

A.H. de Oliveira Marques, the Historian's Legacy

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António Henrique Rodrigo de Oliveira Marques, the historian and university professor whose memory is evoked in this paper, was born in São Pedro do Estoril, in the municipality of Cascais, on 23 August 1933, even though his family lived in Lisbon. He completed all the different levels of education in the capital, taking his first degree in Historical and Philosophical Sciences in July, 1956. He immediately set off for Germany, on a research scholarship, to prepare his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Professor Hermann Kellenbenz, which gave him the chance to peruse other European archives.

In November, 1957, he took up a post as an assistant lecturer at the Lisbon Faculty of Letters. In July, 1960, he defended his doctoral thesis, already printed as *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média* (Hansa and Portugal in the Middle Ages), obtaining a classification of 18/20 and becoming a senior lecturer. In 1961, he entered his name in the competitive examination to become an Extraordinary Professor of History, but he never got to take the examination due to its successive postponements, since, having survived an academic crisis in 1962, Oliveira Marques then sided with the students. This led him to resign from his job at the Faculty in November, 1964.

Having then been invited by the University of Auburn, in the United States, to teach courses in Medieval European History, he began his own personal tour of American universities in the academic year of 1965-1966. In the following years (1966-1969), he was hired by the University of Florida and in 1970 by the University of Minnesota, but he also taught courses and gave lectures in several others, such as New Mexico, Virginia, Yale, Columbia, Wisconsin and Indiana, as well as at Queen's College and various cultural institutions around the United States.

He returned to Portugal in September, 1970, but it was only after the Revolution of April, 1974, that he was again to occupy a position in the civil service, being appointed as Director of the National Library in Lisbon in 1974 and then, in July 1976, as a Full Professor at the newly-created Universidade Nova de Lisboa. As the Chairman of the Foundation Committee of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, he worked hard to give it a solid structure before its institutionalization in 1977. At that same Faculty, he was later President of the Scientific Council (from 1981 to 1983, and again in 1984). He continued to teach there until his retirement in 2003, lecturing various subjects in different undergraduate and master's degree courses, most notably that of Medieval History, which he himself created.

His teaching activity, to which he was highly committed, being delighted at the chance to work closely with his students, in no way hindered his academic work, for which his scientific rigor and methodical spirit were perfectly suited. He continued to spread his knowledge in courses and lectures that he presented in Brazil (São Paulo, Curitiba, Portalegre), Argentina (Buenos Aires) and Europe, particularly in Germany, France and England. His published work resulted in an extremely vast output that amounted to more than 765 titles, including monographs, articles, adaptations and translations, and book reviews, as well as 272 studies and annotations in the field of philately. In the Festschrift *Na Jubilação Universitária de A. H. de Oliveira Marques*, produced to mark his retirement, his contributions to the many themes that he worked on was celebrated – these included medieval history, paleography and diplomacy, the Portuguese overseas expansion, Portuguese-German relations, the history of the First Republic, the history of freemasonry, postmarks, the histories of Portugal and historiography. This wide-ranging coverage of academic subjects makes it impossible for us, in this brief note, to touch upon everything, however superficially. Given our specialist area, it will be the question of medievalism to which we will devote most of our attention, without forgetting to refer to his various works of synthesis and to the marks that he left on 20th-century historiography.

As early as 1959, in his doctoral thesis on *The Hansa and Portugal in the Middle Ages*, he introduced us to the subject of the trade relations between Portugal and the cities of the Hanseatic league, greatly elucidating the important role played by our country in European foreign trade. But it was later, during the 1960s, that this medievalist produced some major, and highly innovative, works. Even though their impact was only relative at the time, in later decades they were, however, to become unsurpassable milestones, as is clearly demonstrated by the successive editions that were published, especially at a time when Portuguese historiography was being renewed in a climate of openness and freedom generated by the outbreak of democracy. Dating from this time are books such as *Introdução à História da Agricultura em Portugal. A questão cerealífera durante a Idade Média* (Introduction to the History of Agriculture in Portugal. The cereal question during the Middle Ages), which acted as a major stimulus for the production of a rich vein of studies on rural history, frequently supervised by this same historian, such as my own doctoral work and that of Iria Gonçalves. Another important book was his *A Sociedade Medieval Portuguesa. Aspectos da vida quotidiana* (Medieval Portuguese Society. Aspects of Everyday Life), concerned with the discovery of human lifestyles, ranging from the material to the cultural and spiritual, which until then was almost an unknown subject in Portuguese historiography; and also the *Guia do Estudante de História Medieval Portuguesa* (Student's Guide to Medieval Portuguese History), an indispensable guide to the sources and works of medieval history, which greatly supported young researchers in their discovery of medieval history.

Meanwhile, it was during this same period (from 1963 to 1971) that he wrote more than eighty articles for the *Dicionário de História de Portugal* (Dictionary of Portuguese History), which did much to bring Portuguese historiography up to date, while also collecting several of his articles together, about the history of the Portuguese population and about the nation's social and economic history, in his work *Ensaios de História Medieval Portuguesa* (Essays on Portuguese Medieval History).

At the beginning of his activity as a lecturer at FCSH (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas) in the Universidade Nova, especially in the seminar on "Medieval Cities" for the Master's Degree in Medieval History, he set up a research program into urban history and, under his guidance, a large number of master's degree and doctoral theses were produced regarding the medieval urban centers of the North and South of Portugal. This work can be easily assessed by looking at the condensed synthesis provided in the

Atlas of Portuguese Medieval Cities, which he edited and on which he collaborated, as well as through the collection of studies that he published, in 1998, under the title of *Novos Ensaios de História Portuguesa* (New Essays on Portuguese History). And, after that, at the Research Center that he had created at the same Faculty, the Center of Historical Studies, a series of publications was also begun on the *Chancelarias* (Chancelleries) and *Cortes Régias* (Royal Courts), which were indispensable sources for medieval studies. These came out regularly and would continue to be published, even after his death, under the scientific and dedicated guidance of Dr. João Alves Dias.

During the time that he lived in the United States, Oliveira Marques was unable to enjoy access to medieval documentation and so he devoted himself to the study of printed sources that enabled him to get to know more about the 20th century. His works on the *História da 1ª República Portuguesa* (History of the First Republic, 1971, 1979, 1991) and his various books on *Afonso Costa* (life, work and documents, 1972, 1973, 1976, 1978) also turned this historian into a pioneer in studies on republicanism, which were further completed with another work dedicated to the *Maçonaria Portuguesa e o Estado Novo* (Portuguese Freemasonry and the New State, 1975). It should also be stressed that these themes continued to be worked upon by the author in the 1980s and 1990s. Certainly benefiting from this research work overseas were his two volumes comprising the *Antologia da Historiografia Portuguesa* (Anthology of Portuguese Historiography), which came out in 1974 and 1975 and were later completed with the *Ensaios de Historiografia Portuguesa* (Essays on Portuguese Historiography, 1988).

It was while he was still experiencing his period of American exile that Oliveira Marques became aware of the need to produce a work that could help foreigners to discover more about Portugal's historical past. And so, in 1972, a *History of Portugal* was published in Lisbon, London and New York, in English and Portuguese, filling a gap and proving to be highly innovative in its contemplation of the economic and social aspects involved in the construction of Portuguese history. With successive additions, increasing the study from two volumes to three, and reaching as far as the history of the present era, this work enjoyed widespread dissemination, resulting in thirteen editions and also being translated into French, Japanese, Spanish and Polish. Oliveira Marques later used it to compile his *Brief History of Portugal*, which was also published in French, English, Chinese, Romanian and German.

In an even more ambitious project for the writing of syntheses, Oliveira Marques devoted his energies – together with Joel Serrão, although he himself was the real driving force behind the project – to the publication of *Nova História de Portugal* (New History of Portugal) and *Nova História da Expansão* (New History of the Portuguese Expansion). These are now longer histories, with each volume having its own coordination and with the chapters being updated by specialists in the different subject areas. Because of their clarity and the information that they provide, these are to be regarded as highly didactic works, with ten volumes having already been published of the first work and eight of the second. And, as if to lend some visual support to these works, on the occasion of his retirement, the author published (in a work of joint authorship) a thick and graphically attractive *Atlas Histórico de Portugal e do Ultramar Português* (Historical Atlas of Portugal and the Portuguese Overseas Territories, 2003), a work that was to prove highly useful from an academic and didactic point of view and amounted to “a collection of maps relating to various epochs and subject-matters”, which could “illustrate both analyses and syntheses.”

However, the master work of the writing of the *Nova História* was still not complete. Oliveira Marques was not to see the dream of the last years of his life come to fruition. His unexpected disappearance,

which had such a devastating effect on the Portuguese academic community, as well as, undoubtedly, on other historians overseas, occurred suddenly on 23 January, 2007.

Some of his works have remained unfinished, but others are to be completed in his memory. A few of them, such as the one that he wished to write about his own family, will remain in the form of nothing more than notes and echoes (apart from the three volumes that he had already published, with the memoirs of his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather's theatrical work), for only he truly knew how to write these. But his extremely vast, forceful, academic and diversified historiographic output and the example that he provided as a university lecturer, historian and committed citizen will endure through time as anchors and compasses for all those seeking to plough the seas of research and follow the paths of knowledge over the course of the long human journey.

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