



**Revista de Estudos Históricos** (Porto, 1924-1926)

In 1919, the philosopher Leonardo Coimbra, Minister of Education in the government of Domingos Pereira, created the first Faculdade de Letras [School of Arts and Humanities] in Porto, a unique and innovative university institution in a university traditionally specialising in scientific fields. It was from the Institute of Historical Studies of this School that the direction and much of the collaboration of the History of Portugal, known as “de Barcelos”, the first history of the country written by academics, came from. The Faculdade de Letras do Porto [School of Arts and Humanities of Porto] was closed in 1928, but continued to operate until 1931, allowing students who had enrolled in 1927 to complete their degrees.

*Revista de Estudos Históricos* is considered the first university history journal to be published in Portugal. Created within the Institute of Historical Studies of the first Faculdade de Letras do Porto [School of Arts and Humanities of Porto], this publication was directed by Damião Peres, interim rector and professor at the School. The first issue was a double issue dated January to June 1924. Although it was initially billed as a quarterly journal, it was only published quarterly during its first year. The following year, it became a quarterly publication and, in 1926, its last year of publication, only a single triple issue was published.

At first glance, this publication consisted of ten issues published over three years. Strangely, the last three, which refer to the year 1926, contain a set of critical reviews of works published in the following two years, all signed by Damião Peres, in a section entitled “Bibliography”. The same copies also contain an article by Ludovico de Meneses dated April 1928. This observation leads us to believe that the last volumes do not truly correspond to their date of publication, which was only possible from the end of 1928 or the beginning of 1929. We do not know the reasons for this discrepancy and apparent inconsistency. However, the evidence suggests a longer publication period than the three years suggested by the date on the covers. Published in Porto, this journal, aimed at academics, was not divided into sections. Similarly, we are unaware of other characteristics, such as its print run and cover price. Graphically, the periodical was unattractive, with sporadic illustrations of coins, artefacts, maps and documents, and figures of a purely technical nature.

The main objectives of this publication were to promote an objective and scholarly discussion, led and headed by academics, of facts of general history that had never been questioned before, as well as to develop historiographical production linked to the city of Porto. Bringing together articles, many of them unpublished, on



topics such as history, Portuguese and foreign literature, numismatics, archaeology and anthropology, the main editors of this publication were lecturers at the Faculdade de Letras do Porto [School of Arts and Humanities of Porto], although there were occasional contributions from figures outside the institution. The most prolific contributor to this journal was its editor, Damião Peres, author of nine articles out of a total of twenty-eight. However, other professors from the institution also made notable contributions, such as António Mendes Correia, Pedro Vitorino, Artur de Magalhães Basto, José Teixeira Rego and Angelo Ribeiro. Among contributors from outside the institution, the work of Edgar Prestage, an English historian and the only foreign contributor to this publication, professor of Camões at the University of London, Paulo Merêa, Ludovico de Menezes and the specialist in Hebrew Studies, Artur de Barros Basto, is noteworthy.

The main topics covered by the authors are the history of Portugal, the history of Porto, the history of art in Porto, archaeology and anthropology, and German and Portuguese literature. With regard to the history of Portugal, there are articles on the island of Madeira, diplomatic history, particularly in the post-Restoration period, the history of literature, the publication of historical sources and the study of influential figures from our past. There is a strong presence in this publication of various articles on the history of Porto, written by several authors, showing the city as the stage for major events, such as the invasion by Junot's troops and the funeral of Dom Pedro II. The city of Porto is also presented as the heir to artistic treasures, evident in its Municipal Museum, which is constantly studied in this publication.

Some authors, such as Armando Carvalho Homem, consider Damião Peres to be a historian of synthesis rather than a researcher. However, in several articles written for the *Revista de Estudos Históricos*, the author demonstrates his research skills, particularly in the collection of articles on the public administration of the island of Madeira during the reign of King Manuel and in the period following the Restoration. In these articles, we observe the use of various documentary sources, with the author drawing on various chancelleries and archival documents, such as the patents in the Funchal City Council, bringing innovation to the overseas historiography of the time. In fact, while some of the articles written by the editor of this publication are mere publications of historical sources or the dissemination of numismatic specimens, others show an intention to clarify certain facts that were previously unclear, using primary sources.

In his article entitled *O problema dos governadores gerais da Ilha da Madeira* (The problem of the governors-general of Madeira), Damião Peres questions many of the observations made by Álvaro Rodrigues de Azevedo, a professor and leading authority on the history of the island. Damião Peres disagrees with the professor on several points, such as the list of people appointed as governors-general, the name given to the position and the scope of their powers. According to him, the designation of the position took various forms, from general and superintendent of war affairs to governor and then captain general, but never governor general, as Álvaro Rodrigues de Azevedo claimed. Damião Peres also considered that the powers of this official were very limited, almost exclusively military, contrary to his interlocutor's view.

Another interesting historiographical debate is highlighted in the article by António Mendes Correia, entitled *A lealdade de uma Rainha portuguesa* (The loyalty of a Portuguese queen). In it, the author argues that Queen



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Catherine of Austria never favoured the aspirations of Charles V and Philip II to the Portuguese crown, contrary to the opinions defended by Professor Queiroz Veloso, of the University of Lisbon, and by José de Sousa Guimarães. To this end, Mendes Correia bases his argument on the monograph by Spanish academic Llanos y Torriglia and on unpublished documents published by Queiroz Veloso. José de Sousa Guimarães would publish a book entitled *Erros da História* (Errors of History), in which he would attack Mendes Correia's position on the role of this queen in the establishment of the Dual Monarchy. The professor at the Faculdade de Letras do Porto [School of Arts and Humanities of Porto] criticises the high degree of "inflexible historical certainty" demonstrated by his interlocutor, analysing the very concept of "historical error" incorporated in the work. He criticises the "judgement of historical figures" carried out, as well as the author's partial and severe language. In the article in question, Mendes Correia took the opportunity to defend his point of view, implicitly and explicitly criticising his opponents, in a debate that was understandable during a period when historical nationalism was a historiographical trend, emphasising a taste for the biographies of great historical figures.

While, on the one hand, this publication offers a broader historical perspective in comparison with contemporary international scenarios, on the other hand, there are also references to regional history. This is the case by in the article by Artur de Magalhães Basto entitled *O Porto contra Junot* (Porto against Junot), which recounts the opposition of the people of Porto to the invasion by French troops. The author's discourse is sometimes reduced to a theatrical succession of events, due to the excessive use of adjectives in a markedly factual text. This cult of narrative history is also evident in another article by the same author, entitled *Na morte de um Rei* (On the Death of a King), which recounts in detail the funeral of Dom Pedro II. Magalhães Basto expresses enthusiasm when the 'patriots of Porto' rise up against the invading French troops. The notion of 'homeland' is recurrent in his discourse, referring to 'patriotism', the 'patriotic aspirations' of the people of Porto or the Portuguese 'homeland'. The people of Porto are observed in many different ways by the author. They are the "masses" who incite revolt against the "Jacobins"; they are the "people" who, frightened, do not understand the "invasion". But the people of Porto are also a "population," a "multitude," "mobs" that incite "revolt," a "rabble," "plebs," which contrasts with the "upper classes," the latter with little enthusiasm for the struggle.

Pedro Vitorino and Damião Peres, in their articles on Numismatics, Epigraphy, Medallion Art and Art History, consider coins, medals, inscriptions and other works of art as historical sources and documents, observing a broadening of the concept. As Pedro Vitorino states: "Those who seek truth as the foundation of history must take advantage of everything." The author even goes so far as to refer to some urban elements of Porto as "architectural documents". In his article on medallion art, he uses the concept of "memory", the memory that was lost after the disappearance of some sacred medals from the 17th century. In another article, the author uses the expression 'diagnosis' of an era, a diagnosis that is possible, according to him, through the reading of certain epigraphic elements. In another contribution, this time on the arch of Santo António do Penedo, the professor uses the term 'oblivion', induced by the disappearance of some of the city's architectural heritage.

Another historiographical debate present in this work is raised by Paulo Merêa. The professor questions the

fact, defended by authors such as Herculano, António Caetano de Amaral and João Pedro Ribeiro, that Afonso Henriques only began to call himself king after 1140. The academic points out that he has occasionally found a document, dated before the Battle of Ourique, in which Afonso Henriques already called himself king, a fact that does not corroborate the hypothesis put forward by Herculano and his followers, which had never been questioned until then.

Ludovico de Meneses, in his article on the Battle of Ourique, uses the interesting concept of “fiction” to describe this event, which he believes has been exaggerated by the “nonsense of later chronicles”. The author even considers this a “historical problem”, taking the opportunity to question the past and raise a number of plausible hypotheses in areas that cannot yet be proven by documentary evidence. The author contrasts this with the study by Lieutenant Colonel Botelho da Costa Veiga, published in the newspaper *O Século* on 28 March 1928, criticising the location of the battle indicated by the military officer, as well as the routes to and from the military camp proposed by him. Ludovico de Meneses suggests a more r location for the battle, between the Mértola-Odemira line, the sea, Aljustrel and the Entradas-Mértola line, thus proposing the Lower Alentejo as the scene of the battle.

Dedicated to topics in general and local history, the *Revista de Estudos Históricos* was undoubtedly an innovation in Portuguese historiography at the time, aimed at a specialised academic audience. Bringing together a range of contributions and authors with varied historiographical perspectives, from a markedly critical history to a narrative history, this publication, innovative in theoretical terms, became a reference work, sometimes distancing itself from the historical nationalism that marked the historiography of the time. Cultivating a documentary and erudite history, extolling debate as a vehicle for clarification and historiographical innovation, this publication reflected a concern for truth and objectivity over a more in-depth interpretation of the facts.

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