

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

<http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/>



LEMOS, Maximiano Augusto de Oliveira L. Júnior (Peso da Régua, 1860 – Vila Nova de Gaia, 1923)

The acclaimed pioneer of the History of Medicine in Portugal, Maximiano de Lemos, was son his father of the same name, Maximiano Augusto de Oliveira Lemos and his wife D. Guilhermina de Matos e Oliveira, a middle-class couple who lived in Rua de Medeiros in Peso da Régua, where their son was born on 8 August 1860. Little is known of his early life on the banks of the Douro, but by the age of fifteen he was already settled in Porto studying for entry into medical school at the Academia Politécnica do Porto, matriculating after a year to the Escola Médico-Cirúrgica do Porto, in late September 1876. Throughout his five years of studies Maximiano de Lemos showed himself to be a gifted and hard-working student, while sharing his interests with the literary and bohemian world as an amateur poet and a restless and effusive young man, according to the memoirs of his friend Ricardo Jorge.

In July 1881, he defended his inaugural thesis called *A Medicina em Portugal até aos fins do século XVIII (tentiva histórica)* [Medicine in Portugal to the end of the eighteenth century (historical essay)], which gained the approval of the jury, who awarded him the diploma in medicine and surgery, just short of twenty-one years of age. His choice of topic already revealed what would be his overriding intellectual interest and the centre of his researches: the History of Medicine, until then left neglected in sporadic and minor studies. He illustrated his thesis with an accumulation of material and a historical exposition of the progress of medicine in Portugal from the foundation of the kingdom to the eighteenth century, from various angles: scientific areas of knowledge, educational and medical institutions, leading personalities, and a bibliography. This first work of a historical nature already demonstrated some of the characteristics of his later works, while also showing clear influences of the historical approach adopted by Alexandre Herculano, such as the selection of facts from historical sources, a critique of the same in search of truth from original documents, or the construction of knowledge in a way that is erudite, all-embracing, and of a nationalist character. He justified this in his introductory remarks: 'prompted by the enthusiasm that he has for the glories of his fatherland to assay the merit of those became notable in his country in the branch of knowledge to which he has dedicated himself' (*A Medicina em Portugal*, 1881, pp. 13–14).

The young clinician immediately started his career in the Posto Médico-Cirúrgico in Porto and the following year he considered an academic career in the Academia Politécnica, but he put them both aside in



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favour of a military career, entering the army in Estremoz in 1883 as an assistant surgeon. Later he was posted to Porto and Pinhel, and was promoted to chief surgeon with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In parallel with private medicine, to which he devoted most of his life, Maximiano de Lemos continued with his researches into the history of medicine, creating, in collaboration with highly regarded Portuguese doctors, two vehicles for the transmission of his discoveries, studies and learnings: the *Anuário dos Progressos da Medicina em Portugal* (1883–85) and the *Arquivos da História da Medicina Portuguesa* (1886–1920). The latter in particular, which he continued to edit almost until his death, comprising two series of twenty volumes, constitutes an extremely rich collection of unpublished documents and important essays on the events and personalities in the History of Medicine in Portugal.

In 1889, against other candidates in open competition, he finally began his extensive career as a lecturer in the school where he first started out, the Escola Médico-Cirúrgica. He was appointed as substitute lecturer in the medical department with a promise of his own chair in Legal Medicine, which, however, he only came to occupy after five years of holding that in General Pathology. This was his most productive period in terms of intellectual activity and research, during which he produced material on various topics of a medical character, as well as literary criticism, historical and educational writings, and translations of the work of historians such as Louis Blanc and François Guizot. He also contributed to medical and cultural journals, and managed the publication of the *Encyclopedia Portuguesa Illustrada*, himself signing the extensive biographies of the principal doctors of Jewish origin in the modern epoch. He belonged to many scientific and cultural bodies, being most notably president of the Sociedade de Medicina e Cirurgia do Porto, the Associação Médica Lusitana and the Associação de Jornalistas e Homens de Letras do Porto; he was also elected a corresponding member of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, the Sociedade Portuguesa de Ciências Naturais, the Sociedade de Medicina e Cirurgia da Baía, the Leipzig Society of Natural Sciences and the German Society for the History of Medicine.

The publication of his two-volume *História da Medicina em Portugal* (1889) was testament to his merit, his culture, erudition and pioneering effort in the History of Medicine; recognized as his masterpiece it was widely praised internationally for its solid historiographical value by such eminent figures in the field as Max Neuburger, Fielding Hudson Garrison and George Sarton. If in his academic dissertation he had acknowledged time restraints in deepening his historical researches, while conserving in a masterly way his conceptual line of history, he now extended his sweeping erudition to the early twentieth century with an assessment of the mass of documentation that he had been collecting in the course of his intellectual labours. And so in this, which is considered his magnum opus, he set out to revise and complete his study of the course of medicine in Portugal, with the same multi-faceted perspective of its position and tendencies over the centuries, while seeking to accompany the international work being done in order to highlight the contribution of the Portuguese whose best work had often been done abroad.

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Although affected by hearing problems he was placed in the army reserve in 1911, and immediately decided to resign his position as a professor in the recently founded University of Porto and suspend his academic career. Five years later, however, he was invited by the Porto Faculty of Medicine to teach courses in Medical History and Philosophy and in Professional Ethics, and he became the first person in the country to hold a chair in the History of Medicine. In 1918 the Conselho Escolar [School Council] awarded him the degree of Doctor of Medicine and nominated him Director of the Faculty, a position he held until 1922. He also served briefly as Vice-Rector of the University of Porto from 1921, a position from which he retired just a few months before his death on 6 October 1923. In 1933, in a posthumous homage, the newly created Museum of the History of Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Porto was named after Maximiano Lemos, by way of recognition of his extraordinary merit as an intellectual, a scientist and a historian of medicine with a biography that runs to some 134 published books and essays.

Works by the author: *A Medicina em Portugal até aos fins do século XVIII: (tentativa histórica)*. Porto, Imprensa Commercial, 1881; *Archivos de Historia da Medicina portuguesa*. Porto, Lemos & Companhia, 1886-1920; *História da Medicina em Portugal – doutrinas e instituições*, 1.^a edição. Porto, Manuel Gomes Editor, 1899; *Amato Lusitano: a sua vida e a sua obra*. Porto, Eduardo Tavares Martins, 1907; *Zacuto Lusitano: a sua vida e a sua obra*. Porto, Eduardo Tavares Martins, 1909; *Ribeiro Sanches: a sua vida e a sua obra*. Porto, Eduardo Tavares Martins, 1911; *Estudos da História da Medicina Peninsular*. Porto, A Vapor da Enciclopédia Portuguesa, 1916; *História do Ensino Médico no Porto*. Porto, A Vapor da Enciclopedia Portuguesa, 1925.

Works with references to the author: *Homenagem da Faculdade de Medicina do Pôrto ao Prof. Maximiano de Lemos*. Porto, Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade do Porto, 1923; SAAVEDRA, Alberto, “O professor Maximiano Lopes: inventário bibliográfico”. *A Medicina Moderna*. Porto, vol. 10, 1923, pp. 379-418; MONTEIRO, Hernâni, *História do Ensino Médico no Porto (apêndice)*. Porto, A Vapor da Enciclopedia Portuguesa, 1925; SAAVEDRA, Alberto, *O professor Maximiano Lemos (1860-1923): no primeiro centenário do seu nascimento*. Porto, [s.n.], 1960; SUEIRO, M. B. Barbosa, *O grande historiador da medicina professor Maximiano Lemos*. Lisboa, [s.n.], 1966; FONTES, Barroso da, *Dicionário dos Mais Ilustres Transmontanos e Alto Durienses*. Guimarães, Editora Cidade Berço, 1998.

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APOIOS:

