

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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ALMEIDA, Fortunato de (Vilar Seco, Nelas, 1869 – Vilar Seco, Nelas, 1933)

The details of Fortunato de Almeida Pereira de Andrade's birthplace are contradictory. Moreira das Neves put forward Folhadal, Coimbra, and Justino de Almeida Folhadal in the municipality of Viseu. The most common reference, the one that seems to be correct, indicates Vilar Seco, Nelas, where he was baptised and in whose register the reference to the place of birth, which took place on 15 April, is missing, as is the case with the registers from that period drawn up by the same parish priest. This seems to point to a correspondence between the parish of baptism and the parish of birth. The same document states that he was the son of Francisco Manuel de Almeida, a deputy to the Registrar of the Ordinary Court, and Felícia da Anunciação, a landowner. He may have been the fruit of his father's second marriage, which other sources have not been able to confirm, given the reference in the document to Maria Miquelina, his "half-sister" and baptismal godmother.

He completed his secondary school studies at the Viseu Seminary. Abandoning the possibility of embracing the ecclesiastical life, he went to the University of Coimbra, where he enrolled in the School of Law in 1890-1891. Among others, he studied with the poet Fausto Guedes Teixeira and José Ferreira Marnoco e Sousa, who came to prominence as a jurist, in addition to the executive activity he carried out at the end of the liberal monarchy. In this School, he met António José Teixeira de Abreu, Quirino de Jesus, and Afonso Costa, all at a later stage in their academic career. He completed his bachelor's degree in Law in 1896, with a classification of "Good with 11 points". In addition to this training, he had theological preparation – knowledge characterised, at the time, by a strong legal focus – which had given him access to Latin and French, a language in which he even published. His previous seminary studies and the academic environment in Coimbra combined to define his political and ideological views, leading to affinities and disagreements that began in Coimbra, both with members of his School and with some of those who were studying theology at the time, including Manuel dos Santos Farinha, Abúndio da Silva, Joaquim Mendes dos Remédios, and António Alves Ferreira, who would later become bishop of the diocese of Viseu. It was with a theology student, also from the diocese of Viseu, that he undertook the editorial initiative that formed the *Revista Contemporanea de questões religiosas, scientificas, philosophicas, históricas e sociais* [Contemporary Journal of Religious, Scientific, Philosophical, Historical and Social Issues] (1894-1896) – Fortunato de



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Almeida was the editor, and the director was José Marques Rito e Cunha, an ecclesiastical student of theology who, among other duties, would become a canon of the See of Viseu. In this periodical, he printed “A Igreja Católica e a Escravatura” [The Catholic Church and Slavery]. He managed to get Luciano Cordeiro to collaborate with this magazine, writing about one of his recurring themes – the discovery of America.

This activity signalled Fortunato de Almeida’s Catholic militancy, which should be seen in the context of integral Catholicism, an identitarian cornerstone, coinciding with nationalist tendencies where the Catholic factor would be an essential element and where participation in the life of political parties would tend to be instrumental. This militancy was also expressed in his work as a polemicist, which took the form, among other things, of a critique of the thesis upheld by Afonso Costa on Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891). With *A questão social: reflexões à dissertação inaugural do Senhor Afonso Costa* [The social question: reflections on Mr Afonso Costa’s inaugural dissertation] (1895, the same year when the thesis of the future leader of the Partido Republicano Português [Portuguese Republican Party] was defended), he returned to a controversial topic that was hot at the time: the place and political framework of the papacy, as well as the Catholic claim to its freedom, which would require the exercise of the temporal power of the bishop of Rome over an autonomous territory; Fortunato de Almeida had dealt with the topic when he translated *A verdade sobre a questão romana* [The truth about the Roman question] in 1890.

After completing his university studies, he took up a teaching career, establishing himself professionally after competitive examinations as a teacher at the Central Secondary School of Coimbra, later José Falcão Secondary School. In this capacity, he was part of the teaching staff of the Teacher Training Course, in charge of the historical and geographical sciences section.

He divided his activity between teaching and historiographical production, areas that mutually influenced each other, as can be seen from the list of his publications, which amount to a significant number. He had shown an inclination and appetite for historiography since at least his university years. He had not yet finished his bachelor’s degree in Law when, at the age of 25, he published a significant monograph entitled *O Infante de Sagres* [The Prince of Sagres] (1894). A laudatory memoir of this member of the illustrious generation, it was awarded one of the prizes in the competition held on the occasion of the fifth centenary of D. Henrique’s birth. This first historiographical endeavour was clearly influenced by Oliveira Martins, who, along with Pinheiro Chagas and Luciano Cordeiro, was on the jury of the competition. He would later move away from Oliveira Martins’ influence when it came to his conception of what a historian’s work should be, just as he moved away from the epic character that emerged from his portrait of D. Henrique, as well as the fantasies about the supposed School of Sagres. Although nuanced, the view of the Portuguese pioneering spirit in maritime expansion that he espoused in this study, even though it was a hypothesis that had been questioned for a long time, remained in his later production, betraying concerns for national exaltation – at the time pervasive in various political and intellectual quarters – a theme he returned to in a different form with *La découverte de l’Amérique: Pierre d’Ailly et Christophe Colomb: les voyages des portugais vers l’Ouest pendant le XVe siècle* [The discovery of America: Pierre d’Ailly and Christopher Columbus: Portuguese



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voyages to the West in the 15th century] (1913).

His bibliographic production in the years after he took up his teaching duties was extensive, and mostly also its subsidiary, both in the areas covered and in the form it took. In fact, a series of textbooks written by him appeared in print from at least 1896, the year of the publication of *História antiga dos povos orientales* [Ancient history of the oriental peoples]. That work, which reached its third edition in 1904, is part of a set of didactic texts that served his professional activity and revealed some of the traits that also characterised the style of his historiography: the erudite nature, based on extensive bibliographic knowledge, the painstaking thoroughness and the detail in establishing the facts served the clarity and robustness of the overviews. They are, therefore, a set of traits that make him stand out, particularly as an author of reliable scientific dissemination, and definitely contributed to his impact, also seen in the many editions printed – for this reason, rather than for his interpretative originality or the raising of new analytical hypotheses. This is consistent with the historiographical scope he embraced, prioritising the establishment of facts supported by documentary evidence, where hermeneutic work is secondary. In addition to the aforementioned work, he wrote *Historia antiga da Grecia e de Roma* [Ancient history of Greece and Rome] (the date of the 1st edition is unknown, the 2nd was published in 1897, and the 6th in 1904) and *Historia da Edade Média, Moderna e Contemporanea* [Textbook of the Middle, Modern and Contemporary Ages] (1898, 4th edition in 1905). His *Curso de História de Portugal* [Manual of Portuguese History] was published for the first time in 1899 and reached its 10th edition in 1945. The *Curso de História Universal* [Textbook in Universal History] and the *Curso de Geografia Física e Política* [Textbook of Physical and Political Geography] were also widely disseminated. No references were found for the earliest editions of either, but it is known that the former reached its 6th edition in 1925. As for the aforementioned Geography textbook, it had its 2nd edition in 1910 and reached its 13th edition in 1927. The case of *História das Instituições em Portugal* [History of Institutions in Portugal] (1900) is paradigmatic of the impact of such publications, as well as their adaptation to the didactic standards of the time: the 2nd edition, dated 1903, came out with the seal of official approval for secondary school studies.

Geography, at the time a subject linked to History, was the subject of similar publications. In 1902 he published *Principios scientificos de geografia* [Scientific principles of geography]. This was followed by *Chronicas geographicas: estudos de actualidade* [Geographic chronicles: topical studies] (1905), a work that had the peculiarity of revealing his partisan affinities, placing him close to the Partido Regenerador [Regeneratist Party] and, in the political context it appeared, supportive of the dissent led by João Franco, to whom it was dedicated. *Nomenclatura geográfica: subsídios para a restauração da toponymia em língua portuguesa* [Geographical nomenclature: subsidies for the restoration of toponymy in the Portuguese language] (1908, with the 2nd edition, amended and expanded, in 1928), strengthens the weight among his intellectual concerns of what he considered to be the defence of nationality, a recurring topic in his work. The geographical field was also present in *Portugal e as Colónias Portuguesas* [Portugal and the Portuguese Colonies] (1918), whose main worth laid in the bibliography it provided on the subject.



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The end of the first decade of the 20th century seems to have been a turning point for Fortunato de Almeida. Even though his political activities had been secondary to his Catholic militancy in the previous period, after the triumph of the Republic, there is no evidence of any such activity. On the contrary, he continued to be active, expressing himself, among other things, in his collaboration with *Lusitania – Revista Catholica Mensal* [Lusitania - Monthly Catholic Magazine], directed by Francisco de Sousa Veloso and edited by Manuel Gonçalves Cerejeira. In it, he published, as an “unpublished passage from the History of the Church in Portugal”, *A Reforma Protestante e as irreverências de Gil Vicente* [The Protestant Reformation and the irreverence of Gil Vicente] (Year I, no. 4, 1914). He sought to refute, on the one hand, the “historical phantasmagorias” of Teófilo Braga, who saw in the “court poet” a “precursor of Erasmus” (p. 207); and, on the other hand, the “apparatus of erudition and equal firmness of historical criteria” (p. 210) that, in his opinion, were revealed in Carolina Michaëlis Vasconcelos’ *Notas Vicentinas* (1912). It discussed the inquisitorial institution - a subject on which he proceeded with caution, even in later works – and the role of the Catholic Church and its agents in this regard. Emphasising the uniqueness of the Iberian courts in the landscape of Christendom, the author points out chronological inconsistencies in relation to the aspects that he perceived in the playwright’s work as part of the climate that led to the religious reforms of the 16th century and, in this context, tries to refute the hypothesis that the censorious and inquisitorial environment was at the origin of the bard’s withdrawal from the court.

While he continued to teach, the period after 1910 was focused, in terms of historiographical activity, on the production of his two works unanimously considered to be the most important, namely *História da Igreja em Portugal* [History of the Church in Portugal] (*HIP*), a work in eight volumes that he began publishing in 1910, and *História de Portugal* [History of Portugal] (*HP*), whose publication began in 1922, comprising six volumes, although he did not live to write the last volume planned, which was to cover the period of the Republic. The remaining production from that period seems to be the result of the work required for these two publications, which share a number of defining characteristics of their author’s historiographical standing and method.

Firstly, they allow us to place him within the framework of what has been called erudite historiography, following in the footsteps of Gama Barros, whose work he appreciated and which came to be the object of his attention in *Gama Barros e a História da Administração Pública em Portugal* [Gama Barros and the History of Public Administration in Portugal] (1921). His concern for accuracy was grounded on the “exact knowledge of the facts”, which should subtract from the historian’s “fantasy” the deduction of “historical circumstances”, as can be read in the preface to *HIP*. The positivity of the documentary support, which brought him closer to Herculano – to whom he dedicated a lecture given and published in 1910 – would be the essential task of historiographical work, which is consistent with the work he carried out in this book. His circumstances, however, distanced him from the archival focus of Gama Barros’ research, of which he was fully aware. In the aforementioned preface, he clearly explains that he made use, above all, of published bibliography, collecting materials “dispersed in hundreds of volumes”. Undertaking a work of this magnitude, combining it with his



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teaching duties, would be incompatible with extensive work of identifying, analysing and processing primary archive sources, which in this work were limited to “certain periods and subjects”. We should also bear in mind that the production of these volumes was carried out during a period when the documents were scattered between civil and ecclesiastical archives, which would only increase the difficulty pointed out. In addition, he considered that a work of this nature exceeded “the strength of one man”. In his view, the *HIP* corresponded to the “first step” of outlining the “layout of the building”, which would have to be finished with the contribution of the “many” who would bring materials for its construction. His statement about the work of “coordinating” the materials already published in various collections and which, “sought out diligently and used judiciously”, could be enough for the “complete and perhaps definitive formation of many pages of the ecclesiastical history of Portugal” is highly questionable, to say the least, a standpoint that is understandable given his minimisation of the specifically hermeneutic task of historiographical work. Thus, the work excels in its efforts to establish the facts with precision. This concern extended beyond the publication of the work, as evidenced by the updates that, in view of the new bibliography that had emerged in the meantime, were being prepared for the second edition. Some of these changes are incorporated and signalled in the 1967 edition, the one that is most easily accessible and quoted today, prepared by Damião Peres from the annotated copy of the 1st edition belonging to Fortunato de Almeida himself. Secondly, the *HIP* shows didactic care in the systematisation of subjects and their presentation. Finally, its internal organisation is indebted to the coeval perspective that, with regard to the religious phenomenon, valued, above all, its institutional dimension. This characteristic is reinforced by the periodisation that follows the chronological outline of the reigns, which would not be unrelated to the attempt to highlight the importance that the Catholic Church would have had in the historical evolution of Portugal. Although the task of writing *HIP* was no stranger to his Catholic militancy and the social circles that were indebted to it, which would have contributed decisively to the construction of his worldview, the work was the result of “advice and incitement” from one of his most “beloved and illustrious teachers”, José Joaquim Lopes Praça, which would have occurred “as soon as [...] he left the university campus”.

Besides the identitarian motivations and persuasion of Lopes Praça, the research into religious matters stemmed from his understanding of historiographical work itself, which could not neglect this area, at the risk of jeopardising the understanding of “many pages of our political and social history”, which, in his opinion, occurred because “the ecclesiastical history” of the country had not been properly studied. Despite the limitations imposed by some of his characteristics, Fortunato de Almeida made some innovative thematic incursions, both in the attention he paid to the situation of the Jewish and Islamic communities, and in the religious expressions and practices considered heterodox, such as superstitions and magic, as well as in analysing the incomes of ecclesiastics, aspects of their customs, careers, training, and intellectual production. Some of these aspects, which only the transition from ecclesiastical history to religious history would consolidate as objects of research, have in these volumes their first contributions within the national historiographical framework. Many of the topics listed there are still awaiting in-depth research. Just as a



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significant part of the biographical summaries of Portuguese prelates needs to be elaborated on. More than a hundred years on, the effort made is as remarkable as the backwardness of the national historiographical scenario due to the inability to overcome the limitations of Fortunato de Almeida's work, as far as religious issues are concerned, considering its concatenation with political, socio-economic and cultural history. Fortunato de Almeida's collaboration on the *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et Géographie Ecclésiastique* [Dictionary of Ecclesiastical History and Geography] (1912) was not unrelated to the recognition of the author's ability to produce syntheses on these subjects that *HIP* had earned him.

A decade later, the second of the aforementioned works, *História de Portugal*, began to be published. It shares some characteristics with *HIP* that, paradoxically, can be understood as aspects that contributed to, on the one hand, subsequent Portuguese historiography surpassing it and, on the other hand, having a long editorial longevity, with the latest edition dating from 2018, under the presentation and coordination of José Manuel Garcia. Thus, the insistence on periodisation by reigns, plus the summary of the monarch and the royal family at the end of each of these sections, meant a step backwards in the methodological progress that attention to political and socio-economic developments as periodisation criteria had represented with Herculano or Oliveira Martins, as noted by Sérgio Campos Matos (See "ALMEIDA, Pereira de Andrade, FORTUNATO DE", *Dicionário de Educadores Portugueses*).

However, the didactic usefulness of this option, combined with the persistence of the traditional view of the uniqueness of Great Men, may have contributed to the longevity of his *HP*. On top of this, there is a certain perspective on the Nation's journey, combining supposed greatness with a presumed decadence resulting from denationalising influences that continue to have some intellectual support. In this regard, are eloquent the words of Caetano Beirão, for whom this work was the result of "conscientious, calm, objective, documented, albeit sometimes excessively superficial" work, which contrasted with previous works that gave a "distorted history that suited his bastard idealism, his political conveniences", both for the "blue-and-white democracy, first" and for the "green-and-red democracy, later". This resulted in a "History to teach the Portuguese to be Portuguese". The same Beirão, however, brought it closer to the works of Pinheiro Chagas, Sousa Monteiro, and Latino Coelho, "without the magical style of Oliveira Martins", saying that it was clouded by "political passion" because it failed to support D. Miguel's claim to dynastic legitimacy. It was thus far removed from the nationalism of the integralists, which also saw António Sardinha strongly criticise this work, considering it to be exaggeratedly erudite and superficially analytical. Conversely, it can be appreciated for its synthetic nature, condensing detailed information, served by a detailed narrative and careful systematisation of a wide bibliographical collection, with frequent and often extensive quotations from the sources it uses, sidelining the historian's interpretative activity as if the quoted text said it all. The need for documentary support led him, as in the case of the School of Sagres, to an evolution in his historiography, distinguishing legends from facts, rejecting some of the elements that reinforced the traditional providential reading of the country's history, such as the miracle of Ourique. Even so, his reading of the nation's journey is not devoid of essentialist elements, combined with a decadent perspective resulting from the external influences that



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contaminated the character of the country. This is clear in the assessment of some episodes, as in the case of some of the religious reforms undertaken by the more radical liberal sectors, attributed to the influence of Freemasonry and the “Jacobin spirit” that was “imported” from France.

HP was the culmination of the intellectual journey made by Fortunato de Almeida over the previous decades, an appreciable effort to synthesise the extensive bibliographical collection work carried out in the meantime, prepared by the aforementioned 1899 textbook and the *Esboço de História de Portugal: Com Episódios, Biografias e Tradições* [Outline of the History of Portugal: With Episodes, Biographies and Traditions], which came out in 1920, just two years before the start of the work under consideration...

In addition to the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa [Lisbon Academy of Sciences] and the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa [Lisbon Geographical Society], he was a full member of the Instituto de Coimbra from 1896 onwards. He was secretary of the Literature, Humanities and Arts sector between 1910 and 1923, and was a member of the special editorial committee of the journal *O Instituto* from 1924 onwards. He actively participated in the Sociedade Portuguesa de Estudos Históricos [Portuguese Society for Historical Studies] launched by Fidelino de Figueiredo, publishing in the *Revista de História* [Journal of History] some of the studies related to the preparation of his two major works, such as “A Questão do Apresamento da Barca ‘Charles et George’ e o Conselho de Estado” [The Question of the Seizure of the ‘Charles et George’ and the Council of State] (1917), “Subsídios para a História Económica de Portugal” [Subsidies for the Economic History of Portugal] (1920) – an appraisal of Pombaline policy in this area. He was honoured with the “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” award, the highest award the Holy See bestows on a layperson.

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