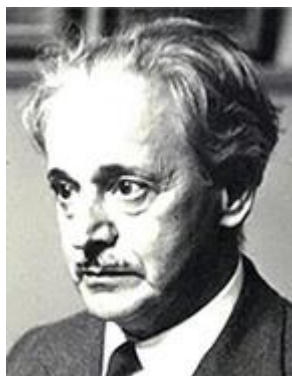


DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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ALMEIDA, Francisco Lopes Vieira de (Castelo-Branco, 1888 – Cascais, 1962)

Having been prepared at home to obtain his primary education qualification by his father, an official in the Ministry of Finance, he went on to study at the Castelo Branco Secondary School and graduated in History from the Curso Superior de Letras [Art and Humanities Higher Education Degree] in 1910 with a thesis entitled *História (Significado e Função)* [History (Meaning and Function)].

In this academic exercise, where he immediately displayed the assertive, argumentative and polemical style that he would cultivate until the end, probably foreseeing his admittance into the teaching profession and taking into account the reform process being carried out by the recent republican regime, he provided a theoretical basis, in terms of “intrinsic value”, “didactic criteria” and “pedagogical value” (*OF I*, p. 10), for a proposal for the structure of the History curriculum in secondary education. This proposal, deliberately moving away from a nationalist inclination and guided by a conception of History as genetic knowledge of the “strong facts” that have been driving the collective life of humanity over time (*OF I*, p. 24), begins with Eastern Antiquity, follows the chronology of the great epochs and only provides for the introduction of the History of Portugal, in a generic way, in the fifth grade, to be taken up again, more specifically, in the seventh and last grade (*OF I*, p. 61).

After five years of secondary school teaching, in 1915, he was appointed Assistant in the History group of the institution from where he had graduated, for which he submitted a dissertation entitled *A Equação da História* [The Equation of History]. With the approval of his Doctoral Thesis in Philosophy in 1922, *A Impensabilidade da Negativa* [The Unthinkability of the Negative], he moved to the Philosophy section of the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon as a Professor, becoming Full Professor in 1930 and serving as Director from 1936 to 1940.

He became publicly known as the author of an essay entitled “Dispersão do Pensamento Filosófico Português” [Dispersion of Portuguese Philosophical Thought] (1943). This trait, relating to an ideal type, appears as a hypothesis with interpretative scope, thus requiring subsequent case-by-case verification. Defining this ideal type based on three aspects, “lived pragmatism” (*OF II*, p. 469), “non-systematic conviction” (*OF II*, p. 470) and “freedom of thought” (*OF II*, p. 471), he understood it as corresponding to a specific way of philosophising, something more experimental, which he thought was valuable in times of war



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when compared to the excessively systematic tendency of other national philosophies, such as the German one, which in his view was intolerant starting from the claim of exclusive coherence. Although this position is confirmed in Vleeschauwer's critique of Germanism, its success in "Do Pensamento Português" [Of Portuguese Thought] (1944) was the result of its usage by the national intelligentsia in the opposite sense, turning it into an argument to prove a national deficit of modernity.

Having introduced formal logic in Portugal, he developed an argumentative methodology of deconstruction based on discrete problems and aimed at eliminating pseudo-scientific or pseudo-philosophical evidence while consolidating a rational epistemology with an idealistic inclination, which provided for inventiveness and essayistic progression. Thus, the aim was to change the dominant pattern of rationality in Portuguese society, redirecting it towards contemporary scientific objectivity, also with regard to historiography. Due to his constant criticism of metaphysical overflows and substantive drifts in scientific matters, as well as his use of neopositivist, analytical and pragmatist authors, he was included in the positivist current, a misconception he sought to undo in *Pontos de Referência* [Reference Points] (1961), his definitive "discourse on method". In it, he clarifies the distinction between positivism as a system, which he constantly criticised as a limitation to knowledge, a criterion to which he regularly turned, and as a positive attitude, "rejecting a ready-made system and an established limit" (*OF III*, p. 188), which he practised and tried to disseminate.

His works on the epistemology of History, several of which were left unfinished with the promise of a resumption that never occurred, boasting a diversity of interlocutors (Bossuet, Voltaire, Hegel, Marx, Comte, Wundt, Poincaré, Herculano, Oliveira Martins, Renan, Eucken, and Toynbee, among many others), are ample proof of this. Notwithstanding the systematic nature of his questioning, always guided by the value of criticism and positivity, they reveal his refusal to conform to a particular system, Comte's to start with, given his neglect of History (*OF I*, p. 19), or to produce one of his own.

He taught in a variety of areas (History, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy), about which he also wrote – a polymathy that can be easily identified in the three volumes of *Obra Filosófica* [Philosophical Works], published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1982, with two important introductory studies by the editors, Joel Serrão and Rogério Fernandes. They include the nine main works that he dedicated explicitly to the theory and philosophy of History in two periods of his career.

The first, which began with his undergraduate thesis, published in 1911, spans the beginning of the following decade, interrupted by the change of section, and includes, in addition to the two texts already mentioned, the articles published in the *Revista de História*: "O Sentimento Colectivo de Finalidade (Realidade – Dinamização Histórica)" [The Collective Sense of Purpose (Reality - Historical Dynamisation)] (issue of 1913-14); "Théorie de l'histoire" (in two parts, in 1919 and 1920 and presented as a summary of the previous ones). Some scattered writings also appeared in this decade. Worth highlighting is the extensive critique of Antero de Figueiredo's work *D. Sebastião Rei de Portugal 1554-1558* [D. Sebastião King of Portugal 1554-1558] (1924), namely his defence of a "poetic history", which should take precedence over any scientific or philosophical version, a text that, in 1927, constituted the first theoretical contribution to the



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magazine *Seara Nova*.

In significant proximity to António Sérgio, also found in other aspects where the rational and idealistic reformist background emerged, such as the subsumption of the interest in the past to the understanding of the present, he expressed his concern about the predominance of anti-rationalist historiography, based on sentimentality and the licence to extract judgements of value from it that were as absolute as they were hollow, which the reinvigorated Sebastianism favoured. He, thus, sealed his connection to the *Seara Nova* movement and its mentors after a brief stint with Lusitanian Integralism, whose doctrinal programme proved incompatible with the individualist and cosmopolitan formula of his monarchism.

This was never denied; instead, it was consolidated by his repudiation of the totalitarian impulses that swept through the 20th century, of the warfare catastrophe caused by the Nazis, whose rise he saw because he was in Germany in 1933 and even got to witness the burning of books, as well as the dictatorship of the Estado Novo, against which he stood up. This opposition was mostly palpable in 1958 when he was involved in inviting the socialist Aneurin Bevan to Portugal, which earned him a short spell in prison. And above all, in General Humberto Delgado's presidential campaign, for which he was the national representative. Most likely, his renewed interest in matters of historiography was justified by the tension between this bias towards the doctrinal spectrum of the regime's opponents, loyalty to a moderate, democratic and non-partisan position guided by Enlightenment values far removed from revolutionary ideals, such as those he identified in Marxism, whose temporal impact he realised but that a molehill of arguments – already fully formulated in *Paradoxos Sociológicos* [Sociological Paradoxes] (1948) about the contradiction inherent in the idea of dialectical materialism and the epistemic unfeasibility of determining a plan, a legality or even any direction in History (*OF III*, p. 291-290) – dictated a withdrawal and the realisation that the profound changes of the post-war period brought different aspects.

This gave rise to a second period in the 1950s, with the publication of “Le sens de l’histoire” in the *Revista da Faculdade de Letras* in 1953, followed by: “Lições de História, Lições da História” [History Lessons, History Lessons] (1959); “Simbolismo e História” [Symbolism and History] (1960); “Razão – História – Ideal” [Reason - History - Ideal] (1961); “O Reverso” [The Reverse] (1963, therefore posthumous), all published in *Revista Ocidente*.

These texts generally show an evolutionary development of the major thematic cores, the methodological approach and the critical perspectives that presided over the first moment. In these developments, the imprint of the context is reflected, for example, in the consideration of a politicised interpretation of History, based on the tragedy-farce binomial, as two lines of the same mythification, resulting from the substitution of judgements of fact for judgements of value, where one blames misery and the other greatness (*OF III*, p. 30), or in the discussion of the instructive scope of History, which he denies, distinguishing between what belongs to historical knowledge and what goes into morality or politics, only to accept the possibility of history lessons (*OF III*, p. 522). In line with his initial condemnation of the dangers of patriotic history, which he considers ipso facto favours polarities, hatreds, and wars (*OF I*, p. 54), he continues to express great concern about all forms

of alliance between historiography and ideology, which replace facts with symbols and generate delusions about superior men and extraordinary peoples (*OF III*, p. 593) and therefore with this rejection of scientific objectivity, contain warmongering and despotism.

Similarly, these texts suggest an intention to intervene in the ongoing historiographical debate, both nationally and internationally, for which the French language would once again be useful, with the rejection of notions such as tendency, “le nom donné par un procédé vulgaire d’objectivation, non plus au résultat probable mais à la probabilité (substantivée) du résultat” (*OF III*, p. 289), factor, “l’affaiblissement valoratif de celui de ‘causes’” (*OF III*, p. 293), or cycle, “transposition de “l’éternel retour” philosophique sur le plan historique et même scientifique” (*OF III*, p. 290).

In all three, therefore, he finds renewed versions of the use of finalism and causality, two explanatory matrices that he criticised throughout a large part of his production because they presuppose a supra-historical common-sense perspective, incapable of overcoming the temptation to hypostatise and go beyond the limits of possible knowledge, determining a major epistemological obstacle to the development of scientific historiography.

Since he believes that the human condition is intrinsically historical, in accordance with the historicist orientation of neo-Kantianism, which also appears in Ortega y Gasset’s *Historia como Sistema* [History as System], the surplus of life-history in relation to science-history appears to be an anthropological inevitability, which also forms a fundamental condition of historical knowledge. Insofar as historiography, in his view, ultimately depends on the traces of past collective action (a necessary, but never sufficient, starting point), its object is factual knowledge, the ideal way of organising the available information and constructing an interpretation of the realised world, in terms of what it was, not what it could or should have been, in itself or in the will of men (an insurmountable stage of objectification without, however, corresponding yet to the scientific knowledge pattern), and aims for a properly scientific understanding, i.e., universal, relational and functional, of the dynamism of time, for which it inevitably has to generate a constructive perspective. Since “par la perspective donc et seulement par elle les faits acquièrent une signification et une valeur” (*OF III*, p. 28), there is no way to make this process coincide with a determination of the system of causes or ends. Life-history manifests as action, i.e., as a set of relationships between events, and so science-history can only be the construction of possible meanings to contain the constitutive indeterminacy and contingency, never the unveiling of a prior order, which, if it existed, would imply the negation of historicity. As he had already established in “Théorie de l’histoire”, “c’est le monde réalisé et en train de se réaliser toujours qui nous importe et aucunement pas les entités que nous mettons en cause de la réalisation de ce monde” (*OF I*, p. 213).

Consequently, the epistemological consideration that “the principles of science are on the same level as the scientific reality for which they are the starting point, i.e., they are not transcendent” applies to scientific history (*OF III*, p. 220). If science-history contains the legitimate aspiration to reduce the gap between *cognoscere* and *intelligere* (*OF III*, p. 285), giving rise to a philosophy of history in line with what he thought

was the contemporary epistemological standard of a “scientific-philosophical osmosis” (*OF III*, p. 255), it can only be realised by strengthening its gnoseological process, adequately managing the border with the adaphorous in the triple dimension of the unknown, the irrelevant, and the irrational, so as to offer sufficiently solid support for the search for an equation whose formula subsumes the diversity of what is lived in the abstraction of conception, which cannot be mistaken with any epistemically unfeasible prediction of its course or outcome. In the 1919-1920 article, this correlation was already clearly stated: “a) Pour qu’il y ait une philosophie de l’histoire, il faut et il suffit que la science de l’histoire soit possible et commence à devenir réelle. Réciproquement, b) S’il y a une philosophie de l’histoire, il y a aussi, nécessairement, une science de l’histoire” (*OF I*, pp. 215-216).

The first and main contribution of Philosophy, therefore, concerns this effort to rationalise the epistemological conditions, either by analysing the fundamental concepts or by determining that logic of limits whereby, by reducing the extent of the knowable, the intention of the known is increased, and the possibility of a higher level of understanding opens up. This, however, must remain in a direct relationship with the knowledge acquired, without trying to replace what is possible to know, based on the trail left by human action, with a metaphysics of History. From this collaborative task, in addition to the aforementioned critical exercise, he took it upon himself to define the scale required for History to become a fully-fledged social and human science, according to the idealised standard of scientificity, which presupposes, as we have indicated, an abstract knowledge of complex relationships.

The extent of the design is immediately defined by the philosophical ideation of History as a whole, without ignoring the specificity of the different fields or approaches that may make it up but refusing to allow this context to be offered as a sum rather than a synthesis achieved by the quality of perspective, or to favour the vision of “l’histoire de l’homme en quelque sorte du dehors” (*OF III*, p. 285), as is the case when temporal factuality is preferred to the stability resulting from the substantification of “historical constants’, such as art or science are for him. Nor does he sympathise with the narrowness of notions such as nationality, both for what it contains of locality and for what it implies of currentness, being a recent creation and therefore not suited to other contexts (*OF III*, p. 523). Conversely, he recognises the importance of embracing the contribution of other sciences. The history of man in action (*OF III*, p. 282) is therefore based on four main axioms: “on pense en perspective dans le temps” (*OF III*, p. 286); “l’intelligence humaine est l’élément principal interne de l’évolution historique”; “l’évolution historique est orientée”; “les conditions de l’évolution historique sont intelligibles” (*OF I*, pp. 216-217). Despite the general nature of its scope, it is clearly distinguished from the ontological aspect of Hegelian universal history, approaching the transcendental nature of Kantian universalism and the long-term references of the Annales School without referring to it or its most prominent theoreticians.

As evidenced, keeping the time perspective open is decisive since restrictions are tantamount to particularisations with which the capacity for meaning is inevitably lost. Similarly, it is essential to avoid the confusion between fact and singular event so that fact and perspective can be correlated, materialising

knowledge on a plane of effect that is sufficiently abstract, dense and, therefore, maximally encompassing, which is why he devoted a significant part of his reflection to it. Given that it has to ensure the passage from the lived to the known, offering a possible framework for the diversity of information, “the fact will not be historical unless it ceases in some way to be a sum of particularities and is translated into some kind of social dynamism” (*OF III*, p. 557).

In “Le sens de l’histoire”, he therefore already introduced a gradation between three types of facts, reminiscent of the division into event, conjuncture, and structure in force within the *Annales* “On pourrait considérer les faits avérés, singuliers, individuels et épisodiques [...], comme des faits du premier degré; les faits du deuxième degré seraient les termes d’une série d’éléments analogues, comme “les découvertes maritimes du seizième siècle”; enfin les faits complexes aux noms évocateurs, comme “renaissance”, “féodalité”, etc., formeraient l’ensemble des ‘faits du troisième degré’” (*OF III*, p. 287). While the first are indispensable and with the second one effectively begins to see and, therefore, to know, only the third offer this complex relational cut-out, which makes it possible to justify a posteriori not only the arbitrariness of the selection, but also the commitment to the epistemic power of the adopted perspective. Bearing in mind that this is stated, we would like to stress, in an article published in 1953, it cannot be ruled out that he had had access to Fernand Braudel’s *La Méditerranée* (1949) or at least a detailed account of it.

Finally, by focusing on relationships, such historiography cannot fixate on idiosyncrasy, whether that of the individual personality or that of the collective, if it is equated with an individual or a scheme of opposition between the two. Rather, it must be understood that “César est le nom anthropomorphique et idole d’un ensemble de faits historiques” (*OF III*, p. 282), in such a way that what matters is the pattern of intelligibility obtained by the maximisation of links and series. Although the noise produced by the dialogue with multiple voices is noticeable in historiography, including those of some of his contemporaries, even leading to a successive revision of Wundt’s definition from which he had started, the desire to give epistemological consistency to the Kantian project of a “history from a cosmopolitan point of view” seems to prevail in the end. While this philosophical approach to historiographical theorising, in which totality prevails, helps to consolidate the idea of historical science, it can also lead to a less visible recognition of the differentiating effect of contexts and temporalities, from which the practice of History would not be able to escape.

This possibility can be seen in the way he understood the work of the history of philosophy, which he carried out in the introductions to the various texts he translated, from Plato to Schopenhauer, including Aristotle, Augustine of Hippo, Berkeley, etc., an extraordinary effort of dissemination, which he theorised in a brief article published in 1956 in the *Revista Ocidente*, entitled “Da História da Filosofia” [From the History of Philosophy]. In this article, he takes up the idea of a genetic history aimed at a regressive understanding of the progress that has determined the present, which is why he only values “knowledge of current facts and problems, evolutionarily linked to the way in which they were solved at an earlier time”, excluding any interest in the “external history of systems” (*OF III*, p. 355). Even though this is a particular field where theoretical problematisation comes to the fore, the tension between the two matrices that structure his thoughts on



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History becomes clear: one geared towards the search for a meaning for the future, the other committed to the contemporary conditions of historiographical work on the past. In both, however, there is the conviction that, as Wundt intended, by being part of the self, knowledge brings about a transformation in the known reality, which means that, somehow, the study of the past, in its specificity, will always revert to the understanding of the present.

Having lived through two world wars, a national change of regime, the turmoil of the First Republic, and the establishment of a dictatorship whose end he never knew, limited by the conditions imposed on the Portuguese University and at odds with the intellectual practices that prevailed within it, the irresolution of this dilemma constitutes, to a certain extent, an unforeseen pledge of intellectual freedom. The scope of his epistemological perspective, in the national context, is reflected in how he influenced the historiographical understanding of academicians such as Jorge Borges de Macedo and Vitorino Magalhães Vilhena, while the intellectual breadth and camaraderie, prominent in his personality, with which he integrated the collective of opponents to the dictatorial regime, left its friendly mark on political figures such as Mário Soares, as is evident from the testimony he left at the end of the volume commemorating the centenary of his birth.

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