

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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MARQUES, António Henrique Rodrigo de Oliveira (S. Pedro do Estoril, 1933 – Lisbon, 2007)

“My interest in history dates back to primary school. I invented countries and the history of those countries, and I wrote their history from pre-history to the present day” (A. H. de Oliveira Marques. *O Homem...[A. H. Marques. The Man...]*, 1994, page 22). This young boy, born into the Lisbon educated bourgeoisie, studied at Liceu Camões and Liceu Gil Vicente and did, in fact, turn out to be a renowned historian. And this dream of inventing countries, where he would travel in time, must have come to him from his early discerning eye for stamps and his love for collecting them. Not surprisingly, his first paper, written at the age of 18, was on philately, and three years later his first work *História do Selo Postal Português* [History of the Portuguese Postage Stamp] was published, while he continued to explore the subject of philately throughout his life. Upon completion of high school, he entered the Instituto Superior de Ciências Económicas e Financeiras [Higher Institute of Economic Sciences and Finance] in 1950, which he would abandon in 1952 to enrol on the Ciências Histórico-Filosóficas [History and Philosophy of Science] course at the Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa [Faculty of Arts of Lisbon]. At the same time, he studied English, French, Italian and German at accredited Language Institutes becoming enviably proficient in foreign languages. He graduated in June 1956 and the following month of July, in a unique feat, he submitted his dissertation, *A Sociedade em Portugal dos séculos XII a XIV* [Portuguese Society from the twelfth to the fourteenth century] on which he had been working since his second year at university under the supervision of Virginia Rau, thus completing the licenciatura [first degree] with an overall mark of 17 out of 20. In October of the same year, he departed for Würzburg to initiate his PhD research on the commercial relations between Portugal and the countries of the Hanseatic League, under the supervision of Professor Hermann Kellenbenz. This competent, committed supervisor worked with his supervisee one afternoon per week, instilling in him a rigorous, systematic method that met the personal demands of such a disciple, which he replicated when he was a supervisor himself. These traits of the German school, combined with the traits of the French school, perennially moulded his identity as a historian. Kellenbenz initiated him in the subject of bibliography and introduced him to the diverse German archives where the documents under study were filed. Oliveira Marques also looked for sources in the libraries and



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

archives of other cities in the German Democratic Republic, in the Public Record Office and in the Library of the British Museum, in England, in the National Library in France, and also in Belgium, Holland and Spain, having defended his printed doctoral thesis, *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média* [The Hanseatic League and Portugal in the Middle Ages], after four years, on 7th July 1960, with an overall mark of 18 out of 20. Oliveira Marques's academic background was, indeed, brilliant, unique, and unprecedented. He displayed wholehearted commitment, in part to be on a par with his high school classmates and to compensate for the two-year delay caused by having changed courses.

In 1957 he began his teaching career as a lecturer for three months at the University of Würzburg and then in November he was hired as Segundo Assistente [Second Assistant Professor] by the Faculdade de Letras where, in October 1960, he was promoted to Primeiro Assistente [First Assistant Professor] by reason of his doctorate. That very same year, he married Maria Fernanda Espinosa Gomes da Silva (until her premature death in 1971) and immediately set to work on his research in England, France, and Italy in preparation for the professor extraordinário [non-permanent position] tender procedure. His internationalisation, quite innovative in the historiographic context of the time, was further boosted by his conferences at the Universities of Würzburg (1957), Köln, Bonn, Freiburg (1962) and submission of papers in seminars (Lille, 1958). Concomitantly, he organised and took part in congresses held in Portugal (Lisbon, Braga). He taught Palaeography and collaborated initially in two subjects, *História de Portugal* [History of Portugal] and *História Medieval* [Medieval History], supervised by Virginia Rau who encouraged him in this early stage of his academic career; he would eventually come to fully supervise *História Medieval*; occasionally, he also taught *Teoria da História* [Theory of History]. In May 1962, he submitted a printed copy of his dissertation of the tender for professor extraordinário with the title *Introdução à História da Agricultura em Portugal* [Introduction to the History of Agriculture in Portugal], which he never defended since the public examinations were successively suspended and the tender itself revoked due to his siding with the students in the March-May strike of 1962. In view of such hindrances, Oliveira Marques resigned from his post as assistant professor on 17 November 1964, thus closing the first cycle of his life for another to open as a university professor living far away from his country in the United States of America.

He was bold enough to apply for a job at foreign universities and was eventually recruited in 1965-1966 as associate professor by the University of Auburn (Alabama, United States of America) and between 1966 to 1969 as full professor by the University of Florida (Gainesville). He taught courses on the *História de Bizâncio e Civilização Muçulmana* [History of Byzantium and Muslim Civilization], *História da Idade Média* [History of the Middle Ages], *História da Península Ibérica* [History of the Iberian Peninsula], *Cidades Medievais e Comércio no Norte da Europa* [Medieval Cities and Commerce in Northern Europe], *Cortes* [Courts], *Origens da Expansão Europeia* [Origins of the European Expansion] and *História de Portugal. 1890-1940* [History of Portugal 1890-1940]. During this period, he gave innumerable conferences and taught courses at several universities (University of Auburn, Florida, New Mexico, Virginia, Yale, Columbia), at Queen's College (New



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

York) and at other cultural institutions on a multitude of themes from the fall of Rome, Islamism, Portuguese, peninsular and European medieval features, to issues of contemporaneity related to Portugal and Europe, while continuously marking his presence in scientific meetings in Europe, such as Paris and Leipzig. In response to an invitation by the Columbia University Press, he began writing a História de Portugal [History of Portugal] in English, which was published in 1972. This book had a huge scientific impact, as shall be addressed further ahead. The highly intense and far-reaching labour of Oliveira Marques as teacher is testament to his profound, scholarly and vast background as a historian with an in-depth understanding of the medieval age in diverse spaces, chronologies, and themes and who, in the absence of primary sources of the Middle Ages, focused on features of contemporary history.

In July 1969, personal reasons forced him to leave the United States and until 1976 his course was somewhat erratic. He returned to the United States in 1970 and 1973 to chair courses or give conferences at the Universities of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Chicago, Illinois, and Northern Illinois. Without a stable job in Portugal, he was awarded a scholarship by the Minister for Education, Veiga Simão, who appointed him for a committee in charge of preparing the reform of the Cursos de Letras [Arts Degree]. His work and research began to focus more on contemporary history, particularly the Afonso Costa Archive, and he began to publish the História da I República Portuguesa [History of the First Portuguese Republic] in 1973, as editor. Upon establishment of democracy in Portugal, Oliveira Marques returned to the Faculdade de Letras in October, but the climate of political agitation forced him to resign; a month later he was appointed Director of the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa [Lisbon National Library], where he remained in office from February to December 1975 but where, unfortunately, he was unable to accomplish the reforms he had planned in view of the troubled labour environment at the time, despite having granted immediate direct access to the General Catalogue of the Library to all its readers and organised several exhibitions as part of the Biblioteca's cultural animation. Oliveira Marques continued to give conferences on themes that were dear to him as a citizen; Iberism and Freemasonry. By taking part in a company-linked project, sponsored by the Companhia de Seguros Império [Império Insurance Company], he published Para a História dos Seguros em Portugal [Towards a History of Insurance in Portugal] (1977), another of his pioneering themes.

In July 1976, he was hired as Full Professor on secondment at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa [The New University of Lisbon] and thus began his third and last cycle of his rich and very full academic life ... And more specifically, from the moment he was sworn in as President of the Founding Committee of the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas [Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities], in December 1977, he supervised the work that would give it substance until October 1980. He was appointed Head of the Foundation Course created by the government in 1977 as preparation for university admission. He would be Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Faculdade twice and in the Department of History, of which he was member, he prepared the launch of the first degree and master courses in Medieval History and in History of the 19th-20th Centuries, which began functioning in the 1980s. Throughout these years, he continued to give conferences



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

abroad, at this stage mainly at Brazilian Universities (University of S. Paulo, Curitiba, Catholic University of Santos, Catholic University of Porto Alegre), where, in September 1978, he addressed contemporary Portuguese historiography. In his capacity as full professor of the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas he opened new horizons for research on Portuguese medievality with his teaching and supervision of MA dissertations and PhD theses both in and beyond his own school. This research was centred around the refocusing of urban history with new conceptualizations and methodologies, and rural history, in the study of manor houses, among others. In May 1993, he joined the Departamento de Estudos Alemães [Department of German Studies] where he coordinated the History of Culture area until his retirement in 2003. He also taught in the Departamento de Ciências Políticas e Relações Internacionais [Department of Political Sciences and International Relations], the creation of which was also the fruit of his efforts.

His extensive oeuvre, amounting to over sixty books and a thousand articles, was basically divided into two chronological scopes, medievality and contemporaneity, the former perhaps more well-known and recognised than the latter, but both quite innovative. His work reflects his conceptualization of History as a science, with the characteristics of the social sciences and humanities, grounded methodologically on vast, critically measured historical information, supporting a sharp and insightful interpretation. It brings new, amply evidenced knowledge in a reflected and structured work mirrored in a writing style where the accuracy of historical discourse mingles with engaging literary language. In 1958 and in his auspicious 1960s, seminal works on medieval times were published and reprinted time and time again. A Sociedade Medieval Portuguesa. Aspectos da vida quotidiana [The Portuguese Medieval Society, Aspects of Everyday Life] released in 1962 had six editions (the latest in 2010) and was translated into English. Depicting the daily life of the medieval man, his working rhythm, housing conditions, his body, hygiene and health care, his needs and representations of clothing and food, his intimate affections and beliefs, his culture and leisure and his attitude to death, this book was far too advanced in the Portuguese historiography of the time, when the novelty of an economic and social history was still merely budding. It was only in the 1980s, under the impact of the new history that opened up mentalities, behaviours, religiosity, and human feelings that this work became a “bible”, as already mentioned, a work of reference, read and cited again and again. Likewise, his dissertation *Introdução à História da Agricultura: a questão cerealífera na Idade Média* [Introduction to the History of Agriculture; the cereal issue in the Middle Ages] for the tender, with three editions (1962, 1968, 1978), would inspire the new generations of the 1980s and 1990s who imposed the inclusion of rural history in Portuguese medieval historiography and in university teaching. His PhD thesis *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média* (1959 edition), describing the navigations and trade of the Portuguese in the Atlantic, fell into oblivion until the revised and enlarged 1993 second edition, which for several decades was one of the major scientific works on Portuguese trade in medieval times. He continued to study Portuguese-German relations, ranging from commercial to cultural, focusing on the navigations and trade relations with Prussia and on some features of Flanders’ 15th-century trading station, the contact between Portugal and Germany in the 16th century, the



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

relations between Damião de Góis and the Danzig merchants, the German printers in Portugal in the late Quattrocento and the documentation on Portugal in German Hanseatic archives, publishing some of these works in his book *Portugal Quinhentista* [Sixteenth-Century Portugal] (1987). He further extended his analysis of Portuguese-German political and diplomatic exchanges far beyond the medieval and modern centuries up to the 20th century (Thomas Denk, *Na Jubilação Universitária...[On Academic Retirement...]*, 2003, pp. 79-99).

Coherently, both in articles and other studies, many of them compiled in *Ensaio de História Medieval Portuguesa* (1965) [Essays on Portuguese Medieval History] and *Novos Ensaio de História Medieval Portuguesa* (1988) [New Essays on Portuguese Medieval History] he continued to open new paths for research on the population, the Pragmatics of 1340, currency, international trade and the urban history of Lisbon, Sintra, Cascais and Arruda dos Vinhos. Sadly, however, he did not complete his work on medieval Lisbon, which he had already structured and for which he had compiled a vast collection of documents. It should be noted that, having supervised a seminar in 1958, at the Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa on “A Peste Negra em Portugal” [“The Black Death in Portugal”], a theme mostly unknown at the time, he took part in the I Congresso Histórico de Portugal Medieval [First Historical Congress on Medieval Portugal] on the topic, organised by Virgínia Rau, in Braga in 1959, the proceedings of which were published in the journal *Bracara Augusta* in 1963, featuring his paper “A Peste Negra na Europa” [“The Black Death in Europe”]. His multifaceted knowledge of political, institutional, social, and economic history is evident in the hundred entries he wrote for the *Dicionário de História de Portugal* [Dictionary of History of Portugal], directed by Joel Serrão, and for so many other dictionaries and encyclopaedias. His *Guia do Estudante de História Medieval Portuguesa* (1964) [The Student’s Guide to Portuguese Medieval History], with three editions, unveiled the wealth of libraries and archives and disseminated the essential bibliography for anyone wishing to undertake research on medieval history. Having created the Centro de Estudos Históricos [Centre for Historical Studies] in 1980, Oliveira Marques who taught and wrote articles on Palaeography and Diplomatics, invested efforts in the publication of sources, the support of historical work (Saul António Gomes, *Na Jubilação Universitária...*, 2003, pp. 45-56). This was the beginning of the publication of *Chancelarias Portuguesas* [Portuguese Chancellery] (nowadays consisting of 19 volumes on Kings Afonso IV, Pedro I, João I and Duarte) and *Cortes Portuguesas* [Portuguese Courts] (nowadays consisting of 12 volumes on Kings Afonso IV, Pedro I, Fernando, Duarte, Afonso V and Manuel I), a significant service to the national and international scientific community, which has been extended to the present, thanks to the highly committed team of the above-mentioned Centro. It was also in this Centro that the *Atlas Histórico de Portugal e do Ultramar Português* [Historical Atlas of Portugal and of the Portuguese Overseas Territories], co-authored by Oliveira Marques, was published, featuring maps, analyses, and summaries of historical features, in short, a mapping manual that was sorely needed in national historiography.



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

In a somewhat jocular tone, Oliveira Marques said in a conference that his work could be defined “in triangular terms” grounded on three strands “publishing firstly a bibliographical part and source guide, then monographs and thirdly a synthesis” (A. H. de Oliveira Marques. [A. H. de Oliveira Marques. *The Man...* 168]), which is what occurred both for the study of medieval times, as noted above, and for the study of contemporaneity. His scientifically grounded work on contemporary history sheds early light on an understudied period during the Estado Novo and Marcelismo. It is worth noting, borrowing the words of Hipólito de La Torre, that “on the historical knowledge of the First Republic, there is a before and after the work of Oliveira Marques” (Na Jubilação Universitária..., 2003, p. 101). From a silenced, proscribed, and distorted period of the Estado Novo, the First Republic moves to the forefront as a theme worthy of scientific, rigorous, well-grounded and objective study, redefining circumstances and political events while retrieving some of the major protagonists of Republican life.

Working in libraries and archives, in 1971, he published *A Primeira República Portuguesa. Para uma visão estrutural* [The Portuguese First Republic. Towards a Structural View] and shortly after, while leading a research team and as author, he published a more comprehensive reference work, *História da Primeira República Portuguesa* [History of the First Republic] (published between 1972-1979). At the same time, he continued to publish or supervise the publication of public and private documents, mostly epistolography, on this period, in close connection with the writing of biographies of leading figures of the Republic, such as Afonso Costa, Bernardim Ribeiro and Norton de Matos. The knowledge he gained as researcher enabled him to publish the *Guia de História da 1ª República Portuguesa* [Guide to the History of the First Portuguese Republic], in 1981, a collection of sources and studies, organised by themes, which became the compass for those studying this period. Simultaneously, since many Republicans were freemasons and Oliveira Marques had also joined this organisation (in 1973, he was a deputy Grand Master and Sovereign Grand Commander), he sought to disseminate the history of freemasonry, on which there was confusing or little to no knowledge. In 1975, he published *A Maçonaria Portuguesa e o Estado Novo* [The Portuguese Freemasonry and the Estado Novo] and in the 1980s several of his studies, mainly on freemasons, were compiled in *Ensaio de Maçonaria* (1988) [Essays on Freemasonry], two volumes of *Dicionário da Maçonaria Portuguesa* (1986) [Dictionary of Portuguese Freemasonry] were published, “a summary of linguistic, ritualistic, philosophical and mainly historical, political and social knowledge, both in Portugal and the colonies, as well as in all those countries ... where there were lodges under or related to the Portuguese freemasonry” as stated by Ferrer Benimeli (Na Jubilação Universitária..., 2003, p. 138). In 1990, he began his “most ambitious opus magnum” in the words of the above-mentioned author (Idem, p. 139), the *História da Maçonaria em Portugal* [History of Freemasonry in Portugal], originally conceived in four volumes, of which only two were published, and the second volume was published in two parts, in 1996 and 1997 respectively, providing the political and social economic profile of freemasons in different historical times, as well as of the internal organisation and the masonry ritual supported by relevant and updated bibliography and enriched with detailed appendices (part of



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

the fourth volume was published in 2011). With a view to their dissemination, he summarised his teachings in little over a hundred pages in *A Maçonaria em Portugal* [Freemasonry in Portugal] (1998). In this book, as in many other essays, “viewing freemasonry against the social context by which it is framed is a unique way of understanding the relationship between Professor Oliveira Marques and his freemasonry work”, recalling the words of Ferrer Benimeli (Idem, p. 146).

With a great knack for synthesis, and since he believed there was no updated synthesis of the History of Portugal, Oliveira Marques decided to write it, initially with a view to its dissemination in the United States, however this project was subsequently further expanded. It was published in two volumes, in English and in Portuguese, and in 1972 a third volume was released. It is a synthesis of the history of Portugal, supported by updated bibliography and with a rather innovative approach insofar as not only does it feature political history but also demography, economy, society and culture, revising propositions and concepts of the official historiography (from the significance of the Reconquest to the very existence of feudalism in Portugal), advancing the history of the Empire and highlighting the history that followed the liberal revolution, extending his study to the present day (José Amado Mendes, *História da História em Portugal...[History of the History in Portugal...]*, 1996, pp. 321-324). The impact of this work in Portugal, on both high school and university education, may be judged on the basis of its 15 editions (the latest in 2010) and its international impact by way of the translations into German, Spanish, French, Japanese, Romanian and Polish, besides the English edition. The short version of this work, *Breve História de Portugal* [A Short History of Portugal] (1995), had 11 editions in Portuguese (2019), and a very short version *Brevíssima História de Portugal* [A Very Short History of Portugal] (1992), had four editions in Portuguese and was translated into French, English, Chinese, Spanish, Romanian and Italian, with a different number of editions. But Oliveira Marques went even further in the vast scientific study of the history of Portugal and in making it available to the public at large. From the late 1980s until his death, he invested his knowledge and vital strength, as director, coordinator, and author in the publication of the *Nova História de Portugal* [New History of Portugal] and in the *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa* [New History of the Portuguese Expansion], two projects he shared with Joel Serrão, in collaboration with many historians from different generations. In 1987, volume four of the *Nova História* was published, exclusively authored by Oliveira Marques, entitled *Portugal na Crise dos Séculos XIV e XV* [Portugal in the Crisis of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries], which is presented as a model of the general scheme to be followed in all the work, articulating structures and conjunctures, and largely representing demography, social groups, technology, production means and systems, political dynamics, religion, art, culture, and daily life. This inaugural book is still a reference today in the study of the history of Portugal in the Early Middle Ages. Until the end of his life, nine volumes of the *Nova História de Portugal* were published, although it was difficult sometimes to meet publication dates or other deadlines (two revised volumes were never published). Eight of the planned twelve volumes of *Nova História da Expansão* were published, most of the first volume having been written by Oliveira Marques, *A Expansão Quatrocentista* [Fifteenth-Century Expansion], with the



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

clarity and systemization that were typical of his writing. The impact of this enormous task clashed with contemporary publishing within which many other Histories of Portugal had appeared. But the wealth of information, accuracy, well-grounded historical interpretation, and crystal-clear writing were the major imprint Oliveira Marques wished to bequeath and, in general, may be observed in the many books of the New Histories, most of which were authored collectively. Oliveira Marques was also attentive to the study of the past of university institutions, particularly of the Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa, the institution from which he had graduated and where he had taught, and to the evocation of Portuguese historiography and historians in works such as *Ensaios da Historiografia Portuguesa* [Essays of Portuguese Historiography] (1983) and *Antologia de Historiografia Portuguesa* [Anthology of Portuguese Historiography] (1974, 1975), where major prominence is given to Alexandre Herculano, as the historian, citizen, and politician he much admired (Luís Miguel Duarte, *Na Jubilação Universitária...*, 2003, pp. 155-175).

The more intimate and personal profile of this Man and Citizen is revealed in his interview with João Pedro Ferro on his sixtieth birthday, and is condensed in A. H. de Oliveira Marques. *O Homem e o Historiador* [A. H. Oliveira Marques. The Man and the Historian]. This interview unveils the engaged Citizen, the democrat who, when still in high school, campaigned for Norton de Matos, who sided with the students in the 1962 university strike, who was a supporter of General Ramalho Eanes in 1980, who stood for the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. It portrays a Man who collected stamps and “collected” other items of historical interest, who claimed to be a music enthusiast, enjoyed travelling, was learned, refined, urbane and a captivating conversationalist. The diversity and reach of the Historian’s extensive oeuvre, in the precision of the years of publication and study types, is evident in the Bibliographies on him. (Maria F. Andrade e João A. Dias, *Estudos de História...* [Studies of History...], 1982, pp. 39-97; *Idem*, *Na Jubilação Universitária...*, 2003, pp. 185-238; Manuela Rêgo, *...50 anos de Historiador...* [Fifty Years as a Historian], 2007, pp. 59-197).

The great merit of this Historian was acknowledged both in Portugal and abroad. In 1982, on the 25th anniversary of his teaching career and of the publication of his first history essay, his students organised a ceremony which was graced with the presence of the President of the Republic where Oliveira Marques was gifted with two volumes of the *Estudos de História de Portugal* which paid tribute to him. In 1998, he was awarded the *Grã-Cruz da Ordem da Liberdade* [the Cross of the Order of Liberty] by the President of the Republic. On the occasion of his retirement, in a solemn act held at the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra [Faculty of Arts of the University of Coimbra], he was presented with a book featuring statements and contributions for reading and reflection on his work by other experts, grouped thematically. Following his death, the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal hosted an exhibition on his work with the publication of the respective Catalogue. The city of Lisbon, the village of Cascais and São Pedro do Estoril, remember him fondly and honour him by naming places and schools after him. The translation and publication of his books abroad are proof of his international renown; in 1997, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the La Trobe



DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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

University, in Melbourne, Australia. And the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies in the United States named an award after him, conferred every year to the best work on Portuguese history.

A. H. de Oliveira Marques left his imprint on the historians of his time, on those of the present and undoubtedly will influence those of times to come with the legacy of a scientific historiography of reference, particularly in the medieval and contemporary periods. A Historian who was a proficient Master and creator of disciples, who efficiently led projects and collective works, who encouraged many young people to undertake research and the writing of history, binding several generations. He was a Historian who, both orally and in writing, projected the knowledge of the history of Portugal across several countries in Europe, America and Asia, and whose name features amongst the great disseminators of Portuguese History and Culture worldwide.

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DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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