

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**Boaventura, D. Frei Fortunato de São** (Alcobaça, 1777 – Rome, 1844)

One of the most prolific writers on historical-philological themes and a leading political pamphleteer of his time in counter-revolutionary thought, as well as a correspondent and honorary member of the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* [Lisbon Academy of Sciences], a general studies reformer, and Archbishop of Évora under King Miguel, whom he loyally served even in exile, Friar Fortunato de São Boaventura — whose secular name remains unknown — stands as a significant example of a multifaceted author and a politically consistent figure in both ideas and actions. He comes from an "honourable" family background from Alcobaça, in the words of Inocêncio Francisco da Silva, his father was a bookseller, according to the same source. At eighteen, he professed the Cistercian rule of St Bernard in the affluent monastery of Alcobaça, during an era of the *Ancien Régime* when joining the regular clergy often served as a gateway to an intense cultural life and a well-ordered, informed worldview — as exemplified by José Liberato Freire de Carvalho (born in 1772) at the monastery of São Vicente de Fora in Lisbon. He completed his preparatory studies in Coimbra, obtained a bachelor's degree in 1806, followed by a licentiate and doctorate in 1810 from the Faculty of Theology (already reformed, it should be noted), and went on to teach at the College of Arts and later at the University, eventually becoming a Professor of Theology. In 1808 and 1809, the years of the French invasions, his first known writings surfaced, six pamphlets printed on the University's royal printing press, marking the legitimisation of their content. These works include one written in Latin and addressed to the vice-rector, two translations concerning Napoleon's expansionist policy and the siege of Zaragoza, eulogies of Francisco da Silveira Pinto da Fonseca, and tributes to the actions of the academic volunteer corps in the armed struggle against Napoleonic forces, which he joined as early as 1807, according to memoirist Marquis of Fronteira, as quoted by João Ameal (although another source cites 1808). In 1812 he took on the role of substitute lecturer in theology and in 1817 he became a professor of Greek at the College of Arts.

Thus, by the age of forty, Friar Fortunato's academic career was already well established, with a substantial bibliography on contemporary events that positioned him within the so-called immediatist history — alongside figures such as Garção Stockler and Acúrsio das Neves, for example, with new titles celebrating the secular and military heroes of the time, such as General Silveira, Colonel Trant, Marshal Beresford, and



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the Viscounts Wellington and Montealegre, all published in 1811. But he was also beginning to develop, although separately, a journalistic vein, with a "well-supported volume" of the *Minerva Lusitana* from 1808-1809, also with the official seal of the university's royal press. A first work of a historical nature appeared in the same printing house, the *Memória sobre a vida da beata Mafalda, rainha de Castela e reformadora do monasterio de Arouca* [Memoir on the life of Blessed Mafalda, Queen of Castile and reformer of the monastery of Arouca] from 1814. And already here, according to Inocêncio's comments, we have an initial methodological issue: the work does not have, as suggested in the text, the promised documentary appendices, in keeping with the prevailing mindset at the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, where António Ribeiro dos Santos, António Caetano do Amaral and João Pedro Ribeiro had. Also in this volume is a brief unpublished treatise by Friar Bernardo de Brito.

In fact, it was at the Academy of Sciences that Friar Fortunato published five studies, in 1821, 1823, 1825 and 1827, on the *História e Memórias* [History and Memoirs]... They are themes in which traditional monastic erudition intersects with the classical subjects of literature, worked on within the Academy. On the one hand, memoirs about "three great figures of Alcobaça historiography" (João Ameal), a concept that Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão only accepts in the strict sense — Bernardo de Brito, António Brandão and Francisco Brandão. On the other, studies on Greek and Hebrew literature, from the beginnings of the monarchy to the reign of King José.

Several other titles were published at Imprensa Régia, such as the funeral orations of the Bishop of Leiria and the Bishop-Count of Coimbra, in 1820 and 1822; and voluminous collections of anti-liberal pamphlets, virulent in tone and rich in political intolerance language, such as the periodicals *O Punhal dos Corcundas* [The Hunchback's Dagger] (1823-24), *O Mastigóforo* [The Mastigophora] (1824 and 1829), *O Defensor dos Jesuítas* [The Defender of the Jesuits] (1829-1833) and *A Contra-mina* [The Countermine] (1830), some of them during the reign of King Miguel and when Friar Fortunato was already Archbishop of Évora. In these writings, the author blended the finest anti-Masonic rhetoric with the authority of his public office positions, acting — like José Agostinho de Macedo and other writers — as an unofficial spokesperson for the regime against liberal thought. However, even during the liberal period and after the Vila-Francada, he refrained from inciting physical violence (especially in *O Punhal dos Corcundas* anonymous). He thus associates the concept of popular sovereignty and the actions of Freemasonry with errors in historical and philosophical logic, both of which he traces back to Luther's Reformation and the 18th-century Enlightenment. During the Vintist triennium, he criticises royal legislation on ecclesiastical matters, the separation of Church and State, the attempts to reform the clergy, and freedoms of the press and thought. He defends the Inquisition and the Society of Jesus as forces countering the irreligiosity of the 16th and 19th centuries; he refrains from describing his own era as one of decadence, although he does criticise the alleged role of the Vintists in Brazilian independence and the depletion of public funds. Finally, he praises Bossuet and ultramontane thinking, showing a careful argumentative construction inspired by biblical examples and an informed, almost legalistic and moderate historian's view of the affairs of the State and the Church. In the second publication of



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*O Mastigóforo* from 1829 onwards, with King Miguel's royal position already strengthened, the language and tone change, much more aggressive and dichotomous, with no aim of leading to reflection or debate, but rather, "through the Manichaeism it reproduces, to provoke immediate feelings of near love/hate, repudiation/acceptance", following the line of thought of José Agostinho de Macedo, whom he calls the prince of anti-Masonic writers. Although he calls for a war of the pen rather than the sword, his tone is clearly warmongering and intolerant, in line with what he considered to be the teachings of the Holy Scriptures in the face of the heresies of all times. He starts to favour the extreme ideas of a Masonic conspiracy, as Abbé Barruel used to say (Marília Favinha, *Frei Fortunato de São Boaventura e a "Contra-Revolução"* [Friar Fortunato of St Bonaventure and the 'Counter-Revolution'], 1996, pp. 95-109, 117, 119, 121-131 and 143-147 and João Ameal, «*D. Frei Fortunato de São Boaventura...*», 1964, pp. 406-423 and 428-429).

After the Vila-Francada, Friar Fortunato de São Boaventura was appointed royal censor of the *Desembargo do Paço* [Royal Board of Appeal], and on 5 December 1823, he became secretary of a purging board for lecturers, opponents, and university employees to be excluded for their revolutionary behaviour and opinions (Marília Favinha, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 23 and 135). In 1827 he was promoted to chronicler-general of the Order of St Bernard and that same year he published, once again at the Imprensa Régia, the *História cronológica e crítica da Real Abadia de Alcobaça, da Congregação Cisterciense de Portugal, to serve as a continuation to the illustrated Alcobaça by the Chronicler Major Frei Manuel dos Santos* [Chronological and critical history of the Royal Abbey of Alcobaça, of the Cistercian Congregation of Portugal, to serve as a continuation to the illustrated Alcobaça by the Chronicler Major Frei Manuel dos Santos] with a long favourable opinion from José Agostinho de Macedo, who in a letter refers to the author as the Mabillon of the "congregation of St Bernard" (Teófilo Braga, *Obras inéditas de José Agostinho de Macedo...* [Unpublished works by José Agostinho de Macedo...], vol. I, 1900, p. 92 and Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão, *A Historiografia Portuguesa...* [Portuguese Historiography...], vol. III, 1974, pp. 98 ff.). This work, however, was criticised by João Pedro Ribeiro in 1829 and 1830, at a time when he was the dean of the Portuguese Literature class at the Academy and holder of the Diplomatics chair at the Torre do Tombo. Friar Fortunato and even José Agostinho de Macedo will respond to Ribeiro's comments, marking a clear confrontation between a historiography that, while authored by a secular priest, was secularised and did not conform to the hagiographic spirit of certain monastic historiography, and a centuries-old tradition of Alcobaça scholarship, which was not free from foundational myths and undocumented legends. These myths and legends are not criticised by Ribeiro, and thus Friar Fortunato does not seem to have reproduced them uncritically; rather, he heatedly defended the merits of his predecessors in the Order, the authors of the *Monarquia Lusitana* [Lusitanian Monarchy] work which we know reproduces the pseudo-minutes of the Lamego courts. For example, there is discussion around the palaeographic expertise within the Cistercian congregation and its decision not to send some of its monks to the Aula Diplomática in Lisbon — a choice that Friar Fortunato attributed to economic reasons, suggesting it could be addressed through alternative means, with internal training provided by the Order. As for the origins of the donations to the monastery of Alcobaça, São



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Boaventura argued that placing too much emphasis on the lack of contemporary documents would lead to "historical scepticism" and reminded that "there are also very respectable historical traditions" (*Resposta às "Reflexões do conselheiro João Pedro Ribeiro"* [Response to the Reflections of Counsellor João Pedro Ribeiro], 1830, pp. 3-8 ff.). Although João Pedro Ribeiro's tone deserved some criticism from the Academy's censors (António Baião, *A infância da Academia* [The infancy of the Academy]..., 1934, pp. 197-200), this controversy did, to a certain extent, anticipate those which, with regard to the reforms introduced by the 1834 revolution in the forms of land ownership (João Pedro Ribeiro-Coelho da Rocha) and Ourique, will place Alexandre Herculano against Father Francisco Recreio and other authors in later years. The unabashed and ironic tone on both sides; the legitimacy of unwritten tradition versus the unique value of documents with proven authenticity; the continuity of Joanist reformism — whether in charters, religious orders, or improvements in agricultural income — interrupted by the fierce, legal legitimacy of intellectuals such as Herculano and Mouzinho da Silveira, all emerge in these heated dialogues between men of letters with shared subjects of analysis but opposing perspectives.

Even after King Miguel and his court departed for various European capitals — London, Paris, Rome — Friar Fortunato followed his sovereign to the Eternal City and lived there for more than ten years, as did two other members of the Academy with important historical and cultural writings and public roles under King Miguel: the Bishop of Viseu, Francisco Alexandre Lobo, and the Viscount of Santarém. Unlike both of them — and the Dukes of Cadaval and Lafões, also in Paris — Friar Fortunato did not remain anonymous as a private individual or as a merely erudite man of letters: similarly to the Bishop of Viseu, he wrote several pastorals to his flock of faithful in Évora, commenting on the open schism between revolutionised Portugal and the Holy See, but he maintained his *official* roles as ruler in the name of King Miguel, replacing António José Guião as minister in 1836 and António Ribeiro Saraiva as the head of the Miguelist *party* in exile (Maria Teresa Mónica, *Errâncias Miguelistas...* [Miguelist errors...], 1997, pp. 57-58). King Miguel's counsellor since 1831, he was also the papal delegate for Portugal in Rome (Marília Favinha, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 28, 151 and 163). However, that doesn't stop him from dedicating himself to scholarly writing. Thus, we find Friar Fortunato, now in his sixties, addressing the Portuguese Catholics of his archbishopric, researching Portuguese manuscripts in Roman archives, and encouraging the anti-liberal guerrillas in the Algarve to revolt. A life devoted equally to humanities and politics, marked by a dedication and self-sacrifice that is both unique and original, owing to the striking contrast between scholarly tools of erudition and the vernacular language used to promote armed struggle and foster ideological and religious intolerance. One of the members of the Academy of Sciences who, although he didn't become a full member (contrary to what João Ameal claims, *Op. Cit.*, p. 398), was mentioned as a member of the academy by Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão (*A Historiografia Portuguesa...*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 248). In short, here is an author who admired the Marquise of Alorna just as much as he directed and preached at the popular performance of the Mystery of the Cross in 1831, during the reign of King Miguel, embodying an Ancien Régime mentality that was simultaneously traditionalist, erudite, monastic, and anti-revolutionary (Vitorino Nemésio, *A Mocidade de Herculano* [Herculano's Youth], 2003, pp. 281 and 334).



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This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P, in the scope of the projects UIDB/04311/2020 and UIDP/04311/2020.

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