

# CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

## PROFESSOR DR. ANÍBAL BETTENCOURT

João da Silva  
Plaster cast, 20th century  
H. 88 x L. 81 x W. 26 cm  
MAH.R.1989.1131

From Angra do Heroísmo (1868-1930) – Counsellor's Nicolau Anastácio Bettencourt grandson (1810-1874), an important figure of the city of Angra and of the liberal cause in Portugal – Aníbal Bettencourt, a physician and professor, was one of the first investigators in the bacteriology field, in Portugal, with Câmara Pestana and his brother Nicolau de Bettencourt, becoming an international authority on this field of science. That is the main the reason for the existence of an embossed medallion with his bust, made by the sculptor João da Silva (1880-1960), on the main staircase of the Instituto Bacteriológico Câmara Pestana (Câmara Pestana's Bacteriological Institute), located at Campo Mártires da Pátria, in Lisbon, being part Lisbon's University heritage nowadays.

A friend and a collaborator of Câmara Pestana, who died prematurely with the plague in 1899, Aníbal Bettencourt accompanied him until his death, succeeding him on the directorship of the Instituto Bacteriológico (Bacteriological Institute), which would become the support of the activities of all Portuguese physicians dedicated to research.

Aníbal Bettencourt cooperated in the fight against the 1894 epidemic, in Lisbon, being the co-author of a report about that subject which would be published in German language. He led the medical mission that developed the first great essay about the sleeping sickness in Angola, in 1901. He made investigations about the cerebrospinal meningitis and the bilharziasis (its parasite as well), for which he had the cooperation of other physicians. He published in portuguese magazines over sixty scientific investigation essays about Bacteriology and Parasitology, namely in the Archives of the Instituto Câmara Pestana (Câmara Pestana's Institute) which he founded in 1906. He also published in foreign magazines.

He was also invited to lecture the subject of Bacteriology and Parasitology when that one was included on the syllabus of the Medicine Degree. The invitation occurred in 1911 after a unanimous decision by the Conselho da Faculdade de Medicina de Lisboa (Lisbon's Medical School Board), after the integration of the Instituto de Bacteriologia (Bacteriology's Institute) into Lisbon's University.

He was a Commander of the Ordem de Santiago da Espada, do Mérito Científico, Literário e Artístico (Portuguese Military Order that recognizes scientific, literary, and artistic merits) – 1901. Corresponding member, permanent, holder or honorary member of many scientific institutions in Portugal and abroad, and President of the Sociedade Portuguesa de Biologia (Biology Portuguese Society) and of the Sociedade Portuguesa de Ciências Naturais (Natural Sciences Portuguese Society).

Dedicated to the study and the practice of the art of photography, Aníbal Bettencourt was the founder and the first President of the Sociedade Portuguesa de Fotografia (Photography Portuguese Society).

This plaster cast maquette of this embossed medallion was donated to the Museu de Angra do Heroísmo (Angra do Heroísmo's Museum) in 1970 by the Instituto Bacteriológico Câmara Pestana, and currently belongs to this museum's Fine Arts Management Unit.