

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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RICARD, Robert (Paris, 1900 – Paris, 1984)

A student at the École Normale Supérieure, Agrégé des Lettres in 1920, he was a lecturer at the *Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa* [School of Arts and Humanities of Lisbon] from 1920 to 1922 and then worked in Madrid (École des Hautes Études Hispaniques) from 1922 to 1927. He devoted himself in particular to the history of the Church, having defended a remarkable doctoral thesis in Paris on the evangelisation of Mexico by the mendicant orders in 1932, under the direction of Henri Hauser and Marcel Mauss. He was a high school teacher in Rabat and later a professor at the University of Algiers, a senior official in Morocco (Director of Public Education), he was appointed to the Chair of Hispanic Studies at the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in 1946. He directed the Institut Hispanique and held the position of Directeur d'Études at the 4th section of the École Pratique des Hautes Études. He also devoted himself to Arabic studies, and after the death of Henry de Castries, he worked with Pierre de Cénival and David Lopes in editing the Portuguese section of the *Sources Inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc* — for which he was ultimately responsible. He was a member of the Editorial Committee of the *Bulletin Hispanique* from 1947 until 1981 (which he chaired from 1977 to 1981), and then served as President of Honour of that Committee of a magazine to which he collaborated extensively. He also contributed to the *Bulletin des Études Portugaises*, published by the French Institute in Lisbon. In addition to the *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian* [Archives of the Portuguese Cultural Centre of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation] in Paris. He was also a regular contributor to magazines published by Catholic institutions, particularly those linked to the Society of Jesus.

As a scholar with a sure grasp of philological research, he published articles of great subtlety and depth on terms and concepts, refining meanings that were often forgotten or remained hidden: as in the case of *rossio* and *devezas* and *terreiro do paço* or the *eixido* or the *toques das trindades* or the meaning of *couraça* — as well as other lexicographical studies of his choice. With these works he proposed and solved problems of toponymy, both Portuguese and Spanish, with great critical finesse. Many of his writings are scattered and difficult to access, and would merit a publication that would allow them to be studied together — and there are many of them, scattered throughout magazines that sometimes have a very small circulation: Robert Ricard was generous in distributing his wisdom. With the exception that, in 1955, the University of Coimbra organised a collection of his articles on the history of the Portuguese in Morocco, and in 1970 there was a



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similar effort by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Paris, that gathered other writings on the moral and religious history of Portugal. These are two indispensable volumes for scholars of Portuguese culture and politics — and essential for all scholars.

Robert Ricard always looks very closely at what the sources say — which he knows very well — in order to draw out the meaning or significance that may be hidden in them. But that wasn't enough for him. He wasn't a *literato* who only wrote papers. He conducted field research, such as when he focused on Portuguese urban toponymy, travelling to various locations with the help of guide Orlando Ribeiro. Dealing with the *rossio* he looks for the "forms and etymology of the term, separating the role of the thing and sketching a comparative study with certain elements of Spanish vocabulary" ("Recherches", p. 134). That's how he decides to explore some Portuguese cities where he knows the place names he wants to explain. In the same way, he also deals in detail with excellent examples of the *ruas direitas* [right streets], the direct routes that other scholars have also travelled. Or the *door of betrayal* that one finds in Portuguese settlements. Or *couscous* so popular in Moroccan gastronomy, for which he seeks an equivalent in Spanish and Portuguese. Even in the face of the most renowned masters (such as José Leite de Vasconcelos), he managed to maintain the healthy distrust that should characterise scholarly research. RR studied the expressions he wanted to explain on the basis of philology and observed reality, "partial and local studies", before moving on to the precise definitions and extreme rigour he aimed to achieve — and he succeeded. (*Études*, p. 490). That was his working method. For example: to find out what is meant by *marlota* he looks at numerous examples in Spanish and Portuguese, without excluding Moroccan contaminations and even the French case of *marlotte*. With these extensive and detailed enquiries, he finally "defined" the object of his study. This exemplary work process is explained in detail in the article on the four-century Portuguese chronicles of Morocco, in which the names of people and places are investigated and these in turn are compared with the current names — many of which he knew *de visu*. Robert Ricard wants to and succeeds in making a reading on the ground and in the texts in combination, always with great acuity. With a keen interest in original sources and a mastery of Portuguese and Spanish languages, he translated numerous excerpts from chronicles and other texts with exemplary fidelity to the originals. His translations included works by Gomes Eanes de Zurara, Infante D. Pedro, Friar João Álvares, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, Damião de Góis, Diogo do Couto, Francisco de Andrade, Friar Luís de Sousa, among many others. Few things will have escaped his attention: another example is the meanings of the ways of riding a horse, with the different names — *à gineta* or *à brida* — not for the detail itself, but as a clarifier of military tactics, as the exact meaning of the *rebate* or *rebato*, necessary to understand certain aspects of the fights in Morocco (*Études*, pp. 345-355). That he didn't want to leave meaningless in obscure passages of chronicles. He dedicated detailed notes to the evacuation of Portuguese forces in Morocco during the reign of King João III: Safim and Azamor in 1541 and Alcácer-Ceguer and Arzila in 1549-1550. Without separating these evacuations from the necessary framework of the Portuguese empire, especially in Asia — a mainly financial framework that explains the sovereign's decision to abandon it. He has a keen sense for everything related with the military. An erudite attention that is neither common nor to be expected



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from someone who favoured cultural history and, within this, religious aspects — and, within these, spirituality. But he didn't want to leave anything unchecked. Even if insignificant matters, as long as he came across them, had to be investigated and settled. This is the case with the burial place of D. Juan Manuel, where confusion arose between Peñafiel (Castile-La Vella) and Penafiel (Entre-Douro e Minho). A small correction in writings by Joaquim de Carvalho, which was not meaningful. And that is why it is recorded as a note. However, he insists on adding it (*Études d'Histoire*, p. 122).

Rather than dedicating any extensive or monographic work to Portuguese history, he chose to disseminate his findings through short yet enlightening articles, which he submitted to numerous magazines. The articles he often wrote only hinted at the issues he was dealing with. However, at least two of these unpretentious articles — played a central role in problems that would be revised and continued by other historians: “Le commerce de Berbérie et l'organisation économique de l'empire portugais aux XV^e et XVI^e Siècles” (from 1935, where he ventured working hypotheses that would later be explored and developed by Vitorino Magalhães Godinho) and “La dualité de la civilisation hispanique et l'histoire religieuse du Portugal” (from 1956, which Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho always provided as his vital reference). Barradas de Carvalho has even written on the subject, in which he categorises Robert Ricard's article as “remarkable”.

With remarkable subtlety, the scholar delved into the meaning of important things and words, such as Maghrebi alambels (*hambels*). What he found serves as a starting point for explaining the general network of Portuguese trade centred on North Africa in various respects (*Études*, pp. 84-88). Not to mention other goods that circulated, such as fabrics, horses, fruit, wheat, etc. He undoubtedly made an essential contribution to understanding and explaining the Portuguese expansion from the Portuguese-Spanish-Moroccan Gulf to Guinea (without forgetting Arguim and Mina). An Atlantic area where the slave and gold trades, essential for the construction of the Portuguese African empire, were later established. So much so that Berberia and Guinea resemble a “solidarity bloc”. This also includes the islands (Madeira, the Azores and the Canary Islands), Andalusia (Cádiz, Málaga, Puerto de Santa María and Jerez de la Frontera) and the western Mediterranean through the Genoese maritime trade network. In the 1930s, Portuguese research on Morocco was still centred on discussing the military and political aspects of the conquest — although David Lopes had already made a notable contribution. Much less were other aspects mentioned, particularly the economic one. It was then that Robert Ricard presented his succinct and well-founded vision of the presence in the Maghreb within the framework of the Portuguese domains and presence in Africa. Everything that ultimately shows “the coherence, the tenacious, multiform and almost implacable continuity of what can well be called Portuguese imperialism.” (*Études* (*Études*, p. 104). The procedures for evangelising indigenous people and the Moorish deserved enlightening pages. Although they cannot be confused. However, it's about saving people from spiritual death, because the other type of death, the physical one, doesn't wait. (*Études et documents...*, p. 210). Robert Ricard pays special attention to figures of converts who go unnoticed in Portuguese histories, such as those he calls Moroccan martyrs, Gonçalo Vaz and João Vaz, who turn from Muslims to Catholics only to perish in barbaric suffering when they are caught by their homeland — because they refuse to



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renounce their chosen faith. Or the enquiry into the acceptance of a Christian bishop in Muslim Lisbon in 1147. It follows that we cannot think of a Christian community organised and led by a bishop. And so, he moved away from Herculano and closer to Fr. Luís Gonzaga de Azevedo. (*Études d'histoires...*, p. 41). Literature and history, firmly rooted in scholarly research, are consistently present throughout all studies, but Robert Ricard, a rare master of the sources, excels in articulating and addressing questions through the extensive range of data he is able to compile. He used comparisons to establish solid conclusions. Robert Ricard's knowledge of the history of the Portuguese in Morocco was largely used by Joel Serrão in the *Dicionário de História de Portugal* [Dictionary of Portuguese History] and entrusted him with the writing of several entries in his well-known field of research.

Central to his research was the Spanish-Portuguese peninsular duality. It's a reality that is not possible to explain on a map. Portuguese nationality, which emerged early on (like others on the Peninsula, such as Catalan and Basque), but most importantly (and this is the key point) continued to deepen and endure. Independence as a mystery or a miracle? (*Études sur l'histoire*, p. 13). For the historian, it's neither one thing nor the other, but a problem that needs to be solved. There is a Portuguese culture, which has links with Spanish culture, but cultures that are distinct. Portugal has been formed since 1250, with the conquest of the Algarve. It soon formed a separate entity from Castile. But Spain had not yet been formed. In contrast to a "unified, complete" Portugal, there are the separate kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Navarre and the Muslim kingdom of Granada. (*Études sur l'histoire...*, p. 17). And Portugal will endeavour to remain independent. Even maritime expansion is due to the disproportion between the two political entities. And even in the linguistic realm, whose boundaries are particularly in line with what happens in the realm of politics. Although politics and culture cannot be confused, neither do they overlap. And until at least the Restoration of 1640, Robert Ricard argues that there was and remained a peninsular culture, when the languages were already differentiated. And he always tries to find aspects in the two literatures that he calls "complementary" and not opposites. In the same way that "Portuguese navigators and Spanish conquistadors complement each other" (*Études et documents*, p. 9). This does not leave aside the political aspects, particularly after the Iberian Union.

With the revival of diversified politics after the Restoration in 1640, the cultural duality of different — and often adversarial — States was resumed. Portugal and Castile experienced numerous conflicts, which explains their political differentiation; however, what might seem contradictory is the sustained continuity of a shared literary culture. This cultural (and linguistic, in terms of artistic expression, with Galician-Portuguese as the common language for medieval lyrical poetry and Castilian for other forms of expression later on) community, in which Castilian works by Gil Vicente, Sá de Miranda, and Camões stand out, still during the Renaissance. After and during the dynastic union, Portugal leaned towards a privileged relationship with French culture and artistic expressions after 1640. Because "the political rupture will be accompanied by an intellectual and spiritual rupture." (*Études sur l'histoire...*, p. 16). After all, as Robert Ricard proposes, it is the period from 1580 to 1640 that intensifies the cultural divide between Spain and Portugal.



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The relationship with French culture after 1640 arises from the vulnerability experienced during the period of union, sparking a defensive reaction that, alongside the political rupture, also results in a spiritual separation. The bilingualism that still persists among some authors after the Restoration — such as Friar António das Chagas and Francisco Manuel de Melo — gradually fades and so does the shared peninsular culture. But Robert Ricard is not satisfied with these historical arguments, and extends his studies to the duality that seems to exist between the areas of religious geography in the two countries. An area that he feels has not yet been explored. The Christianised north, with a religious practice identical to that of Spain and Italy, with its centre in Braga, was opposed by a de-Christianised region south of Porto and up to the Algarve, similar to that of most of France. This separation between the national idea and the Christian idea in Portugal may help explain the penetration of philosophical liberalism and secularism, which have left a lasting mark. And from there to the need to explain the lack of religious vocations is a step that Robert Ricard never fails to take. Always looking at history and observing what's around him. Erudition also in the contemporary, one might say.

In the field of the history of spirituality — in his own words — he focuses on the writings of Prince Fernando (the Holy Prince), Prince Pedro and the *Livro da Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* on Prince Luís (son of King Manuel I), Friar Bartolomeu dos Mártires (through Friar Luís de Sousa, who translated and annotated the *Anais de D. João III* [Annals of King John III]), Friar António das Chagas, and Father António Vieira, along with Soror Joana da Cruz and Father Manuel Bernardes, among others — including Friar Heitor Pinto, Friar Luís de Granada, Luís António Verney, Teodoro de Almeida, Camilo Castelo Branco, and Miguel de Unamuno, a contemporary to whom he gives special attention. In particular, we sought to define the precise meaning of these spiritual practices, as well as the readings and external influences — namely those of the Northern Mystics — on the spirituality observed among the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries. (*Études sur l'histoire...*, pp. 205-221). And many other aspects. The detailed enquiry into the *Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* [Virtuous Benefaction] — prepared with great care and detail — as is usual — succeeds in highlighting the sources that Prince Pedro and his collaborator Friar João Verba would likely have used: evidently, the *De beneficiis* by Seneca, the Old Testament as a whole, the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke, texts by St Paul, Aristotle and Cicero, St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas. Nevertheless *Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* is "to a large extent an original work that contains an important personal contribution" by the Prince. (*Études sur l'Histoire*, pp. 120-122). That way one becomes more familiar with him. Robert Ricard had a wealth of information that made it difficult for his erudite analyses to be contradicted (or even to be contradicted at all). Because the documentary evidence for the conclusions they allowed was presented as self-evident. Without being exaggerated or allowing extrapolations. And that's what counted, in the rigour he was aiming for. And he did achieve it. Trying to make his knowledge and analyses available to specialists from other areas. This is the case, for example, with the *Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* "which in many respects is linked to political philosophy." Although this wasn't his object, he did summarise the main interpretations of Prince Pedro's book in order to make it easier to study. (*Études sur l'Histoire*, p. 123). Because for Robert



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Ricard, one does not need to consider just one facet of a work, but its entirety. Not linked to the *Annales* or any later proposal for a new history, it is nevertheless to these innovative movements that he draws close — while retaining the old scholarly procedures that structure his hermeneutics with a finesse that is hard to match.

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