

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

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SOARES, Torquato Brochado de Sousa (Porto 1903 - Vila Meã, Amarante 1988)

Torquato Soares was born on 7 March 1903 in Porto, where he completed a complementary course in Arts & Humanities at the Liceu Rodrigues de Freitas [Rodrigues de Freitas High School]. From his family roots in Vila Meã, in the Douro region of Amarante, he would always remember childhood holidays spent with his grandparents in the manor house, complete with its villa and chapel — a setting that would shape his particular way of viewing the history of Portugal (*Mãe-Pátria* [Motherland], 1958). The main features of his biography, published works, positions held, and honours received have already been outlined by the historians of the *Academia Portuguesa da História* [Portuguese Academy of History], as cited in their passive bibliography (2003). Certainly, consulting his archives and library, as well as reviewing the reports from his missions abroad and his five-year stay in Angola, will provide us with additional information. He graduated from the former School of Arts & Humanities of the University of Porto (1919-1928) in Historical and Geographical Sciences in 1924, with First-Class Honours [19 points in the Portuguese grading system], and went on to become an Assistant Professor there from 1927-1930. When that Faculty was abolished and he continued his research as a scholarship holder in Portugal and Spain (where he connected with Cláudio Sánchez Albornoz), he obtained his doctorate in Coimbra in 1935 with the thesis *Subsídios para o estudo da organização municipal da cidade do Porto durante a Idade Média* (new edition, facsimile, with preface by H. Baquero Moreno, 1989). Many years later, from his assessments for the academic title of *agregado* to further his university career resulted a book, *Reflexões sobre a origem e a formação de Portugal* [Reflections on the Origin and Formation of Portugal] published by the School of Arts and Humanities of Coimbra in 1962. In 1970 he published *Contribuição para o estudo das origens do povo português* [Contribution to the study of the origins of the Portuguese people] which was not really a continuation of the previous work, but a reworking of it, as he explained: "we felt that a more in-depth investigation was necessary". A full professor at the university, he remained there until his retirement, but took two breaks: between 1957-1959, because he was hired by the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Humanities of the University of São Paulo (Brazil); between 1965-1970, because he was invited to Angola, where he took part in the implementation of General University Studies, serving as the rector's delegate at the Sá da Bandeira centre (now Lubango) between 1967-1970. When he returned to Coimbra that year, he resumed his teaching position and was also



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

appointed director of the University Archives. He retired in 1973, but until his death he published around thirty other historical works. His final work, serving as his historiographical testament and reaffirming his main theses on the origins of Portugal, would be published posthumously under the title of *Formação do Estado Português* [Formation of the Portuguese State] (1989).

Alongside his work as a professor and researcher, he took an active part in various international history congresses, where he presented papers, such as the Congress of the Portuguese World (Lisbon, 1940); 'S. Martinho de Dume' (Braga, 1950); the "Historical Congress of Medieval Portugal" (Braga, 1960) and the First Luso-Spanish Days, "Poverty and Assistance to the Poor in the Middle Ages" (Lisbon, 1972); the Second Congress of Guimarães (Guimarães, 1981).

He was a corresponding scholar of *APH* since 1938 and number scholar since 1946; Full member of the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* [Lisbon Geographical Society] since 1940 and Corresponding Member of the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* [Lisbon Academy of Sciences] since 1962. He was also a member of the Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid since 1944, the Real Academia Gallega de Coruña since 1945, the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de S. Paulo [Historical and Geographical Institute of São Paulo] (Brazil) and several other institutions. In 1986, for his last work, *Formação do Estado Português*, he was awarded the P. M. Laranjo Coelho Prize by the *APH*. He died at his grandparents' house in Marmoiral, in Vila Meã (Amarante), on 10 December 1988, at the age of 85. Leaving behind almost two hundred published works, including books, articles in magazines and dictionaries, collaborations in collective works, editing of texts and documents, critical reviews (three dozen), biographical profiles, communications to congresses, speeches, lectures, reports on holiday courses at the School of Arts and Humanities of Coimbra, multiple interventions.

A tireless researcher and author, in whom it is impossible to distinguish the professor from the historian, he was a man of great dynamism and initiatives in favour of history, its teaching and its dissemination, which he saw 'as an apostolate': secretary and later president of the Institute of Historical Studies of his Faculty (founded in 1911 and today called the *Instituto de História Económica e Social* [Institute for Economic and Social History]), he is responsible (in collaboration with Paulo Merêa and Damião Peres) for founding the *Revista Portuguesa de História* (Coimbra, since 1941), the creation of the *Estudos de Humanidades* (Sá da Bandeira, 1970) and the *Boletim do Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra* (since 1973). For *RPH* in whose first issues the medieval theme predominated, TSS wrote 7 critical reviews in 1941 (volume I), 8 in 1943 (volume II) and 6 in 1947 (volume III).

He also wrote the abridged edition of some of Fernão Lopes' chronicles (*Crónica de D. Pedro* [Chronicle of King Pedro], 1943; *Crónica de D. Fernando* [Chronicle of King Fernando], 1945) with 'pedagogical intent', 'for the young people' of the schools, he highlighted, as he put it, chapters of varied subject matter with an emphasis on balance: hunting scenes alongside military episodes, administrative measures, 'and above all, the events in which the national conscience is affirmed.' On *Crónica dos feitos notáveis que se passaram na conquista da Guiné por mandado do Infante D. Henrique* [Chronicle of the remarkable deeds that took place in the conquest of Guinea by order of Prince Henry the Navigator] by Gomes Eanes de Zurara, he made a



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

long critical study with annotations (1981).

He worked hard for a decade on the second edition of the work by H. da Gama Barros, *História da Administração Pública em Portugal nos séculos XII a XV* [History of Public Administration in Portugal from the 12th to the 15th centuries] he expanded it from 4 to 11 volumes, with a long general introduction of 63 pages and many erudite notes, essentially of an economic and social nature [Livraria Sá da Costa, 1945-1954]. His plan also included a volume of reference notes, in the end, it didn't come to fruition.

As early as 1924, Fidelino de Figueiredo, praising Gama Barros' work, labelled the 'serious gap [in the first edition] the lack of analytical indexes that would facilitate consultation of its rich content' (*História da Literatura Realista* [History of Realist Literature], 1924, p. 286). For his part, Orlando Ribeiro [1987] observed that this [TSS's] was a "new, fresh, careful and annotated edition", but complained that it "lacks the indispensable analytical index — a shortcoming all the more deplorable given that the first edition is very brief" (p. 90, no. 10). With regard to some aspects of the notes added, the geographer is blunter. Thus, when referring to TSS's position on the 'depopulation', he points out weaknesses in the argument: 'In this erudite plea, the Portuguese historian confronts more authorities than facts — and of those, he considers one indisputable: Sánchez Albornoz!' (p. 95, n. 13). TSS didn't just update a previous edition or edit manuscripts that its author hadn't been able to complete, but took on the task of organising new volumes with the large quantity of 'proofs' and notes scattered in bundles of entries that he had left in a 'perfectly ordered' archive. In his introduction, TSS, while outlining the biography, he was able to critically assess the methodology employed by the author, "who lacks historical training but has a legal background — a bias that is reflected in the disproportionate structure of the work, which aims to reveal the history of institutions." On the other hand, he emphasises that the penchant for meticulous analysis of this indefatigable reader of texts "makes synthesis impossible, without which there is truly no history" (Gama Barros, oc., 1945, p. XL). But TSS protests that this work "is more Gama Barros's than ours" and concludes that it is a work of exceptional merit that, from now on, scholars will not be able to ignore if they want to "seriously approach the life of our medieval society".

Focusing on "updating" national historiography, he also paid attention to historiographical developments abroad. TSS is thus credited with opening up the Faculty to renowned professors from European universities — an absolute novelty in Portugal — who came to teach courses or give lectures, particularly in the fields of medieval, economic, and social history, such as Charles Verlinden from the University of Ghent (1946 and 1947) and Yves Renouard from the University of Bordeaux (1949 and 1950). Professor Verlinden's courses were published in 1948 by the Dr António de Vasconcelos Institute of Historical Studies under the title of *Introduction à l'histoire économique général*. The Belgian historian also gave two lectures in Coimbra that called for innovation and methodological updating: 'L'Histoire est une science et une art'; 'Qu'est ce que l'histoire sociale?' To teach medieval Provençal literature, the Frenchman Pierre David came to Coimbra. Having taught for around twenty years at the French University Mission in Poland (Krakow), he was forced to leave in 1939, settling in the city of Mondego from 1941 until his death in 1955. For his part, TSS contributed



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

to these international connections by travelling to Spain, France, Italy, Brazil, and Argentina, where he taught courses, participated in conferences, studied theses published in these countries, and established relationships with historians from these countries. His objectives do not appear to include the aim of creating disciples or inspiring the younger generations to seek new directions for research and the teaching of history, nor to renew his school of thought. His attempt to hire José Mattoso as a professor of medieval history at Coimbra in the early 1960s failed and the renewal of his Faculty would have to wait for the events that followed the revolution of April 1974.

All his research and historiographical production, developed over more than half a century, can be summarised in a trio of main themes: municipal institutions and municipalism; the settlement of Portuguese territory; and the formation of Portugal. To the first, to which he had already devoted his *Apontamentos para o estudo da origem das instituições municipais* [Notes for the study of the origin of municipal institutions] (1931), he would also dedicate his doctoral dissertation, *Subsídios para o estudo da organização municipal da cidade do Porto durante a Idade Média* [Elements for the study of the municipal organisation of the city of Porto during the Middle Ages] (1935). Some of the great specialists of the time, professors of Law or Humanities (History), both national and foreign, welcomed the two works, while disagreeing with certain statements in the first, such as the Roman origin of urban municipalities (which attempted to rehabilitate the theses of Alexandre Herculano) and what he called "district municipalities" (L. García de Valdeavellano). They characterised the second work as containing "solid pages of political history", but their criticisms primarily focused on its lack of attention to the "topography and physiognomy of the city and its region" (Paulo Merêa) or on the predominance of legal aspects and the insufficient emphasis on economic and social factors. As one critic, noted, "if law regulates relations between individuals, it is impossible to understand it without first determining what drives such relations" (Charles Verlinden). While some medievalists today continue to criticise the excessive juridical focus and the lack of attention to human geography (J. Mattoso, 1985) or the absence of a "social vision based on material infrastructures that goes beyond the traditional perspective" (H. Baquero Moreno, 1989), others, such as José Marques, highlight aspects of "methodological pioneering" and "innovation" in his work (M. Helena da Cruz Coelho).

A scientifically proficient historian and a man of integrity, TSS humbly accepted those criticisms and acknowledged that he endeavoured to correct the shortcomings pointed out by continuing to debate and deepen the same issues in later articles, such as: "As cartas de foral. Constituição dos concelhos rurais e urbanos" [Foral charters. Constitution of rural and urban municipalities] (1937), "Henri Pirenne e o problema das origens das instituições municipais da Reconquista" [Henri Pirenne and the problem of the origins of the municipal institutions of the Reconquest] (1939), "Notas para o estudo das instituições municipais da Reconquista" [Notes for the study of municipal institutions in the Reconquest] (1941 and 1943), "A organização municipal do Porto no tempo do Infante D. Henrique" [The municipal organisation of Porto at the time of Prince Henry the Navigator] (1960), "A organização municipal do Porto dos séculos XII a XIV" [Porto's municipal organisation from the 12th to the 14th centuries] (1962). His article on municipalities in the



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

Dicionário de História de Portugal (1971), in some way summarises the final maturing of his position on the subject. On the topic of the settlement of Portuguese territory in the Christian Reconquest, TSS, who initially tried to follow the "Romanists" Herculano and Gama Barros, came to adopt the "Germanist" positions of Claudio Sánchez Albornoz (whom, as we have discussed, he had met in Madrid in the early 1930s and with whom he had become a disciple and friend), including the defence of the depopulation as a strategic desert that opposed Christians and Muslims. This position soon led him into controversy with his colleague at FLUC, Avelino de Jesus da Costa. In his doctoral thesis, *O Bispo D. Pedro e a restauração da Sé de Braga* [Bishop D. Pedro and the restoration of the Cathedral of Braga] (1959), using previously unpublished documentation, he demonstrated how untenable this position was. The differences between the two professors and medievalist historians from the same "Coimbra school" were evident in their speeches at the II Congress of Guimarães in 1981 and in articles in the *RPH* of the same year, as well as lively defences in their respective classes or in exam juries in which they both took part. Arguing and defending each other's positions, the controversy remained a cordial and constructive debate, never straying beyond the scientific realm. It set an example of healthy disagreement at the historiographical level, demonstrating the possibility of divergent interpretations and highlighting the challenges of objectivity and the pursuit of truth in the social and human sciences. As for the third topic, the formation of Portugal, which TSS had been working on since 1937 ("International politics — the constitution of the County and Kingdom of Portugal and its diplomatic relations with the Roman Curia and Castile"), he would continue to explore it until his death (the last book on the subject was published posthumously). This topic became the foundation of a trilogy he developed throughout his entire career as a researcher: 1. *Reflexões sobre a origem e formação de Portugal* [Reflections on the origin and formation of Portugal], Coimbra, 1962 [assessment for the academic title of *agregado*]; 2. *Contribuição para o estudo das origens do povo português* [Contribution to the study of the origins of the Portuguese people], Sá da Bandeira, 1972. 3. *Formação do Estado Português* [Formation of the Portuguese State], Trofa, 1989.

TSS's attraction to the problem of 'origins' (of Portugal, of the people, of nationality, of municipal institutions, of the state) in the search for deep and distant roots for Portuguese medieval historical problems is notorious. He did so, not in the naive belief that the beginning explains everything, as Marc Bloch criticised, but by following the archaeological, ethnographic, and anthropological work of Martins Sarmiento, Leite de Vasconcelos, Alberto Sampaio, Mendes Correia, and other scholars, seeking more reliable information, drawing on interpretative lines (sometimes divergent) from the school to which he belonged, and which prompted his teachers and colleagues to engage in debates on similar issues: Damião Peres, *Como nasceu Portugal* [How Portugal came to be] (1938) or Paulo Merêa, *De 'Portucale' (civitas) ao Portugal de D. Henrique* [From 'Portucale' (civitas) to the Portugal of King Henrique], (1943, would have a reworked edition in 1967). Perhaps he was doing so in response to the call to find a solid historical basis for the celebration of the centenary of the foundation and restoration of Portugal, which would take place in 1940. Portugal was, from its origins, a country with a missionary vocation and fidelity to this core tradition of the national spirit was,



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

in his view, the right course for its history. Well integrated into the Estado Novo, TSS found in history the justification for his political-ideological stance, aligning with the nation's leaders ("A Tradição histórica portuguesa no pensamento político de Salazar" [The Portuguese historical tradition in Salazar's political thought], 1966).

As he explains in the introduction to the new edition of the aforementioned work by Gama Barros (1945), if one is a historian, meticulous and faithful research must inevitably lead the Portuguese medievalist to the study of origins. It's true that many details of the chronology and establishment of the facts may have been clarified, but the major historical problematisation and European contextualisation are almost always quite absent. His faithful following of the methodical school is evident. To gain a clear understanding of the influence of this, and even German historicism, on the professors and historians at the University of Coimbra in the first half of the 20th century, refer to the two recent works by António de Oliveira cited in the bibliography.

His approachable nature and love of sharing knowledge with colleagues and friends led him to collaborate on several collective works, such as: *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo* [History of Portuguese Expansion in the World], dir. by A. Baião, Lisbon, Ática, 1937-1940, 3 v. (vol. I: *Política internacional; Política administrativa; Política de fomento* [International policy; Administrative policy; Development policy]); *Nova Monografia do Porto* ("O Porto Medieval") [New Monograph of Porto ('Medieval Porto')], 1938; *História da cidade do Porto* [History of the city of Porto], Portucalense Editora, Porto, 1862-1965, edited by A. de Magalhães Basto; *Dicionário de História de Portugal* [Dictionary of Portuguese History], edited by Joel Serrão, Lisbon, Iniciativas editoriais, 1971-1973 [Afonso I, D.; Land tenure; Asturias, kingdom of; Barros, Henrique da Gama; benefit; municipality; *concilium*; Condado Portucalense; confirmations; royal curia; enfeoffment and Portugal to the Holy See; depopulation, the problem of; feudalism in Portugal; land or territory of Coimbra]; *Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura* [Luso-Brazilian Encyclopaedia of Culture], Lisbon, Editorial Verbo, 1963-1975: [Barros, H. da Gama; Portugal, from the Reconquest to the beginning of the Expansion; lender; loan; land seizing; privilege; Reccimer; sesmarias [land distribution system]; Viriatus]. His fondness for oratory enabled him to write and deliver many historical speeches on solemn occasions such as at the *honoris causa* ceremonies at the University of Coimbra for the French Cardinal of the Roman Curia, Eugène Tisserand (1956), Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira (1956), Richard Pattee (1960) and the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freire (1962). He wrote concise biographical and scholarly profiles of various scholars, colleagues, and friends, including Alberto Sampaio, Afonso Tauney, A. Botelho da Costa Veiga, H. da Gama Barros, Francisco Manuel Alves (Abbot of Baçal) Paulo Merêa, Pierre David, Damião Peres, Rui de Azevedo, Mons. Pereira dos Reis, António de Vasconcelos, Guilherme Braga da Cruz and others.

Endowed with a sharp critical mindset, as already noted, TSS became involved in various controversies, yet he always managed to keep them measured and confined to the realm of scientific debate. With Avelino de Jesus da Costa, his medievalist colleague at FLUC, on the existence or not of the "*ermamento*" [depopulation] in the Reconquest; with Sánchez Albornoz, his teacher and friend, on "*chance*" in the



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

formation and independence of Portugal. In 1959, Professor Tomás Óscar Marcondes de Sousa of the University of São Paulo (with whom Damião Peres had already engaged in controversial topics ten years earlier) disagreed on the meaning of "*portuguese colonialism*", especially in India and Brazil. In his reply, TSS demonstrated that the documents presented by his opponent, an "impenitent Lusophile", which formed the basis of his argument, were deficient summaries of the texts cited — containing "serious errors" and misinterpretations. However, the response from Marcondes remains unknown, and it is unclear how the controversy ended.

What was history for TSS? In the vastness of his writings, it is difficult to pinpoint a precise theoretical definition of his own, nor is there any explicit concern with the theory or epistemology of history, even in those studies whose titles might suggest such an approach, as in *Algumas reflexões sobre o sentido da História* [A few reflections on the meaning of history], Luanda, 1968 and Sá da Bandeira, 1971 or at the conference "Towards a new direction in Portuguese history" (S. Paulo, *Revista de História*, no. 35, 1958). A follower of the methodical school, TSS sees it as "his duty to awaken in the soul of the nation an awareness of itself through an in-depth knowledge of its history". His conception of history is erudite and appears intrinsically linked to his ingrained national sense of political usefulness (*O Caso português* [The Portuguese case], 1973; *Exortação ao povo português e às suas Forças Armadas* [Call to the Portuguese People and their Armed Forces], 1974). This conception, which emphasises Portugal's national character and civilising mission, helps us to understand its turn towards overseas topics in the 1950s-1970s: *O Colonialismo português* [Portuguese Colonialism] (1959), about the so-called *Crônicas dos Feitos da Guiné* [Chronicles of Guinea's Achievements] (1960), "Algumas observações sobre a política marroquina da Monarquia Portuguesa" [A few observations on the Moroccan policy of the Portuguese Monarchy] (1962), "A Marinha portuguesa: sua contribuição para o robustecimento da independência e expansão nacional em África. Significado das viagens de Diogo Cão" [The Portuguese Navy: its contribution to strengthening independence and national expansion in Africa. The Impact of Diogo Cão's voyages] (1971) and *Comentário a uma entrevista* [Commentary on an interview] (1973). Thus, his conception of history is best found in these texts or in speeches and critical reviews rather than in theoretical or analytical studies. Like M. T. Cicero, TSS understands history as a moral genre, "*magistra vitae*": "History is and continues to be — in an increasingly evident way — the Master of Life" (*O espírito municipalista futor da comunidade luso-brasileira* [The municipalist spirit that produced the Luso-Brazilian community], 1960). In several of his works, like many of his colleagues at the Faculty who followed German historicism, he stresses explanation over understanding: "history is nothing more than the verification of facts, their analysis, their connection, and the identification of their place." However, he does not disregard the reflective dimension, particularly in the history of institutions, as G. Droysen taught. This involves the formulation of key conceptual questions and even the adoption of a philosophical perspective in order to achieve synthesis, without which genuine history cannot be written. ("Introduction" to H. da Gama Barros, *oc.*, 1945, vol. I, pp. XL). But, like other French masters, Fustel de Coulanges (1830-1889) and more closely Pierre David (1882-1955), he had a predominant taste for the critical-philological method, in the detail of



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

examining the various elements of the text and in the concern to establish the strict meaning of each word, as can be seen in the notes to many of his works. A certain abstractionism in his considerations led him to slip, theoretically at times, into the philosophy of history as understood by Herder, Berdiaeff, Ortega y Gasset and even into his theology, invoking the positions of St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas (*Algumas reflexões* [A few reflections], 1968). Although he was always willing to correct errors pointed out by authoritative critics, there was no significant shift in his views or any profound or notable change in the direction of his historical thinking throughout his long career. It is true that, as a diligent and devoted reader of Marc Bloch — whom he had already praised for *A Sociedade Feudal* [Feudal Society], describing it as a "truly masterly work" — and had acknowledged the immensely important historiographical contribution of *L'Étrange défaite*, he also dedicated a long and heartfelt article to Bloch in *RPH*, promising a more extensive critical examination of his work, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*, a promise he would never fulfil (*RPH*, III, 1947, pp. 634-654). He accepted Bloch's definition of history as "the understanding and science of men in time" and as "essentially the science of variation, of what does not repeat itself" (*O espírito municipalista* [The municipal spirit], 1960). He also embraced the historiographical approach advocated by Lucien Febvre, as evidenced when he quotes him in the epigraph to the final work: "— At the beginning, in the middle, and at the end: the document?" Just the document? — No: at the beginning, in the middle and at the end: the spirit. The spirit that seeks. The spirit that runs among the facts, like fire among the heather" (*Formação do Estado português*, 1989), but as a whole, his history-writing practices do not match these statements.

Despite these forays, TSS is not a follower of the "*Annales* school". Endowed with a sharp critical, analytical, and perceptive mind, he was particularly drawn to political history, always emphasising events. He cultivated a strong devotion to the document and its meticulous analysis (academic role as a professor of palaeography and diplomatics, along with his authorship of a palaeographic document album that went through three editions (1942, 1957, 1961), undoubtedly reinforced this scholarly focus, and so did his efforts to pioneer the collection of documentary sources of Portuguese history from foreign archives — through microfilms and photographs for the Archives of his Faculty — further highlighted his commitment to this erudite approach). In this sense, it is also worth mentioning the critical edition, together with Pierre David, of the *Liber Anniversariorum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Colimbriensis* (*Book of the Kalends*), in 2 volumes, in 1947-1948. The publication in the second volume of *RPH* in 1943, of "a false pontifical document from Coimbra" shows his taste for the rigorous transcription of documents and for critical studies in the disentanglement of false, interpolated or true writings. On the other hand, he left us short biographical studies that are true masterpieces of precision and rigour. He liked comparative history (which he tried to pursue), but his lack of sensitivity to structural analysis and social movements was not echoed in the diligent work he did to promote the opening up of studies and courses in economic and social history at his Faculty by foreign professors invited by him, as mentioned above, and whose topics he himself developed in notes to his edition of the aforementioned work by H. da Gama Barros (1945-1954), in some articles in the *RPH* (1955, 1965) and in entries in the *DHP* (1971-1973). Little inclined to engage in synthesis (despite repeatedly acknowledging that



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>

without it, there is no real history), preferring analysis, narrative, and description, TSS, drawn to historicism but distancing himself from historical positivism, remained attentive to the new historiographical currents emerging from France. He attempted a certain eclecticism but was always more strongly marked by what, in the words of a recent scholar (1995), has been characterised as a defining feature of the historical school of Coimbra in the 20th century, persisting until the early 1970s, as "*neo-methodical historicism*".

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