

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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



OLIVEIRA LIMA, Manoel de (Recife, Brazil, 1867- Washington, D.C., 1928)

He was born in Recife, in the state of Pernambuco, to a family active in the sugar trade. His father, Luís de Oliveira Lima, was a prosperous Portuguese merchant from Porto who settled in Brazil. His mother, Maria Benedita de Miranda, was also of Portuguese descent on her paternal side, which originated from Trás-os-Montes. She was active in the Pernambuco plantation environment. He went to school in Portugal, where the family had lived since 1873. In Lisbon he studied at the *Colégio dos Lazaristas* [College of the Lazarists] and the *Liceu Nacional* [National High School] (1881-1884). There, from a very young age, he acquired an interest in historical studies, which he showed in articles published since 1882. This was followed by his enrolment in the Higher Course of Letters in Lisbon (1884-1888), which provided him with an important reference point and moulded his way of conceiving and writing history. Some of his teachers were Consiglieri Pedroso, Jaime Moniz, Vasconcelos Abreu, Adolfo Coelho, Pinheiro Chagas, Souza Lobo, and Teófilo Braga. As well as cosmopolitan illustration trips to England and France in his youth, his professional activity led him to live in several countries. These experiences originated works reflecting on history, international politics, and travelling. Even though he didn't keep practising religion—and rather ironically recalled certain aspects of his religious upbringing—he acquired throughout his education a positive appreciation of Catholicism in its moralising and civilising aspects, which were very important for his interpretation of history.

In 1890 he began his diplomatic career at the Brazilian Legation in Lisbon, where he held the post of secretary. In successive appointments and travelling in the service of Itamaraty, he served in the legations of Berlin, Washington, London, Tokyo, Caracas, Brussels, and Stockholm, and became Minister Plenipotentiary of Brazil. After retiring from the diplomatic service in 1913, he settled briefly in London, from where he moved to Brazil, pressed by his pro-German stance during the First World War. His last years were spent in the United States, where he set up and ran his private library, which he donated to the Catholic University of America in Washington. Besides his book collections, of which the *Brasiliana* stands out, his private archive can also be found at this university.

From a very young age, when he was still a preparatory student, he edited the monthly magazine *Correio do Brasil* [Brazil Mail] in Lisbon. This was followed by contributions to *Jornal do Recife* [Recife Journal]; in *Le Brésil* (Paris); *O Repórter* [The Reporter] (Lisbon) and *Revista de Portugal* [Portugal Magazine]. As a journalist, his most important professional activity was at the *Jornal do Comércio* [Journal of Commerce] (Rio de Janeiro), followed by *O Estado de São Paulo* [São Paulo State], *Jornal do Brasil* [Journal of Brazil], *Diário de Pernambuco* [Pernambuco Daily], and *Correio da Manhã* [Morning Mail] (Rio de Janeiro). He published articles in *Deutsche Revue*, *Bulletin de la Société Royale Belge de Géographie*, *La Revue* (Belgium), *The Hispanic*



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

American Historical Revue, *Boletim da União Pan- Americana*, and *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires). In academic journals focused on historical and literary studies, he often contributed to *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo* [Magazine of the Historical and Geographical Institute of São Paulo], *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico e Geográfico de Pernambuco* [Magazine of the Archaeological and Geographical Institute of Pernambuco], *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* [Magazine of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute], *Revista da Academia Brasileira de Letras* [Magazine of the Brazilian Academy of Letters], *Revista Brasileira* [Brazilian Magazine], *Revista Americana* [American Magazine] and *Revista da Academia Pernambucana de Letras* [Magazine of the Pernambuco Academy of Letters].

His first comprehensive study—*Pernambuco, seu desenvolvimento histórico* [Pernambuco, its historical development] (1895)—earned him a corresponding membership at the *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* [Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute] and, two years later, at the *Academia Brasileira de Letras* [Brazilian Academy of Letters], of which he was one of the founders. With this work he established himself—at the age of twenty-seven—as a historian of Brazilian themes, more specifically those linked to Pernambuco regionalism, an original bond that was strengthened by his marriage to Flora Cavalcanti de Albuquerque.

The decisive influence on his education came from the Superior Course of Letters, which brought together outstanding masters in humanistic studies of the liberal culture of the late 19th century. The author recognised this in *Memórias* [Memoirs] and in the article "O velho Curso Superior de Letras de Lisboa" [The old Super Letters Course in Lisbon]. His contact with the positivism promoted by Teófilo Braga was decisive to his formative years, as was his adherence to evolutionism. Oliveira Martins, Garret, Ramalho Ortigão, Eça de Queirós and other authors made up the influential intellectual group of the time. The *Geração de 70* [Generation of 70] tended to act with a mission of political and social criticism against stagnation and Catholic tradition, playing an important role in political and social criticism in the context of the Portuguese monarchy crisis. Oliveira Lima shared these concerns and was made aware of issues of nationality and national identity. Within this framework of references, the alignment with idealism and the exploration of affectivity and mental life were prevalent. The advancement of republicanism and socialist conceptions marked the contesting political positions of the monarchist and Catholic political camp at the time of his youth.

His specific training in history was based on reading the German historians, especially Ranke and Mommsen. Nevertheless, he considered Oliveira Martins to be his greatest teacher, with whom he had been acquainted since his student years. Later, as a secretary of the legation in Lisbon and a correspondent for the *Jornal do Brasil*, he used to consult him in search of political information. This historian and his *História de Portugal* [History of Portugal] had a strong influence on his conception of the profession as a conciliation between science and art. Style plays an important role in this historiographical conception, requiring the historian to be correct and clear, and the right vocabulary and arrangement of arguments to ensure that the historical work fulfils the categories of a fictional work, i.e. coherence, credibility, cadence, suggestion and sonority. Intuition would be the cognitive quality of the historian that was necessary to establish causal relationships and influences in his task of reconstructing the past as a resurrection. Social groups are represented in the theatre of history by heroes to be worked on as subject-characters, representative of certain forces at work at a given historical moment, in order to shape the symbols needed to understand and remember the past. The psychological approach to heroes that Oliveira Lima adopted was strongly inspired by Oliveira



Martins and his portrait method. He combined the action of chance with a psychological approach to present the plot of history as a theatre of great individualities.

The path taken by the historian-diplomat to characterise the Brazilian nation expressed—in addition to Portuguese historiographical models—those of Brazilian historiography. When he approached the subject of nationality, he was permeable to the diffusion of theories present in the historiography of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which led him to define the nation by making references to determining elements. His contact with Social Darwinism and Spencer's evolutionism provided him with key elements for the evolutionary conception of the peoples subjugated by the European colonisers. His reading was anchored in the idea of civilisation understood as the construction and apprehension of certain paradigmatic values and behaviours that resulted from the presence of reason in history. The prototype of the most advanced stage of civilisation would be the Western European peoples, those ones who embarked on the colonial expansion of the 15th and 16th centuries and maintained, in the 19th, a submission of peoples attached to empires.

For this reason, his recreation of national history was based on the assumption of a superiority of the European coloniser, who had been entrusted with the historical task of bringing the Enlightenment of European civilisation to peoples that were considered backward on the evolutionary scale. This mission would be accomplished through two main agents: the State and the Church. In Hegel, Oliveira Lima sought grounds to point to the state as the key to reconciling the universal and the particular: an ethical-civilising institution capable of promoting the overcoming of brute existence.

The ethical-political foundation was especially relevant in 19th-century liberal thought and presides over its historical narrative. Colonisation was understood as a civilising task, highly qualified in the sense of promoting a "disenchantment" of America. Backing the imperialist worldview, the author justified the colonial enterprise as an action to rescue less evolved peoples from backwardness and barbarism. He developed an evolutionary and progressive reading of history, with justifications based on science, religion and morality, which would justify the distinction between superior and inferior peoples, and clearly opposing economic interventionism, regulations and monopolies that hindered colonial trade and prevented the free play of market forces manipulated by the European powers. In this interpretation, the presence of the State constitutes the greatest evidence of civilisation, as it signifies the distinctive trait of a superior people, an exclusionary frontier between the European and the Indian in a state of barbarism, dispersion, disorder, absence of authority, and paganism, reminding the colonisers of their own past. The state presents itself as a shaping and tutelary force for the nation, a rationalising element in the historical process by giving it an identity. However, although he acknowledged the merits of the Portuguese colonial enterprise in rescuing the land of savages that was Brazil, he did not spare the Portuguese from a harsh judgement by accusing them of the commercial incapacity pointed out by Oliveira Martins, a result of actions contrary to their own interests in the colonial enterprise. Behind this reflection we can locate an attempt to explain Portugal's situation in the concert of European nations at the time of the production of his works, understood as one of inferiority in relation to The Netherlands and England. Therefore, there is definitely an Aryanising bias in his work on Pernambuco around the discussion of the viability of Dutch colonisation in that Brazilian state. The author emphasised the racial differences between the "Portuguese type"—with which the Flemish would already be familiar because of the immigration of Iberian Jews—and who "had littered the streets of Amsterdam with swarthy people with a perfectly southern complexion". The proof of Flemish superiority over the Iberians would be their military



victories in the 17th century, fuelled by a mercantile spirit that was more powerful than that of the Portuguese—because it was more evolved.

Oliveira Lima endeavoured to keep in tune with the trends of Brazilian historiography in the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute. His main reference was Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen and his *História Geral do Brasil* [General History of Brazil]—not so much in terms of method, but in his treatment of the decisive question of the definition of Brazilian nationality. From a favourable interpretation of Portuguese colonisation—seen from another angle, that of the construction of a Brazilian nation—he presented Independence as a continuation of Portuguese Brazil. His praise of Portuguese colonisation allowed him to advance in his rehabilitating theses of King João VI and to abandon the Portuguese historiographical approach that had disparaged the monarch's actions since the Napoleonic invasion of Portugal. It should also be noted that the dialogues with Capistrano de Abreu led to an appreciation of travellers' accounts as sources for Brazilian history studies. The historian of the Brazilian Empire wrote about the theme of nationality in many of his works, such as *Formação histórica da nacionalidade brasileira* [Historical Formation of Brazilian Nationality], *O movimento da Independência* [The Independence Movement], and *D. João VI no Brasil*, [King João VI in Brazil], which are significant for this interpretation.

One of the themes chosen for his historical works was diplomatic history, which was the name given to the History of International Relations at the time. As a result of his role in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he wrote works on Brazil-USA relations, taking a critical view of Pan-Americanism. Both issues were on the agenda of Brazilian foreign policy at a time when, after the Republic (1889), there was a transition from the European orbit of influence to that of the United States. He was notable for confronting the guidelines printed by Rio Branco and defending Brazil's integration with Latin America from a Bolivarian perspective. Some works in which he dealt with this subject, in addition to the myriad articles, include *Nos Estados Unidos* [In the United States]; *História diplomática do Brasil – o reconhecimento do Império* [Diplomatic History of Brazil - The Recognition of the Empire]; *Panamericanismo: Bolívar-Monroe-Roosevelt* [Panamericanism: Bolívar-Monroe-Roosevelt] and *América Latina e América Inglesa* [Latin America and English America].

He belonged to many cultural and scientific societies, including the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, the Pernambuco Archaeological and Geographical Institute, the Brazilian Academy of Letters, the Pernambuco Academy of Letters, and the Lisbon Academy of Sciences.

His ties with Portugal were strong, especially his long friendship with Fidelino de Figueiredo, which began in 1912 and coincided with the intellectual's active participation in Portuguese political life before his exile in Brazil. Alberto Lamago, António Sardinha, Carlos Malheiro Dias, Edgar Prestage, Hipólito Raposo, and João Lúcio d'Azevedo were also part of his social network in the post-First World War period. This gave him access to universities, publications (*Nação Portuguesa* [Portuguese Nation]), and scientific societies (Academy of Sciences) in Portugal. At a time of unhappiness, when poor health and financial difficulties made his life in Washington very problematic, Oliveira Lima relied on his Lusitanian origins and found in them recognition for his work. Among the honours he received, one that stood out in 1923 was the series of lectures he was invited to give at the Faculty of Letters in Lisbon on the occasion of the inauguration of the subject of Brazilian Studies. It was a favourable opportunity to meet the master Teófilo Braga again, who attended his presentations on the Independence of Brazil, Brazil's historical evolution, Brazil's foreign policy and economic development, and Brazil as an American power. These studies were collected in a volume in *Aspectos da História e da Cultura*



do Brasil [Aspects of Brazilian History and Culture] and published by the University. In the year of his death he was honoured with a special issue of Lisbon's *Revista de História* [History Magazine].

His work had great repercussions in Brazil when it was published but fell into oblivion after 1928. The fact that he lived abroad contributed greatly to this, without minimising the weight of the controversies in which he became involved and the enmities he amassed. He was overshadowed by Brazilian historical memory regarding its own diplomatic history, at the expense of his recognition as a rebel diplomat who dared to challenge Brazil's official policy towards Latin America. The celebrations of his centenary in 1967 saved him momentarily from oblivion, but the reinterpretation and revalorisation of his historical thought and his interpretation of Brazilian foreign policy—especially that related to the United States—are a recent trend, dating back to the 1990s, with the recovery of his theses on Pan-Americanism and his clashes with Rio Branco, Brazil's Foreign Minister between 1902 and 1912 and the architect of the ostensible rapprochement between the two countries. The works *Pan-americanismo* [Pan-Americanism] and *América Latina e América Inglesa* [Latin America and English America] have been the subject of studies and reinterpretations interested in his theory of the three Americas and the defence of Bolivarian-inspired Monroism. Since then there has been a historiographical movement to republish and study his most important historical works, especially *D. João VI no Brasil* [King João in Brazil], which is the most valued of these works, as well as *A formação histórica da nacionalidade brasileira* [The historical formation of Brazilian nationality] and *O movimento da Independência* [The independence movement]. Given its originality and thematic novelty, the travel book *No Japão* [In Japan] still arouses interest today. This work was the result of his pioneering visit to Japan as a Brazilian diplomat and relied on studies based on Pierre Loti.

Active bibliography: *Nos Estados Unidos: impressões políticas e sociais*, Leipzig, F.A. Brockhaus, 1899; *História diplomática do Brasil – o reconhecimento do Império*, Rio de Janeiro -Paris, Garnier, 1902 - 1901; *Panamericanismo: Bolivar-Monroe-Roosevelt*. Garnier, Paris-Rio de Janeiro, 1907; *D.João VI no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro, *Typ. do Jornal do Commercio*, 1908; *Formação histórica da nacionalidade brasileira* (1911) a primeira edição foi em francês, com o título *Tormation historique de la nationalité brésilienne*, Paris, Gernier, 1911; *América Latina e América Inglesa* Garnier, Rio de Janeiro-Paris, 1913; *História da Civilização: traços geraes*, S. Paulo, Melhoramentos de S. Paulo, 1921; *D.Pedro e D.Miguel: a querela da Sucessão* São Paulo, Melhoramentos, 1925; *O Império Brasileiro* São Paulo, Melhoramentos, 1927; *D.Miguel no trono*, Coimbra, Imp. da Universidade Coimbra, 1933.

Passive bibliography: ALMEIDA, Paulo Roberto de, «O Barão do Rio Branco e Oliveira Lima: Vidas paralelas, itinerários divergentes», in CARDIM, Carlos Henrique; ALMINO, João (Org.). *Rio Branco, a América do Sul e a Modernização do Brasil*, v. 1, Brasília, IPRI-Funag, 2002, p. 233-278; FREIRE, Gilberto, *Oliveira Lima: D.Quixote Gordo*, 2.ed., Recife, UFPE, 1970; GOMES, Angela de Castro (org.), *Em família- a correspondência de Oliveira Lima e Gilberto Freyre*, Rio de Janeiro, Mercado de Letras, 2005; GOUVÊA, Fernando da Cruz, *Oliveira Lima: uma biografia*, Recife, CEPE, 2003; LIMA SOBRINHO, A. J. Barbosa, «Oliveira Lima: sua vida e sua obra», in LIMA, Manuel de Oliveira. *Obra Seleta*, Rio de Janeiro, Instituto Nacional do Livro, 1971; MALATIAN, Teresa, *Oliveira Lima e a construção da nacionalidade*, Bauru, EDUSC, São Paulo, FAPESP, 2001; MIRANDA, J.C., *O historiador brasileiro Oliveira Lima: contribuição para o estudo*

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

da sua obra e personalidade, Dissertação para Licenciatura em Filologia Românica, Lisboa, Faculdade de Letras, 1957; MOTA, Carlos Guilherme. *História e contra-história: perfis e contrapontos*, São Paulo, Globo, 2010; *Revista de História*, N^{os} 61-64, Vol. XVI, Lisboa, Empresa Literária Fluminense, 1927- 28.

Teresa Malatian

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P, in the scope of the projects UIDB/04311/2020 and UIDP/04311/2020.

U LISBOA | UNIVERSIDADE
DE LISBOA

FLUL FACULDADE
DE LETRAS

CH CENTRO
HISTÓRIA
INSTITUTO
DE LINGUA

fct Fundação
para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia

REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

SUPPORTED BY:

BNP BIBLIOTECA
NACIONAL
DE PORTUGAL

FUNDAÇÃO
LUSO-AMERICANA