



TROPICAL MEDICINE IN AFRICA OR “WHAT WE KNOW TODAY IS MORE THAN YESTERDAY, BUT LESS THAN TOMORROW”

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Abstract

Before the World could think and dream World War I, several military and civilian doctors headed to Africa, devoting their lives to the study of tropical diseases and the plagues they caused. Manuel de Almeida Nascimento, medical officer belonging to the Health Board of Angola and Sao Tome e Principe, would be one of those illustrious unknown. Arriving in Angola in May 14, 1911, his boat would dock in Luanda, where he would start his work as second lieutenant, soon promoted to lieutenant, first step on his military career progress.

Like others before and after him, Manuel do Nascimento had never set foot on African soil. Luanda would become the base area to which he returned after traveling hundreds of kilometers in the captivating Angolan hinterland, where he would spend the rest of his life.

With the outbreak of war, military conflicts in Africa also started, and that included the Portuguese colonies. Manuel do Nascimento would be in Camoma in 1914, and in 1916, already as captain, he would be in the hinterland of Benguela. There, he worked with Assunção Velho, a Portuguese medical officer, and it is said that he made part of a medical and geographical reconnaissance trip, that can be set in the context of the various study missions made to gain knowledge about the Sleeping Disease in Angola.

This communication aims to demonstrate that, in regard to the study of Tropical Medicine during the Great War, with the help of new tools found in areas such as Digital Humanities and Digital Storytelling, we know now more about some of its actors, their areas of interest and fields of activity, although so much is yet to be register and discover about those on the ground, their actions and impacts within and outside wartime Tropical Medicine.