

Professor Mário Moreira

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This year, 1994, we commemorate the birth Centenary of Professor Mário Moreira, tenured Professor of Clinical Medicine at the Lisbon School of Medicine and first President of the Portuguese Society of Internal Medicine.

Born in Óbidos, he studied at the Liceu do Carmo in Lisbon, and the Campo Santana School of Medicine. A conscientious student, he won various awards and distinctions during his academic career. Before graduating, he was mobilized to provide clinical services to those affected by the Spanish flu outbreak.

As a doctor, he underwent a selection process to become an intern at the Lisbon Civil Hospital (HCL), surgeon at the Misericórdia and Medical Assistant at Lisbon Civil Hospital, achieving first place in the entrance examinations. During this phase, he had the opportunity of being invited by Professor C. Bello de Moraes to become a voluntary assistant in Clinical Medicine, a position that became official when the first vacancy arose, and he was selected (having obtained 19 points in the Clinical Medicine exam, having been mobilized in the Spanish flu campaign, and having been approved in the entrance examinations for the Misericórdia and the HCL).

However, a change of academic chairs between the two professors made him assistant of Medical Pathology and as such, responsible for the partial directorship of Propaedeutic Medicine. He continued to give assistance to the Civil Hospitals, albeit to a lesser extent, but gave up his position Misericórdia which, if he had continued, would have made him a surgeon, such was the backing of his director, Dr. Damas Mora.

Participating in the clinical meetings of the assistants of the Hospital da Santa Marta, the summer schools promoted by the Association of Students, the Medical Societies, and groups of provincial doctors (Coimbra, Beja, Caldas da Rainha) his reputation as a great clinician was established, at a time when Internal Medicine in the capital was cultivated by highly prestigious names, with whom Professor Mário Moreira teamed up.

During this period, the excellence of his teaching

and semiology practice became renowned; his fame as an excellent semiologist, which accompanied him for the rest of his life, perhaps overshadowed other, equally notable aspects for his life, such as his diagnostic intuition, physiopathological reasoning abilities, prudence, and sense of balance in therapeutics; the gift of clarified prognosis.



When the opportunity arose to apply for the chair of tenured professor, his brilliant examination results and approval with absolute merit were not sufficient to obtain the directorship of Propaedeutic Medicine. He continued, for a short time, to collaborate in the teaching of Medical Pathology and to act as part of the board of examiners for the examinations of this academic chair.

Due to unexpected circumstances, but in a memorable entrance examination that signaled a profound crisis that affected the Lisbon School of Medicine, he was awarded the Chair of Clinical Medicine, in an exulted position of internist. It was a delicate position, in which all his qualities were put to the test, and which time would judge fairly and favorably.

To crown his hospital activity, he was nominated Director of the Hospital Santa Maria, and it was here that he demonstrated his qualities of weighing up and proficiency, in a harmonious management with the hospital administration of great technical and social prestige.

Towards the end of his teaching career, the Portuguese Society of Internal Medicine was founded, and he became its President. For four years, in a society that gathered the best internists among us, he excelled for his exemplary assiduity at all the meetings, his exemplary presiding over the sessions, and the profound medical culture which he demonstrated in his clinical practice, which he did not give up.

We seek to highlight, in this biographical summary, the clinician and the professor. All that remains is to mention an aspect that cannot be dissociated from his elevated human stature: his intellectual activity.

As a professor, he had brilliant diction and clear powers of reasoning; he was methodological in the approach to themes, and conclusive in his appreciations. Whether at the patient's bedside, in theory-practice classes, or in his exemplary lessons, he spoke with elegance, sometimes with discrete humor on the theme he was addressing, without the use of audiovisual aids; his teaching was not contested, and students were thankful for his facilitation.

He wrote fluently and elegantly, and his works, small in volume but in prolific numbers, revealed a classical medical writer in whom a concern for clarity was paramount. In some, pages of anthology are selected.

For this reason, as one of his curricula tells us, "our mission has been to study and teach with dignity and effort". ■