

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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CASTRO, Aníbal Pinto de (Cernache, 17-01-1938 – Coimbra, 07-10-2010)

University professor, literary critic and historian of literature. Of humble origins, Aníbal de Castro (AC) attended the D. João III Normal Secondary School, where, in 1955, he completed the complementary course (paragraph a). He then enrolled at the School of Arts and Humanities in Coimbra. There, he obtained all his academic degrees and spent most of his time lecturing and researching. He was one of the most respected and influential representatives of the philological school that goes back to Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos, continued by Joaquim Mendes dos Remédios and Álvaro Júlio da Costa Pimpão.

Apart from the differences in time and idiosyncrasy, one could say that this school was grounded in a positivist view of history and guided by a civic and institutional ethic: to make Portuguese literature known, with as much precision as possible, through the study of texts and contexts. In fact, this purpose closely follows a broad movement that emerged in European universities towards the end of the 19th century, committed to building a history of Western civilisation based on linguistic and literary phenomena.

Directly or indirectly, AC should be considered one of the first and most important proponents of comparativism in the history of Portuguese literature. Having started his academic career in 1961 when he published his undergraduate dissertation on the influence of Balzac in Portuguese literature, AC would stand out in his generation through a broadening of horizons that resulted from his wide and deep knowledge of Romance and Classical literature, especially Latin literature. This knowledge not only allowed him to research sources in the most conventional sense of the word but also led him to fruitful intertextual approaches in the field of reception or the so-called 'literary fortune' of authors and the periods or movements that framed them.

Without prejudice to the importance of his other achievements, his greatest contribution to the construction of the modern history of Portuguese literature is undoubtedly the doctoral thesis he presented in 1973, which he would reprint in the final years of his life. In fact, this work draws on a vast collection of printed and manuscript documents, especially those that were unpublished or had yet to be studied. Emphasising the importance of rhetoric and normative poetics for the knowledge of literary creation, but also for pedagogy and the transmission of cultural assets in general, AC built not only an innovative work in the context of Portuguese and peninsular culture but also an indispensable reference for anyone who wishes to gain an in-depth understanding of the evolution of literary dynamics in Portugal and Spain over more than three

centuries (between Humanism and Neoclassicism).

In addition to bearing the stamp of a generation of philologists who were, above all, 'great readers', AC's literary-historical culture also reflected a strong and intense curiosity, which even brought him into contact with so-called 'minor authors'. What could at first be considered a mere research drift was based on two very important assumptions for the historian of literature that AC really was. In fact, although less read by posterity, these creators ultimately contributed, in their time, to the establishment of the dominant aesthetic codes. Finally, it is important to note that in these same authors (and not so much in the so-called *major authors*), these codes can be appreciated more widely and in a more stabilised way.

His unusual interest in a large number of 'forgotten' authors did not, however, prevent him from concentrating on a small group of 'chosen ones'. He recognised in them an exceptional capacity for irradiation and attached undisguised intellectual affection to them. This was certainly the case with Luís de Camões, António Vieira, and Camilo Castelo Branco.

Having founded the Chair of Camonian Studies at the School of Arts and Humanities in Coimbra (1976), Aníbal de Castro would go on to lead it until his retirement in 2006. His Camonian knowledge, from which several generations of students benefited, was mainly reflected in a collection of essays entitled *Páginas de um honesto estudo camoniano* [Pages from an honest study of Camões], which was published in 2010 and which, in its very title, reflects a whole programme of university verticality. In it, we can find, among other studies, a systematic analysis of the role of mythology in the lyric; in it, we can see issues of complex intertextuality analysed in an innovative and convincing manner, such as the relationship between Camonian lyric and the peninsular poetic tradition or the contiguity between the account of the sinking of the Galleon *Grande São João* and the Camonian retelling of that story in *Canto V* of *Os Lusíadas*. Opening that same work, we also find a valuable text summarising the poet's life and work. This essay was originally intended to appear in an Encyclopaedia. It was later published in paperback by the Camões Institute and was widely distributed. His interest in the author of *Os Lusíadas* is also attested to by the creation of the Interuniversity Centre for Camonian Studies, which he directed for several years.

His particular fondness for the figure and work of António Vieira began during his stay in Italy, benefiting from two factors: his knowledge of the codes of the European Baroque and his physical proximity to the documents preserved in that country's archives. The research that he would later pursue as part of his doctorate opened up new perspectives that he cultivated throughout his academic career and which would materialise in a series of studies (scattered throughout periodicals and collective publications), dealing with the codes that underpin Vieira's thought and also the artistic nature of his writing. The painstaking labour he put into the life and work of this author would lead to the mature synthesis he wrote for a wider audience, which saw the light of day at the CTT Collectors' Club.

While incorporating the legacy of the more conventional philological school, AC kept abreast of the transformations that took place in literary studies throughout the 1970s. It could even be said that his excellent training in the fields of poetics and rhetoric made it easier for him to absorb the stylistic and



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narratological currents that valued the text in both its structural (especially narrative) and aesthetic aspects. Although his entire oeuvre is a synthesis between the role of context and attention to the text, his work on Camilo Castelo Branco's novels is a prime example in this regard. Moved by genuine intellectual interest and perhaps also by some kind of human sympathy for the figure of the writer, AC came to accept the directorship of the Camilo House Museum. In carrying out these duties, he would develop persistent efforts in the areas of heritage recovery and preservation and in promoting initiatives linked to cultural research and dissemination.

Among the aspects that best define his vast literary-historical labour, his commitment to studying the relationship between historical reality and fictional transformation is worth highlighting. This line of research, centred on what we might call the 'writer's workshop', has proven to be particularly demanding, implying a combined knowledge of history and literary studies. In this regard, in addition to the authors already mentioned, his work on Fernão Mendes Pinto and Eça de Queirós (an author on whom he would write a synthesis study, also published by CTT) is particularly important.

In addition to his work as a professor, AC's legacy involves another area of work that he embraced with particular gusto and a sense of university mission. I am referring to the position of Director of the General Library of the University of Coimbra, which he held uninterruptedly for nearly two decades. Although he was a connoisseur of other bibliographic collections in Portugal and abroad (particularly in Spain and Italy), it is undeniable that access to the rich documentary heritage kept in what is the country's second library greatly favoured his teaching and research in terms of broadening his interests.

Thus, the studies he published, the many lectures he gave at universities and other academic institutions and the classes he gave throughout his teaching career were often anchored in an unusual familiarity with the material support of the texts. The pleasure of bibliophilia and the endless interest in revisiting primary sources allowed him to formulate hypotheses, correct positions (his own and those of others), and constantly renew his perspective.

Among the scientific institutions to which he belonged were, in Portugal, the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa [Lisbon Academy of Sciences] and the Academia Portuguesa de História [Portuguese Academy of History], and, in Brazil, the Real Gabinete Português de Leitura [Royal Portuguese Reading Office]. As well as receiving an *honoris causa* doctorate from the Portuguese Catholic University, he was also awarded several decorations, including the title of Commander of the *Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana* [Order of Merit of the Italian Republic], Commander of the Royal Order of Our Lady of the Conception of Vila Viçosa, Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre and Grand Officer of the Ordem Militar de Sant'Iago da Espada.

Active bibliography: *Balzac em Portugal. Contribuição para o estudo da influência de Balzac em Portugal e no Brasil*, Coimbra, 1960; *Retórica e Teorização Literária em Portugal. Do Humanismo ao Neoclassicismo*, Coimbra, Centro de Estudos Românicos, 1973 (reedição pela Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, em 2008); *Narrador, tempo e leitor na novela camiliana*, Famalicão, 1976; *Páginas de um honesto*

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A estas obras há ainda que acrescentar o trabalho que desenvolveu ao longo de vários anos na direção da *Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura* e na coordenação de *Biblos. Enciclopédia Verbo das Literaturas de Língua Portuguesa* (Lisboa/São Paulo, 1995-2005). Contribuiu, de resto, com dezenas de artigos para uma e para outra.

Passive bibliography: Matos, Maria Vitalina Leal de, “Aníbal Pinto de Castro”, in *Biblos. Enciclopédia Verbo das Literaturas de Língua Portuguesa*, Lisboa/São Paulo, Editorial Verbo, 1995, cc. 1058-1061; Silva, Vítor Aguiar e, “Primavera e Inverno na filologia românica”, in *Colheita de Inverno. Ensaio de Teoria e Crítica Literárias*, Coimbra, Almedina, 2020, pp. 91-112.

José Augusto Bernardes

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