

Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe

Education : Portuguese

Author: Gomes, Sérgio Melo, Daniel

Since the mid-18th century, the undergraduate teaching of national matters, namely history, formed part of the teaching of languages and rhetoric. In 1722, within the renovation of the University of Coimbra, a Chair of History and Antiquities was created.

In the 19th century, the liberal and nationalist agendas prioritized the teaching of Portuguese language and history as a way to create a national consciousness. Throughout the century, secondary school education was subject to successive reform proposals, but Grammar and Portuguese Language and History, Geography and Chronology remained fixtures throughout. With the establishment of the republican regime (1910), the teaching of national history was understood once more as a way to promote national unity. However, it was only with the *Estado Novo*, within a nationalist and corporate indoctrination, that history would have an effective role in the curriculum.

In 1858, King Peter V supported the creation of a humanities college at Lisbon (*Curso Superior de Letras*) where national history and literature were taught. The school brought together several nationally-minded scholars such as Teófilo Braga, Consiglieri Pedroso and Adolfo Coelho. While promoting the study of philology and geography in a national spirit, the college also contributed to the professional training of teachers, librarians and archivists. In 1911, in Porto, Coimbra and Lisbon, Faculties of Humanities were created, with courses on philology, philosophy, and the historical and geographical sciences. Although the curriculum usually focused on universal history, the students' final theses were frequently about Portugal's national history. In the Science Faculties, the teaching of anthropology and ethnology also focused on national identity, as was manifested in the thematics of students' final theses as well.

The teaching of arts displayed a national commitment by its historicism, foregrounding historical episodes, past personalities and ancient remains. In the Academies of Fine Arts of Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto, students were encouraged to explore the nation's history, ethnography and national geography. This concern was shared by the Industrial Schools of Lisbon, Caldas da Rainha, Coimbra and Porto in order to create a link between tradition and progress. Regarding the education on music and theatre, in the 1830s the Royal Conservatory of Lisbon, the National Theatre D. Maria II and the Dramatic Academy of Coimbra were created. In the activities of such institutions, the role of Almeida Garrett was prominent.

The concerns of 19th-century civil society with the nation and its identity addressed what amounted to a chronic structural crisis, necessitating wide-ranging social reforms and a knowledge of the nation's human and material resources and its symbolic status. Education

was a major strategy. Most progressives favoured secular education aimed at social cohesion and the nation's modernization under the ideal of a "people of citizens". The Church was committed to maintaining its importance in education and mobilized its support base in Catholic associations. During the Catholic Congress (1895) local priests were called upon to assume an active role in local education, controlling textbooks and reinforcing the teaching of religion in schools.

Popular education was an important initiative carried through many associations. In 1861, Andrade [Corvo](#) argued that it would be a national unifying factor ensuring the nation's continuing independence; republican centres and popular universities (these last inspired by the French example) promoted the circulation of printed material and the organization of evening classes. Even if these initiatives focused on aimed professional and practical training, the priority was to eradicate illiteracy, seen by many as the most serious cause of national decay. New methods were created to facilitate the learning of the Portuguese language, like the method of João de [Deus](#) (*Cartilha maternal*, 1877), which was used by a network of mobile schools (*Associação de Escolas Móveis pelo Método de João de Deus*) created in 1882 by Casimiro [Freire](#), spreading literacy to nearly 30,000 children and adults up to 1920.

Popular education had often a strong doctrinal component, focusing on the spread of knowledge about the nation's history, ethnography and culture. The Education Society of Porto (1880), during the celebration of the fifth centenary of the birth of Infante D. Henrique, organized lectures such as *Os caracteres essenciais da civilização portuguesa* by Manuel [Pinheiro Chagas](#); a cycle of conferences on national history (*História Pátria*) was presented in 1908 by the republican, and former minister, Ginestal [Machado](#) at the Republican Club of Santarém. These associations also organized many exhibitions of art and archeology, promoting the study and popularization of certain collective memories, and contributing to the spread of cultural nationalism.

Throughout the century, civil-society educational programmes combined erudite and popular initiatives regarding national history, revolving around national themes such as patriotism, the relationship with Spain, the formation and regeneration of the nation, the causes of national decay and national heroism. Oliveira [Martins](#) and Latino [Coelho](#) were two main personalities in this process. The discourse needed to reach different kind of audiences stimulated the production of general histories of Portugal, historical narratives, biographies, magazines, evocative texts, almanacs, journals, pamphlets, etc. Coelho promoted the popularization of national historical personalities such as Camões, Vasco da Gama and Marquês do Pombal, canonizing them as national heroes. In order to make historical personalities appeal to non-erudite audiences, Pinheiro Chagas's history was evoked through [narrative or poetic fictions](#) as well, by authors like Alexandre [Herculano](#) and Almeida Garrett.

In addition to the historical and pedagogical work of Herculano, the collection *Biblioteca do Povo e das Escolas* (1880-1913) should be highlighted. Published by David [Corazzi](#) in order to make available an encyclopedic knowledge to Portuguese and Brazilian audiences, it revolved mainly around historical subjects, a trend that was reinforced after the English Ultimatum (1890), with books such *Guerras de independência: As três invasões francesas* (1908). Some of these works were adopted in official teaching. The journal *Panorama* (1837-), created by Herculano, also played a central role in the spread of a Romantic sensibility, of a civic and moral duty to study national history and identity and to share such knowledge. This

journal, and the *Revista universal Lisbonense*, helped establish a collective sense of a national identity.

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