

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**LIVERMORE, Harold Victor** (London, 1914 — ? 2010)

The son of merchants, Harold Livermore attended the *Lincoln School* and completed his degree in Spanish at *Jesus College* of the University of Cambridge. In the mid-1930s he won an award from the *Hispano British Society*, which allowed him to further his studies in Madrid— a process interrupted in 1936 by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. It was during this period that he met his future wife, Ann Livermore, a musicologist and later the author of *Short History of Spanish Music* (1972). Before the Second World War, HL came to Portugal and stayed for a few years, carrying out in-depth research into the country's history and structuring his career in the field of teaching. He was appointed Director of *St. Julian's School*— an English school in Carcavelos that still exists today— during the 1941-42 school year. Returning to England at the end of 1942, HL resumed his link with the University of Cambridge and taught Spanish Theatre and Latin American History there. This academic career was interrupted by a foray into the diplomatic world when he joined the *Foreign Office* Research Department. He travelled to and stayed in Brazil, where he led missions with the aim of discussing the problem of that country's loans to Great Britain during the war. In the 1950s, HL ended up occupying the role of educational director of the *Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Councils* of *Canning House* in London, a centre committed to fostering relations between the British world and the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian universes. He later devoted himself to teaching at the University of British Columbia in Canada, where he was head of the Department of Hispanic Studies until 1976. Towards the end of this period, HL also carried out very significant work as a tutor in the Department of Portuguese Studies at the English Universities of Cambridge and Westminster. The research that underpinned this academic career from an early stage made HL a leading English-speaking expert on the history of the Iberian Peninsula, and more specifically of Portugal. As early as 1947, HL published *A History of Portugal* and won the Camões Prize. In 1958 he also published *A History of Spain*, followed by a long series of articles on the two countries. *A History of Portugal* was the first history of Portugal written by a British author in the 20th century. Although historical research on the country had been promoted by names such as Edgar Prestage (1869-1951) in the first half of the 20th century, these authors tended to focus essentially on specific studies. Maintaining some characteristics of a certain historiography of dissemination, especially in its narrative and moralising components, HL's study simultaneously represented a significant advance in relation to the work of synthesis and collection that characterised traditional historiography on Portugal— while not dispensing with useful systematisation, it also ended up juxtaposing it with original research, based no longer on the analysis of secondary sources but essentially on direct contact with Portuguese documentation. Also preceded by names such as Henry Morse Stephens (1857-1919) and Aubrey Bell (1881-1950) and accompanied by historians such as John Brande Trend (1887-1958), William



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Atkinson (1902-1992), and Charles Boxer (1904-2000), HL consolidated in his work an improvement from the sequential perspective of Portuguese history, structured on a long chronological stage and no longer analysing specific and conjunctural matters, maintaining a traditional and simple division by reigns and regimes. This methodology was justified by the fact that it symbolised the transmission of authority and the constant renewal of society in the succession of generations. In any case, HL also recognised that there was a drawback to this procedure in that compartmentalisation could be understood as closed, when in fact this succession of periods does not end repeatedly with the death of the king or the election of the statesman. The author did not regard the limits of these moments as endings but as an accumulation of principles open (or not) to cultural and political change. The new 1966 edition— *A New History of Portugal* (reissued in 1973 under the title *Portugal*)—turned out to be a shorter version, in which the 19th and 20th centuries were far more developed. This preference for the 18th and 19th centuries came from the fact that these were less studied periods of English historiography. In the 1966 work, the formation of Portugal was defined as a cumulative process of specificities progressively internalised and stimulated, especially after political autonomy was achieved. According to the historian, the Portugal of King Afonso Henriques "was not a mere restoration of Roman Lusitania and [...] his assumption was an act of political inauguration" (*A New History*, p. 10). This inaugural character of the political action of the first king of Portugal was juxtaposed, according to HL, with the long existence of the Portuguese people, whose culture preceded this political milestone, in a journey that developed from the *Territorium Portucalense* to the consolidation of the kingdom. As far as conceptualisation is concerned, HL made a significant contribution— within British historiography on Portugal— to increasing objectivity by consolidating the use of the words Portugal, power, authority, and society instead of concepts such as nation, progress, decadence, and race, which were frequently applied in previous decades. A reading of his work requires, therefore, knowledge of a starting axiom that, to a large extent, defines the structuring and selections made in it: "A history of a nation deals with the life of a society and is concerned with the distribution of power and the use made of it." (*A New History*, p. X). Therefore, the author uses the basic concepts of society and power to analyse the history of Portugal, a conceptual tool with a relevance strongly evident in the chapters on the First Republic and the Estado Novo, which HL favours. In the years following that reissue, HL also emphasised the importance of integrating the history of Portugal into a broader framework, particularly with regard to Brazil (*Portugal and Brazil. An Introduction*, 1953), the Iberian context (*The origins of Spain and Portugal*, 1971), and the historical alliance with Great Britain (*Origin of Luso-British relations*, 1976). Significantly valuing Anglo-Portuguese relations, HL argued these had historical roots in the cooperation of the English military expedition in the conquest of Lisbon, defining this moment as the "beginning of the predominance of western Europe, which reached its full realisation at the time of the Portuguese discoveries" (*Origem das relações luso-britânicas* [Origin of Luso-British relations], p. 42) and recalling that "There was never a bridge between the Peninsula and the north. It's a symbolic bridge. The crusader ships form a bridge that is being built between the peoples of the north and the western part of the peninsula. [...] It is the omen of a permanent alliance" (*Origem das relações luso-britânicas*, p. 42). In his last work on Portugal— *Portugal: A Traveller's History* (2004), HL also valued the relevance of biography— paying special attention to a series of individuals from the history of the country— such as Luís de Camões, Fernão Mendes Pinto, and Alexandre Herculano from Geography— tracing routes from the north of Portugal to the Algarve, and Art— highlighting the importance of Portuguese music, architecture, and painting. HL was sometimes criticised for his conservative and anti-liberal

political stance (referred to as *rightwing* in the context of English political parties). These political views were also reflected in his historiographical output. Indeed, the different editions of *A History of Portugal* present a fundamentally political valorisation of nationalism. *New History of Portugal* ends with a clear eulogy of the Estado Novo and Salazar. This praise is also emphasised by the contrast between this regime and the First Republic, which was characterised as a period of inefficiency and corruption during which "The deliberations of parliament were heated and often disorderly, and the power of decision was exercised, if at all, by the Carbonaria and other gangs of agitators" (*A New History*, p. 330). According to HL, the Estado Novo took the opposite direction to this kind of disorder— the author characterised this regime as a period in which "greater social stability was achieved, which in turn allowed for a more responsible political process" (*A New History*, p. 332) led by a president of the council who spearheaded a "policy of reform and development" (*A New History*, p. 339). In fact, this more subjective analysis seems to legitimise a criticism that is essentially the result of the fact that HL not only does not adopt a condemnatory stance in his historical studies but also clearly adopts a laudatory position towards the regimes of Salazar and Franco. Harold Livermore was a foreign correspondent of the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* [Lisbon Academy of Sciences] and a member of the *Academia Portuguesa de História* [Portuguese Academy of History] and the *Royal Historical Society*. His research into Portugal and his essential role in disseminating Portuguese history and culture were recognised in 2005 by the Presidency of the Portuguese Republic, which awarded him the Grand Cross of the Order of Infante Dom Henrique.

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