in Portugal and Brazil, and published around 35 books. Several volumes of erotic short stories were published in Brazil, where many bookshops had a genre called "Works by Rabelais". More than a dozen works were banned under the Estado Novo regime. In addition to Rabelais, he used the pseudonyms Antony, Baron of Alfa, Countess of Til, Duchess Laureana, Kin-Fó, Ulysses and Katisako Aragwisa.

In 1908, at the age of 49, he published the first of two volumes in continuation of the 3rd edition of *História de Portugal. Popular e Ilustrada* by Pinheiro Chagas, whom he called "master" (and which had already been continued by Barbosa Colen and Marques Gomes). To write the hot piece on the regicide, the publisher had chosen "a writer who is brilliant in form, thoughtful in his ideas, and independent, therefore impartial in his politics; a man who is fond of publications of this genre" (*História de Portugal (Complemento)*..., p. 6). Gallis' identity was not revealed "so that he could deal more freely with the complex and varied issues that make up this reign" (*Idem*), which didn't stop him from emphasising his despair about politics — "that abject, low level, unqualifiable thing, with no moral elevation or social honesty, and lacking any brilliance or decency" (*Idem* p. 8), and revolt against illiteracy and criticize King Carlos I's inaction, "who dedicated his time to worldly life more than adequate, and far less than he should to the affairs of the state" (*Idem*, p. 10). The second volume (1909) was sold already signed.

In *História de Portugal*, he presented the idea that the Portuguese institutions, leaders and people were in decay. In a succession of chronologically ordered episodes, this work presented a mixture of facts and omens, the former taken from a wide array of information sources (official speeches and decrees, manifestos, proclamations, press reports, etc.). Even though he argued that "for the historian, the personal sympathy or antipathy that figures may deserve (...) must be set aside in order to give way only to an impartial, serious, upright and honest criticism" (*Idem* pp. 7-8), the author could not avoid frequent moralising judgements.

The author of a secular, anti-militarist, liberal and nationalist narrative, he was part of a Lisbon elite of civil servants and journalists who worked several textual genres. An astute observer of the city — "Lisbonland", "the capital of the country of fly eaters" (*Os Selvagens do Ocidente* [The Savages of the West], p. 8), he set foot on the terrain of politicians and decision-makers, choir boys, actors and common thieves, against the backdrop of a poor and illiterate crowd, around whom — through the "mists of an unheard of savagery where murder, rape, drunkenness, personal political revenge, boorish and reactionary clericalism, and pilgrimages to various oracles of silly invocation" (*Idem* p. 8) — 19 years of King Carlos' reign had elapsed.

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