

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**PEREIRA, Victor do Monte Gabriel** (Évora, 1847 – Lisbon, 1911)

Librarian, archivist, bibliophile, historian, patrimonialist, publicist, and writer Gabriel Pereira was born in Évora, on 7 March 1847, on the old Rua da Ladeira (which today bears his name) in the civil parish of Santo Antão. He passed away in Lisbon on 6 December 1911. He was the son of António Pereira da Silva, a teacher at Liceu de Évora [Évora High School], and Luísa do Monte Pereira, who came from an old farming family of Évora. G. Pereira completed his primary and secondary education in Évora before enrolling in the Escola Naval [Naval School] in Lisbon, which he later left due to family reasons. He subsequently enrolled at the Escola Politécnica [Polytechnic School] in the same city. However, he did not complete his degree and, although he chose not to pursue studies in the Humanities, he studied palaeography at the Torre do Tombo.

In the capital, he often visited the home of Manuel Maria Bordalo Pinheiro and became acquainted with his children, including Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro. He developed connections with other notable figures in the Arts and Humanities circles, including Pedro W. de Brito Aranha, Gomes de Brito, and António Enes. Together, with whom he established an informal literary and artistic academy, which met periodically at Lisbon's Praça da Alegria and in R. Bordalo Pinheiro's studio, located in the old Largo da Abegoaria.

After completing his archival training, G. Pereira travelled to Setúbal to take up a teaching position at the *Liceu* managed by his father. Here, he dedicated himself to historical and archaeological studies, foreshadowing his later intellectual production. However, when the *Liceu* was closed, he returned to Évora where, in 1872, encouraged by Augusto Filipe Simões — to whom he dedicated one of his earliest works (1875) — he took up a position as a clerk in the secretariat of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, organising and preserving its historical archive for 14 years. This work enabled him to uncover documents concerning lost property, thereby boosting the organisation's income.

In Évora, like many intellectuals of his era, G. Pereira cultivated and expanded his passion for history, art, literature, and archaeology, locating, identifying, and analysing bibliographic and archival collections, as well as archaeological artefacts. Merging scholarly knowledge with personal interests, he also dedicated himself to translating classical works from Latin, such as those of Strabo and Pliny, focusing especially on texts



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describing the geography of the Iberian Peninsula. At the same time, he publishes *Dolmens ou Antas dos Arredores d'Évora* [Dolmens or Antas of Évora's surroundings] (1875) and directed the series *Estudos Eborenses: História, Arte, Arqueologia* [Évora Studies: History, Art, Archaeology], published in 37 pamphlets between 1884 and 1894. His work compels him to continually update his literary and scientific knowledge, both nationally and internationally. Additionally, he critically analyses observed realities, employing evolutionist, progressive, and migrationist models, alongside comparative and oral collection methods. He promotes a methodical and scientific approach to studying the country's prehistoric and protohistoric past, while also showing a keen interest in institutional and social history, aligning with emerging historiographical trends developing abroad.

Meanwhile, through letter no. 164 from the *Direcção Geral de Instrução Pública* [General Directorate for Public Education], dated 15 November 1879, the young palaeographer G. Pereira was commissioned to organise the records of the now-defunct Treasury Board of the University of Coimbra (UC), creating a provisional index of the documents in its registry, published under the title *Catálogo Provisório dos Pergaminhos da Universidade de Coimbra* [Provisional Catalogue of the University of Coimbra Scrolls] (1888), while writing *Documentos Históricos da Cidade de Évora* [Historical Documents from the City of Évora] (1885-1891). This new professional phase stemmed from the results he obtained in the *Misericórdia* archives, as well as from the increasingly strained atmosphere surrounding him in recent times, and his close association with A. Filipe Simões (his predecessor as head of the public library of Évora and now a lecturer at the UC Faculty of Medicine).

Nothing that prevented G. Pereira from becoming deeply involved in Évora's cultural development, following in the footsteps of A. Filipe Simões, Joaquim H. da Cunha Rivara, and Carl Justi. In 1886-1887, he was appointed councillor for Education at Évora's Municipal Council. In this role, he advocated for the creation of libraries and school museums, promoted evening education primarily for the working, industrial, and commercial classes, and contributed to the creation of a technical educational program specifically designed for local women. He also sought to bring to Évora the tradition of literary gatherings he had enjoyed in Lisbon, despite the greater conservatism of the Alentejo city, which already had organisations such as the 'Círculo Literário Eborense' (1837) and the 'Sociedade Harmonia Eborense' (1849). Like Eça de Queirós, G. Pereira attended the 'Sociedade Civilizadora União Eborense', then known as 'Bota Rasa' (1839, 1871), located in the city centre at Praça do Geraldo.

Invited by his former youth companion, António Enes, who played a key role in significant reforms at the *Biblioteca Nacional* (BN) [National Library], G. Pereira returned to Lisbon to take on the role of 'extraordinary employee' at the BN, to which he donated a glass lacrymatory for the antiques collection. The following year, he became a conservator and served as director until 1902, when, following the death of Tomás Lino de Assunção, he was appointed Inspector of the National Libraries and Archives. In this role, he conducted in-



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depth studies of the institution's collections, including illuminated codices. As director of the BN, G. Pereira was appointed by the Minister of Public Works, alongside José Leite de Vasconcelos, to assess the estate of the archaeologist Sebastião Estácio da Veiga, which would later become part of the *Museu Etnológico Português* [Portuguese Ethnological Museum] (1893). Meanwhile, in the lead-up to the establishment of the republic, he campaigned vigorously for a comprehensive reform of archival studies and practices in Portugal.

During this time, G. Pereira joined the *Comissão dos Monumentos Nacionais* (CMN) [National Monuments Commission] (Lisbon, 1881), where, in 1894, he co-organised three questionnaires aimed at cataloguing monuments for national classification and collected information on conservation and restoration projects. In 1897, he served on the committees responsible for the bulletin and the drafting of regulations, recognising the importance of the Arts & Crafts movement for the development of Portuguese industry. He rejected stylistic restoration in favour of scientific restoration and vehemently criticised the ignorance, apathy, and inertia of the national political authorities in this area.

The experience G. Pereira gained within the CMN, his extensive knowledge of work produced in his areas of knowledge, his connections with individuals in the sector, and the positions he held, along with his growing advocacy for heritage, position G. Pereira as one of the intellectuals who laid the groundwork for the *Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes* National Fine Arts Society (SNBA), which resulted in contributions that included assisting with the selection of objects from Évora for inclusion, in 1882, in the "Ornamental Art Exhibition" at the National Museum of Fine Arts (1884, Lisbon) and organising an 1889 exhibition at Évora's public library, inaugurated by the royal family. Then still known as the 'Grémio Artístico', the first General Assembly (GA) was held on 27 March 1890, where G. Pereira was elected vice-president of a board led by J. Ramalho Ortigão. This role encouraged him to travel abroad in 1891, following brief visits to Spain dating back to at least 1879. He subsequently visited several major museums, libraries, and archives in Spain, France, and England, where he found inspiration for certain works. Simultaneously, he wrote short stories and narratives and toured the outskirts of Évora in search of archaeological remains, particularly megaliths, possibly after his visit to archaeological sites in Minho on the eve of the first archaeological conference organised in Portugal (Guimarães, 1877) and whose impressions he writes in notebooks filled with drawings, reflecting the eclecticism of his heritage interests.

G. Pereira's work in art history and heritage conservation enabled him, along with watercolourist Enrique Casanova and art critic José Pessanha, to embark on a brief editorial project *Arte Portuguesa: revista de arqueologia e arte moderna* [Portuguese Art: a journal of archaeology and modern art] published in Lisbon from January to June 1895, aimed at promoting the literary and artistic movements within the country. An experience he would later repeat, namely in *A Arte e a Natureza em Portugal* [Art and Nature in Portugal] published in Porto between 1902 and 1908, alongside intellectuals such as art historian Joaquim de Vasconcelos. Together with Vasconcelos and philologist Carolina Michaëlis, he would go on to write the



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*Biblioteca Internacional de Obras Célebres* [The International library of Famous Literature] published in 1911 by the International Society (Lisbon).

G. Pereira joined several scholarly organisations, including the *Real Associação dos Arquitectos Cívicos e Arqueólogos Portugueses* [Royal Association of Portuguese Civil Architects and Archaeologists] (RAACAP) (1863), whose *Boletim* he directed towards the end of his life, as well as the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* [Lisbon Geographical Society] (SGL) (1875) and the *Sociedade Literária Almeida Garrett* [Almeida Garrett Literary Society]. He was also a corresponding member of the Archaeology Section of the *Instituto de Coimbra* [Coimbra Institute] (1852) and the *Academia Real das Ciências* [Royal Academy of Sciences] (1783).

Considered by Ramalho Ortigão to be the spiritual heir of André de Resende and Frei Manuel do Cenáculo, G. Pereira — a monarchist sympathiser and, like many thinkers of his era — devoted his life to studying the history, art, and archaeology of his birthplace. He strongly defended local heritage and the value of the Évora public library's collections (including archaeological ones), promoting them through numerous monographs and articles, some of which appeared in periodicals such as the *Gazeta Setubalense*, the *Universo Ilustrado*, *O Occidente*, the *Revista Archeologica e Historica*, the *RAACAP Boletim* and the Geographical Society *Boletim*.

Having passed away without children, G. Pereira rests in the section reserved for Évora's most illustrious figures, following the transfer of his remains from the Alto de S. João Cemetery (Lisbon), in 1950. In 1934, writer and journalist João Rosa compiled, annotated, and published a selection of G. Pereira's writings, accompanied by Pereira's own drawings, under the title *Estudos Diversos* [Diverse Studies]. A decade later, the centenary of G. Pereira's birth was commemorated with an exhibition at the Évora Public Library and District Archive, and his name was bestowed upon a high school, a school library, and a street in the centre of Évora.

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