

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**SCHAEFER, Henrich** (Hessen 1794 - Giessen, 1869)

Henrich Schaefer, one of the most important Lusitanists to write about the history of Portugal in the 19th century, was born in Schlitz (Hessen, Germany) on 25 April 1794 and died in Giessen on 2 July 1869, at the age of seventy-five. With a degree in theology, he served as secretary of the court library in Darmstadt (1821), professor (1833) and rector (1848-49 and 1864) at the University of Giessen, a city in the Rhineland north of Frankfurt, then located in the principality of Nassau. He was a member of the Coimbra Institute, according to data from 1852 (*Revista Universal Lisbonense*, 1852, p. 491). At the same time, he was awarded the Order of Christ, through the intervention of the Viscount of Carreira, former diplomatic representative of Portugal in Paris and a close figure to King Ferdinand II. There is no record of Schaefer having been a member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences.

In the words of Oliveira Marques, Heinrich Schaefer “was the son of a primary school teacher and local singer. He studied with his father and later entered secondary school in the nearby town of Hersfeld, originally intending to pursue either an administrative or a musical career” (“Henrich Schäfer e a sua História de Portugal” [Henrich Schäfer and his History of Portugal], *Portugal-Germany-Africa...* 1996, p. 63). learned Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese in the 1820s and 1830s, at a time when he was writing articles on Spain and Portugal. He had no known personal motivations or significant emotional ties to Portugal. It can be said that his *Geschichte von Portugal* was born out of a period of intellectual renewal and innovation in German culture and publishing.

In general, the Germanic world, like the rest of Europe from 1789 to 1848, experienced various political solutions and bloody wars and revolutions, alongside a collective effort to promote cultural enlightenment and the study of national and European history and identity. Leading figures in 19th-century culture and politics, such as Goethe and some of his disciples (the von Humboldt and Schlegel brothers), as well as Metternich and the historians Niebuhr and Ranke, stood out for their commitment and work in devising institutional solutions and documentary collections that served a particular conception of the public good and its respective social and political causes linked to the construction of the nation state. It should be noted that the concern with delimiting these documentary repositories, with the consequent deepening of the critical apparatus of history, was not unrelated to a political and ideological function that European culture at the time



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attributed to it. History was understood as a decisive element in the definition of national cultures and their respective disputes over affirmation and hegemony. It was a point that united different political sensibilities.

Not only did the geography, linguistics and history of peoples and states undergo remarkable growth and development, but literature, law and institutions were also the subject of thorough documentary analysis and ambitious theorising, both at the level of each human community and in terms of their mutual relations and enrichment. As is logical, the history of the main European and overseas empires was the subject of curiosity on the part of scholars and a public eager for new knowledge and systematic and well-founded reading. The past and present of the peoples and political structures of Germany, Sublime Porta, the Holy See, France, England, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Brazil were viewed with new methodologies and intellectual tools created by the German historical school and French and English historiographies. This was the case with Ranke's works in the 1820s and 1840s and with a complex historiographical project, under the editorial direction of Arnold Heeren and Friedrich August Ukert, which began in 1829 and was only completed in 1902. It was a general history of all European states, which eventually comprised 125 volumes. Henrich Schaefer was responsible for the volumes on Spain and Portugal (in the former case, continuing the work begun by Friedrich Wilhelm Lembke).

With regard to the Portuguese reality, several factors aroused the intellectual, academic and editorial curiosity of various European audiences (especially French, German and English). Examples of this are the works of Ferdinand Denis in France and Schaefer in Germany, the most significant figures in foreign historiography on Portugal in the first half of the 19th century (Sérgio Campos Matos, *Historiografia e Memória Nacional...*, 1998, p. 51). The difference is that Schaefer can be seen as a multifaceted historian in his views and analyses of Portuguese institutions, diplomacy and political and military events, while Denis was above all a scholar and editor of unpublished sources, including Portuguese, Brazilian and Spanish literary, historical, poetic and dramatic manuscripts ( ), as well as a populariser and historian of Portuguese culture.

Schaefer himself complained in his *Geschichte von Portugal* about the scarcity of sources and histories of Portugal published in German. In the preface to the second volume of the work (1839), he lamented the absence of critical histories of Portugal in easily accessible languages: "The author did not enjoy the advantage possessed by historians of other European states, whose history had already been narrated several times in German or in a well-known language" (*História de Portugal desde a fundação da monarquia...*, vol. V, 1899, p. 454). He even refers to the "pitiful state of Portuguese historical literature in Germany" (and perhaps also in other countries?). In the preface to the first volume (1835), he had already confessed the difficulty he felt in "combining historical studies, which are inevitable in such a project, with historiography intended for the highest class of students in public education" (*Idem*, p. 453). In other words, in combining the roles of university professor and historian.

We know, on the other hand, that in the 1820s and 1830s, several works published in German focused on the so-called "Portuguese question", that is, the succession of King João VI and the true national institutions.



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Examples of this are Ernest Münch's work, *Geschichte der Repraesentatiftsystems in Portugal*, Leipzig, 1827; *Einige Notizen über die Form und das Wesen der Portugiesischen Cortes nach den von Visconde de Santaren II. Gesammelten Authentischen Nachrichten*, Berlin and Stettin, 1829; and the Manifesto of His Most Faithful Majesty Our Lord King Miguel I..., published anonymously in the *Gazeta de Berlim* on 10 May 1832. As for historical sources, in 1827, also in Berlin and Stettin, a work by João Álvares, *Crónica do santo e virtuoso infante D. Fernando* (*Chronicle of the Holy and Virtuous Infante D. Fernando*), was printed.

During the 1830s, Portuguese academic and historiographical life was in full evolution and revolution – as was, in fact, the national political society itself. While renowned scholars and historians, many of them linked to the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, felt the need to emigrate to France and Italy (as was the case with the Viscount of Santarém, D. Francisco Alexandre Lobo and Frei Fortunato de São Boaventura), after the liberal victory, literature, art and historical dissemination gained new impetus under the auspices of the king consort, the German D. Fernando II, protector of promising young people such as Alexandre Herculano and Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen. It should be noted that these figures stood out in new forms of cultural dissemination linked to the interests and tastes of an emerging middle class, such as *O Panorama* and *Revista Universal Lisbonense*. Common to all these figures was the need to bring national historiography closer to the public, the academic community and European standards, both in terms of dissemination to a general audience and the development of a solid scientific discourse.

It is in this context that Schaefer's original and methodical effort, the scientific and innovative nature of his analysis and the consistency of the ideas and concepts employed in his *Geschichte von Portugal* stand out. The work was published in Hamburg and Gotha at two different times: two volumes in 1836 and 1839; the remaining three in 1850, 1852 and 1854. The German historian had the ambition to cover almost the entire history of the Portuguese monarchy, going back to the time of the County of Portugal and covering the entire historical sequence of the Portuguese nation, from the 11th to the 19th centuries (1095-1820). The German edition was organised as follows: Volume 1, 1095-1383; Volume 2, 1383-1495; 3rd, 1495-1580; 4th, 1580-1667 (with more than half of the volume reproducing information relating to Portuguese India, from 1521 to 1580); 5th and last, 1667-1820. When he published the first volume in 1836, Schaefer was around 42 years old. Previously, other histories and historical summaries of Portugal had been written by foreigners, but without comparable results. At that time, the young Herculano, second librarian at the Porto Public Library, was twenty-six years old and far from aspiring to write the History of Portugal, which would begin publication in 1846.

There is no doubt that Schaefer's History of Portugal, covering a very long period of the Portuguese monarchy – from 1095 to 1820 – was an invaluable tool for understanding national history, especially as it was originally part of a collection of histories of European states, produced in Germany with all the scientific and methodological rigour that this implied at the time of its publication (1836-1854). The 'simple rhetorical narration of events' was definitely a thing of the past.

Other smaller projects by foreign authors such as Rabbe, Fortia and Mielle, and Ferdinand Denis himself,



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were left behind. The works of Schaefer and Denis exerted an enormous fascination on the Portuguese cultural elites of the 1820s to 1850s, to the point that they were “the most cited in Portuguese historiography” of the time (Sérgio Campos Matos, *Op. cit.*, pp. 67 and 79). What is certain is that, in the official Portuguese gazette, Schaefer was described in May 1845 as the ‘author of the best history of Portugal that has appeared to date’ (*Diário do Governo* no. 123, p. 566) – a year before the publication in Paris of Ferdinand Denis’ Portugal.

Even from the original edition of *Geschichte von Portugal*, the impact on two prominent national historians, Coelho da Rocha and Alexandre Herculano, was significant. Publishing two of their reference works in 1841 and 1842, respectively, they were influenced by Schaefer’s example in the search for a scientific and critical historiography, according to Jorge Borges de Macedo (*Da História ao Documento...*, Lisbon, 1995, pp. XXIV-XXV). In the case of *Ensaio sobre a história do governo e da legislação de Portugal...*, Coelho da Rocha’s most important work, the first three editions, dated from 1841 to 1851 (the latter posthumous), do not directly mention Schaefer. The situation is different with Alexandre Herculano, who frequently quotes and praises the German author. In fact, several experts on Herculano’s work have highlighted the parallels between 19th-century German historiography – conventionally known as the German historical school – and its affiliation and appropriation by Alexandre Herculano. Doellinger (*Elogio histórico de Alexandre Herculano...*, Lisbon, 1910 [1878], p. 21), Consiglieri Pedroso (*Alexandre Herculano...*, pp. 55-56) and, in the 20th century, Vitorino Nemésio and Albin Eduard Beau draw parallels between the works of Schaefer and Herculano.

Sixteen years older than the Portuguese writer and trained in theology – like Johan-Josef-Ignaz von Doellinger, Herculano’s well-known German friend – Schaefer was a reference of seriousness and scientific objectivity for Herculano, whose *História de Portugal*, published ten years after the German’s, seems to provide a complete response to the absence of a work written by a Portuguese author who would follow and deepen the pioneering steps of . So much so that Herculano quotes and praises him on several occasions over more than three decades: in October 1843, in *Apontamentos para a história dos bens da coroa* (Notes on the history of the crown’s assets); in the first two volumes of *História de Portugal* (History of Portugal), published in 1846 and 1847; and in 1875-1877, in the text *Da existência ou não existência do feudalismo* (On the existence or non-existence of feudalism).

With regard to the central issues present in the historiography of the time, Sérgio Campos Matos analysed in detail the characteristics of Schaefer’s work. The German historian was an important milestone in the scholarly and solid analysis of topics that were still controversial in the 19th century. Strongly imbued with the German scholarly tradition in the fields of philology, literary and legal sources, and popular traditions, it is not surprising that he distanced himself from the providentialist tradition of the Battle of Ourique, attributing Portugal’s independence to the qualities of its noble elite (in which he preceded Herculano). On the other hand, unlike the Portuguese historian, he accepted the authenticity and historical legitimising function of the Cortes of Lamego. Schaefer values figures such as Kings João I and Manuel, placing them in context. During the reign of the latter monarch, he saw prosperity, but also symptoms of decline (excessive consumption and



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luxury, rising prices and corruption) and did not hesitate to offer a critical assessment of the administration of King João V. He was, however, cautious in his characterisation of historical figures (such as Afonso Henriques). He valued the social function of individuals in history, hence the attention he paid to their character.

Schaefer still commands respect and interest today. In his day, his work was a novelty, at a time when European interest in Portugal and the circulation of printed works written in Portuguese were only slowly progressing or producing innovative results. However, in 1922, Fidelino de Figueiredo argued that “it is always difficult for foreigners to understand certain aspects of national life” and that “Schaefer’s History of Portugal has no scientific relevance and has become completely unacceptable in many of its pages” (Ruy d’Abreu Torres, “Schaefer, Henrique, in Joel Serrão (ed.), *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, vol. V, 1989, p. 500). Naturally, such a reading must be accepted with reservations, ninety years later, since the historiographical analysis of a work should only be made on the basis of the intellectual resources available to the author at the time. As we have seen, Schaefer explained that his access to Portuguese sources was limited. Furthermore, it must be understood that he was precisely one of the first of these ‘foreigners’ to enrich Portuguese historical knowledge with different and innovative ideas and concepts, Lusitanists and Lusophiles of whom we can and should be proud.

The history of the French and Portuguese editions of *Geschichte von Portugal* is very interesting, as it reveals different ways of receiving and disseminating a foreign historiographical work, resulting in different editorial products. This will naturally influence how posterity assesses Schaefer’s value as a historian. As early as the end of 1839, after the publication of the second volume (which covered the period of the Portuguese discoveries of the 15th century), there were already signs of the impact of Schaefer’s work on French publishers and the Portuguese intellectual community in Paris. A few scattered facts prove that, in the French capital, a diplomat (the Viscount of Carreira) and a historian (the Viscount of Santarém) were involved in various aspects of the French and Portuguese editions of *Geschichte von Portugal*. The Portuguese translation of the work was being carried out by the Viscount of Carreira, diplomatic representative in Paris, with notes and additions by Santarém, according to a letter dated 26 October 1839, addressed by Carreira to Joaquim José da Costa de Macedo, secretary of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences (Private Collection).

In another letter dated 28 February of the following year, 1840, addressed by Santarém to his nephew, the 8th Count of Ponte, he informs us that “I made more than 150 notes and observations for the Portuguese and French translations of the History of Portugal recently written in German by Schaefer” (Viscount of Santarém, *Correspondence...*, vol. VI, p. 46). The French edition was published later that year and contains notes that may have been made by Santarém: for example, those referring to D. Duarte, his works and the review written about them years earlier by Cândido José Xavier. However, these notes are not marked as having been written by the Portuguese author.

As far as we know, the Portuguese edition of Schaefer’s work was never printed in Paris. The French edition of the first volume of *Geschichte von Portugal*, published in Paris in 1840 by Parent-Desbarres,





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contains some curious details. The first is that it brings together in a single volume the material from the first two volumes of the German edition (which covered the period from 1095 to 1495), leaving out, however, the reign of King John II (1481-95). The second is the inclusion of a note by the Viscount of Santarém concerning the extremely important location of the manuscript of the *Crónica da Guiné* by Gomes Eanes de Zurara. The third is the omission of the original prefaces. The last is the poor quality of the translation (by Soulangé-Bodin), which was accused of being careless.

One of the critics of the French translation was the eminent Portuguese-Brazilian historian Varnhagen, son of a German father, who in the early 1840s was part of the Brazilian diplomatic representation in Lisbon. He was responsible for reviewing the French edition by Parent-Desbarres, translated by Soulangé-Bodin, in the pages of the prestigious *Revista Universal Lisbonense*, in issue 2, dated 7 October 1841. In his text, Varnhagen praises Schaefer's new way of writing history, which is narrative and based on sources, in keeping with the German spirit and far removed from what he considers to be Guizot's philosophising. On the other hand, however, he criticises the quality of the translation (admitting that he knew German well enough to make such judgements) and the lack of rigour in the language used in the notes.

It should also be noted that several publishers (including Parent-Desbarres) repeated this commercial strategy, reprinting the work regularly in 1844, 1845 and 1846, always including the reference to the Viscount of Santarém in the title, even when the *Crónica da Guiné* was already in print and Santarém's words had been removed from the text. In 1858, two years after the Portuguese author's death, a new reprint retained these characteristics. It should be noted that, as far as we know, the *Geschichte von Portugal* was never published in its entirety in France. What did exist were additions by French publishers, which were always spurious in relation to the German author's writings. Also in 1840, another French edition of the work was published in Paris, adapted by Jean Lacroix de Marlès and , also published by Parent-Desbarres, which consists of a summary and continuation of the German text by the former: the *Histoire de Portugal, d'après la grande histoire de Schaeffer [sic], et continuée jusqu'à nos jours...* Probably intended for an audience less interested in critical apparatus and erudition, this 288-page edition, practically devoid of annotations (even those from the German original), is ultimately a historiographical product of little quality. The chronological scope is out of step with the Hamburg and Paris editions: Marlès not only extended it to the period from 1495 to 1585 (chapters VIII and IX), but also summarised in about fifteen pages the historical events in Portugal from 1585 to the fall of the first Carlist movement in 1836 (chapter X). This did not prevent the work from undergoing at least six new reprints during Schaefer's lifetime (1853, 1856, 1860 and 1867) and after his death in 1869.

*Histoire de Portugal, depuis sa séparation de la Castille jusqu'à nos jours...* also saw, at least since its reprint in 1845, a developed final chapter containing information on historical events that took place between 1481 and 1836, divided unevenly. Due to the enthusiasm aroused by the French translations and adaptations of Schaefer's work, the Portuguese edition was launched in 1842 in three volumes (covering the period from 1095 to 1433), with a fourth volume published in 1843 (up to 1481): that is, respecting the chronological



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restriction of the 1840 edition by Parent-Desbarres, translated from German by Soulangue-Bodin. The Portuguese translation of the text was the responsibility of José Lourenço Domingues de Mendonça, at the time employed in the accounting department of the Hospital de São José, who became head of the accounting department of the Northern Railway Company (Luís Reis Torgal, “A história de Portugal vista de fora” [The history of Portugal seen from outside], in *Op. cit.*, p. 347). However, in this case too, the quality of the translation seems to have greatly displeased the reading public, at least judging by the criticism that appeared in the press, again in the *Revista Universal Lisbonense* (in issue no. 27 of that publication, dated 27 April 1842, in an article signed by M.L. Nunes Mascarenhas, pp. 323-24). He ended by stating that an alternative translation was being completed, based on “the German original itself”. Who was this translator: Varnhagen?

Inocêncio Francisco da Silva gives us an exhaustive description of the translation of the work that José Lourenço Domingues de Mendonça published between 1842 and 1843 under the title *História de Portugal desde o começo da monarquia em 1095 até à época actual...* In the four volumes that make up the work, the amount of material written by the translator is enormous, totalling more than five hundred pages. However, the following volumes, V to XIII, have a new title, which legitimises the co-authorship assumed by Domingues de Mendonça, as the adapter of the work into Portuguese and compiler of historical material that he considered relevant to what Schaefer had written: *History of Portugal from the beginning of the reign of King John II (1481) to the present day: to serve as a continuation of the translation by Dr. Henrique Schoeffer [sic], organised by....* It is therefore a completely different work, in which the texts are exclusively by the Portuguese author. Volume IX, published in 1846, is dedicated to the Inquisition. The following year, 1847, the work was interrupted at the end of the reign of King Pedro II (1706) for financial reasons. Inocêncio regrets this fact, considering that, if completed, it “would have remained, at least, a vast and well-stocked repository of facts and documents, some unpublished and others little known,” correctly referring to Domingues de Mendonça as the “compiler” of these materials (Inocêncio Francisco da Silva, *Dicionário Bibliográfico Português...*, volume IV, 1860, pp. 423-24).

Comparing the translations of the 1842-43 (partial) editions with that of 1893-1899 (complete) of Heinrich Schaefer’s work, the discrepancies do not appear to be as striking as has been claimed. It seems to be mainly a matter of different translation concepts: one free and popular, from French; the other faithful and scientific, from German. The cultural background of the two translators, as well as the editorial care taken in printing and scheduling the two editions, explain these differences. The Portuguese edition of the late 19th century, so highly praised and generally regarded as a faithful reproduction of the original German edition, does not ultimately achieve this laudable aim. Thus, looking through the various volumes of this edition, which runs under the title *History of Portugal from the foundation of the monarchy to the revolution of 1820. Faithfully, fully and directly translated by F. de Assis Lopes. Continued, under the same plan, to the present day by J. Pereira de Sampaio Bruno*, it is clear that Schaefer’s original prefaces, instead of being reproduced – as would be logical and natural – at the beginning of each Portuguese volume, are referred to the final



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volume of the edition. Furthermore, there is no direct correspondence between the volumes of the original German edition and what would be expected of a critical and definitive Portuguese edition. We thus sometimes have an unorthodox division of material that has no direct relationship with specific historical periods and is difficult to understand: vols. I, 1893, 1095-1383; II, 1893, 1383-1495; III, 1895, 1481/95-1580 (including Portuguese India, 1528/1538); IV, 1898, 1580-1750 (including the remaining analysis of Portuguese India, from 1528/1538 to 1580); V, 1899, 1750-1820. This last volume includes, in a single block, Schaefer's prefaces to the four volumes of the original edition, on pp. 449-67. It is also regrettable that volumes VI and VII, published until 1926 by Casa Editorial A. Figueirinhas, were used for a new continuation of Schaefer's original work, now extended to 1910, with the author, José Agostinho, resorting to integralist readings of the Portuguese past. This was not an uncommon practice at the time.

In conclusion, Heinrich Schaefer's *Geschichte von Portugal* seems to constitute the most complete and perfect example, in the first half of the 19th century, of a scientific historiography dedicated to the Portuguese past throughout the entire span of its multi-dynastic monarchy. This is due to its size; its methodology and erudition; the fact that it was completed (unlike Alexandre Herculano's, for example) and that it is not limited to a single volume or a historical summary or popular version of historical facts, Schaefer's work should be considered pioneering in a 19th-century Portugal in which many editorial and scientific projects were either forgotten or came to a premature end. Although never reproduced as a facsimile document, Schaefer's *Geschichte von Portugal* stands out as the most solid project by a single non-Portuguese author in the entire 19th century, at least among works with the same characteristics of erudition for a literate and academic audience. In the words of Oliveira Marques, its "mere historical usefulness" should not obscure the "awareness that it was a milestone in historiography, both foreign and Portuguese, focused on Portugal's past" (Op. cit., p. 70).

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Daniel Estudante Protásio

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