

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**DIAS, Carlos Malheiro** (Porto, 1875-Lisbon, 1941)

Born into a family of the Porto commercial bourgeoisie, with connections to Brazil on his mother's side, Carlos Malheiro Dias began his education at the Santa Quitéria school, continuing at the Lamego secondary school, after which he moved to his mother's homeland with the intention of settling in Rio de Janeiro. During his stay, Malheiro Dias made his literary debut with his participation in the column "Os que surgem" [Those who emerge], dedicated to new literary talents in the journal *A Semana*, edited by Max Fleiuss and Valentim Magalhães. He did so in September 1893, with an excerpt from the novel *D. Amor* [D. Love], about which Valentim Magalhães highlighted the young man's effort in "paying close attention, drinking from historical sources, events and information indispensable to a work of this kind, so as to immerse himself and impregnate himself as completely as possible with the general character" (Magalhães, *A Semana*, 1893) of a distant era, the reign of Cardinal D. Henrique, chosen by Carlos Malheiro Dias as the setting for his first literary work. This was his first foray into historical research, a pattern that was repeated in subsequent titles; the following year, with *Cenários – fantasias sobre a História Antiga* [Scenarios – Fantasies about Ancient History] (Rio de Janeiro, 1894), a work animated by an interest in distant times, whose repercussions fell short of Malheiro Dias' expectations.

The proximity between history and literature would remain constant in the author's literary work, a characteristic reinforced by the higher education he obtained after returning to Portugal in 1896. In 1900, after completing his degree in literature (1898), Malheiro Dias published his first novel, *O Filho das Ervas* [The Son of the Herbs], followed by *Os Teles de Albergaria* [The Teles from Albergaria] (1901) and *Paixão de Maria do Céu* [Maria do Céu's Passion] (1902), paradigmatic examples of this structuring convergence, now centred on recent historical developments. In this perspective, it is worth highlighting his intention to discuss Portuguese 19<sup>th</sup>-century in an ambitious project called *História Moral de um Século* [Moral History of a Century], to be realised through the aforementioned titles and others – *São Miguel Arcanjo* [Saint Michael, the Archangel], dedicated to the civil war of 1832-34 and the reign of D. Miguel, *Sua Excelência* [Your Excellency], also devoted to the Teles de Albergaria in the aftermath of the republican insurrection of 1891. Also *A Fábrica* [The Factory], *A Emigração* [Emigration] e *O Campo* [The Field], a collection focused on economic and social concerns, where the historical background ensured the (in)temporal scope claimed by the author in his



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criticism of the indifference of the political system, in particular Liberalism, to the living conditions of the Portuguese population. This plan, welcomed with joy by *Revista Nova* and partially urged by Joaquim Leitão in *A Peste. Aspectos Morais da Epidemia Nacional* [The Plague. Moral Aspects of the National Epidemic] (1901), would remain unfinished.

This was partly due to a change in the author's career path, with his joining the Regenerator Party (1901). Elected deputy for the constituency of Viana do Castelo, Carlos Malheiro Dias took up the post of chief of staff to the Minister of Public Works, the Count of Paçô Vieira, in 1903. Removed in October 1904 due to the fall of the government headed by Hintze Ribeiro, Carlos Malheiro Dias did not resume his previous literary career and, by extension, his underlying historiographical work. Instead, and certainly driven by the prevailing political and party motivation, he began a new stage in his career, associated with the regenerative press. First, in the newspaper *A Tarde*, followed by *Notícias de Lisboa*, founded by Hintze Ribeiro in 1905, where he collaborated with several journalists and historians, including Cristóvão Aires and António Maria de Queiroz Veloso.

In January 1906, he took over the artistic direction of the journal *A Ilustração Portuguesa*, in response to an invitation from Silva Graça, suggested by Eduardo Schwalbach, a position he held until 1912. Once again, the author drew on the recent historical past to give the journal a new lease of life and express his ideological convictions and political objectives, often in a subliminal manner in line with the aims of the Regenerators. These, inscribed in the English model of liberalism, dictated his refusal to violate constitutional principles, which was the reason for his departure from party life during the Franco regime. However, his loyalty to constitutional principles and to King Carlos I did not allow him to remain aloof from the Portuguese situation, but rather impelled him to adopt a critical opposition stance. Thus, although he did not underestimate the endogenous effects of the 1891-93 crisis in the political, social and economic spheres, he discovered remote causes for the disintegration of the Portuguese parliamentary system through a regressive analysis, in which he also scrutinised solutions based on a return to the fundamental values and objectives of liberalism. In practice, this meant a return to the recent past, to the founders of the liberal regime, whose aims he would publicise on several occasions in the pages of *Ilustração Portuguesa* during the Franco regime and in response to it.

This historical evocation took on an eminently political dimension, provoking public confrontation between the practice of monarchical constitutionalism and its contradictions. It became an effective weapon in a political struggle characterised by the advance of the executive power over opposition sectors, with the suspension of titles and the sanctioning of directors and journalists. *Ilustração Portuguesa* achieved a symptomatic expansion of public acceptance of the editor's editorial line, which featured historical texts on anniversaries, protagonists or values associated with Liberalism. The builders of the liberal regime were exalted, whose disintegration was evident in contrast to reality, and the old adversaries of the liberal cause were rehabilitated, due to the position of some sectors of the Church towards the political system in the first decade of the 20th century.



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Anticlerical, a certain restraint was imposed in the period following the assassination. Between February 1908 and October 1910, the effort to build the image of the young Manuel II was, at the same time, the last opportunity to reverse the trend towards the disintegration and constitutional disintegration of the monarchical system. This certainty, evident in the pages of *Ilustração Portuguesa* and in the book *Quem é o Rei de Portugal?* [Who is the King of Portugal?], dictated a new return to history for an exercise in legitimising the king, whose popular acceptance implied affiliation with a frame of reference familiar to the mental structure of Portuguese society.

With the Republic established and Malheiro Dias' efforts to return to political activity thwarted, he returned to his role as an observer of Portuguese reality after 1910. He took on, following his previous exercise, the role of chronicler of Lisbon's daily life, brought to the Porto public in the form of "Cartas de Lisboa" [Letters from Lisbon] in the *Comércio do Porto* newspaper, using a methodology of objective analysis, distanced and strenuously uncommitted to the republican regime. He dared to read the present with historical analysis tools whose results, collected in three volumes, foreshadowed his political convictions, expressed in an environment hostile to criticism of the Republic. This was especially true if such criticism extended beyond the national sphere and painted a picture of republican turmoil, unrest and intolerance. In November 1913, Malheiro Dias was compelled to leave Portugal and settle in Brazil, a decision that was not unrelated to the chronicles published in *Correio Paulistano*, which drew numerous parallels between the Portuguese revolution and its French counterpart of 1789. In these texts, Malheiro Dias returned to the critical approach he had developed towards the constitutional monarchy in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This chronicle genre, forged with the use of history, did not go unnoticed by the republicans and constituted a phenomenon of political resistance and, at the same time, a catalyst for adverse reactions to the Republic in a society with high levels of rurality, which corresponded to a conservative mindset rooted in Catholic values and institutions.

The return to Brazil marked a new turning point, centred on the cultural dynamism of the Portuguese colony across the Atlantic and on strengthening the identity between the two countries, a constant aspiration since the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emphasised by the intellectual environment that prevailed after the First World War, which was conducive to the exaltation of cultural, linguistic and historical factors as the primary binding element for the constitution of large political and institutional communities. In this case, the communion of interests and values implied the adoption of a confederative model for the Portuguese and Brazilian realities, a proposal by Bettencourt Rodrigues that was received with moderate enthusiasm by Malheiro Dias: "nevertheless, whatever form the understanding advocated in Portugal by Messrs Bettencourt Rodrigues and Coelho de Carvalho may take in the future, and in Brazil by Alberto Seabra and Medeiros Albuquerque, in line with the Atlantic interests outlined by the visionary and poet João de Barros and boldly pursued by the plane of two heroes, this event will only be viable when we regain our full prestige; when we have valued our own resources; appease our petty internal disputes and achieve cohesion once again" ("Relações Luso-Brasileiras. Quimeras e Realidades", *Lusitânia*, 1924). The success of the joint effort



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between Portugal and Brazil depended on a prior and unequivocal move by the former in favour of the (im)material development of the national territory.

This reservation did not prevent him, in the recent past, from undertaking an ambitious editorial project of a historiographical nature, in which he fought for the communion of the intellectual elites of both Portuguese-speaking countries. Thus, when commenting on Bettencourt Rodrigues' expectations in 1924, Malheiro Dias discussed his experience in this initiative, which began in 1917, when he and Albino de Sousa Cruz formed a company to finance the *História da Colonização Portuguesa do Brasil* [History of Portuguese Colonisation in Brazil] (1921-1924), characterised by multiple symbolic dimensions, almost contradictory if one considers the event being commemorated, Brazil's independence; or perhaps not, considering that this country was a consequence of the Portuguese worldview and national historical past. This work, which featured prominent figures in Portuguese and Brazilian historiography such as Jaime Cortesão, Luciano P. Silva, Duarte Leite, Júlio Dantas, H. Lopes de Mendonça, Duarte Pacheco, F. M. Esteves Pereira, Paulo Merêa, Pedro de Azevedo and Oliveira Lima, Malheiro Dias was responsible for the artistic direction of the work, the chapters on the expeditions of 1501 and 1503, and the relationship between the metropolis and the conquests during the reigns of King João III, King Sebastião and King Henrique, and the donatary system. He also wrote the introductory texts to the two parts of the work, which are important for understanding its objectives.

Celebrating Brazil in 1922 meant marking the golden age of national history and highlighting the contemporary testimony of the territorial integrity of the former colony over the following hundred years, an analytical perspective that legitimised the Eurocentric approach reflected in the entire first volume being devoted to the Portuguese Discoveries. The Portuguese contribution was seen as essential to the civilisational process, responsible for the creation of a community with specific contours, also subsidiary to the socio-cultural patterns of "continental European civilisation". It also led to a systematic analysis of the topics covered (relating to the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries), where the predominance of political, diplomatic and military aspects placed it within the traditionalist historiographical domain, as well as the positivist influence, evident in the approach of individual journeys whose value was projected into subsequent space-time dimensions. This was without prejudice to the manifest interest in the administrative organisation of the territory, the technological value underlying Portuguese expansion, or the trade flows generated in Brazil. Conceived as a landmark publishing initiative in the national historiographical panorama, *História da Colonização Portuguesa do Brasil* [History of the Portuguese Colonization of Brazil] marked Carlos Malheiro Dias' entry into historiography, which was late given the author's close connection to history. And, punctually, as can be seen from subsequent choices where the study of historical evolution regained its supplementary character, which remained constant until the 1920s. Paradigmatic of this view, the controversy with António Sérgio surrounding the figure of D. Sebastião (*O Desejado: depoimentos de contemporâneos de D. Sebastião. Precedidos de uma carta prefácio a Carlos Malheiro Dias* [The Desired One: Testimonies from D. Sebastião's Contemporaries. Preceded by a Prefatory Letter to Carlos Malheiro Dias], 1924), in the wake of the publication of Antero de Figueiredo's work, revealed an instrumental relationship between the author, then

convinced of the failure of the liberal project (in both its monarchical and republican forms) in Portuguese society, with history, a repository where he sought arguments to strengthen the glorification of the young king who died at Alcácer Quibir and to confront Sergian rationalism.

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