

Cristina Rodrigues

Thoracic Surgery, Centro Hospitalar Universitário Lisboa Norte, Lisboa
 drcirodrigues@gmail.com

FOUNDERS

João Rafael Bello de Moraes, Thoracic Surgery Professor (1907-1975)

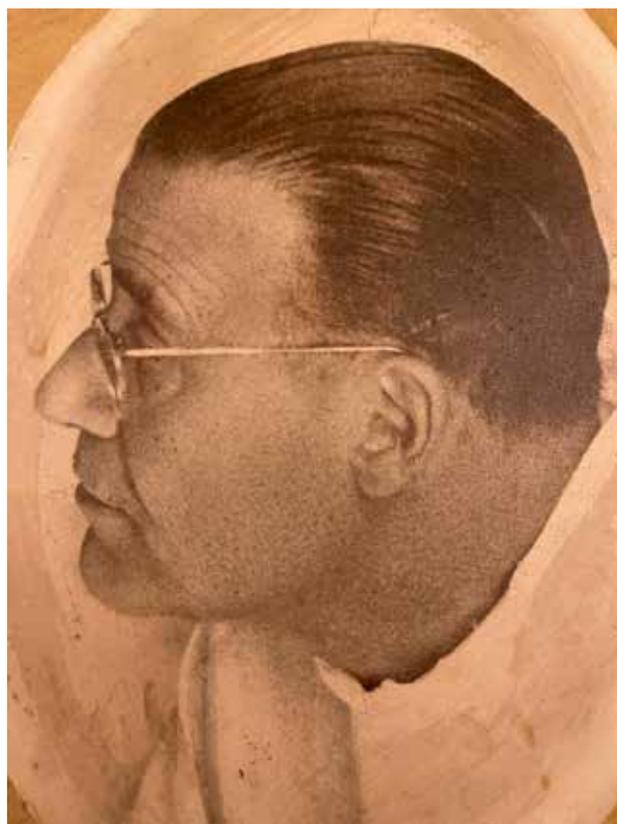
João Rafael Casqueiro Bello de Moraes was born in Lisbon on April 30th 1907, son of the renowned surgeon Professor Carlos Bello de Moraes, Professor of the Medical-Surgical School, in Lisbon, heir to the Royal School of Medicine founded in 1825.^{1,2}

He initiated his medical education in the Lisbon Medical Faculty in 1925, by then a 5 year course and continued his studies in Sanitary and Tropical Medicine, which entitled him to access a position as a doctor of the National Institute for the Assistance to Tuberculosis patients (Assistência Nacional aos Tuberculosos – A.N.T.) in 1931.

Parallel to this activity, his preference for surgery led him to apply for the surgical residency in 1933 at the surgical Clinic of Dona Estefânia Hospital and in the emergency Department of the São José Hospital under the guidance of Dr. Luis Quintela, which at that time was already dedicated to tuberculosis surgery. He continued working with Dr. Quintela on a voluntary basis until 1942, and always referred to him as his mentor, giving him all the credit for his early training in pulmonary surgery.

In the mean while, in Europe and in the United States, surgical collapse techniques and lung resections were evolving including the first reported successful pneumonectomy for chronic suppurative disease by Nissen in 1931³, in Portugal they were seldomly used.

For this reason and with the support of a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation, he went to the United States of America in 1936 and worked in several renowned thoracic Surgery centers for 8 months: Cornell Medical Center and Sea View Hospital in new York with Coryllos, John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Michigan University Hospital at Alenxander's Department, Deaconess General Hospital and Lahey Clinic in Boston. One year after, again supported by a scholarship he traveled to Paris to Dr. Maurer and Dr Monod department in Paris and to Dr T Edwards Unit



in London.⁴

By 1941 he had performed the first lobectomies in Portugal⁵, and from the beginning, his scientific vein surfaced when he published his first papers on thoracic surgery: cystic diseases of the lung ("Doenças quísticas do Pulmão" – Imprensa Médica, 28-05-1940) and lobectomy in the treatment of bronchiectasis ("A lobectomia no trata-



Figure 1 With his father, professor Carlos Bello de Moraes

mento das bronquiectasias” – Lisboa Médica, N°6 – 1941).²

After touring several British Thoracic Surgery centers in 1946 (Brompton, London Chest hospital, London Hospital and Middlesex County Hospital) and American ones in 1947, (Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York)⁴ he reported the first series of 4 cases of successful pneumonectomies in the Iberic peninsula in 1948⁶, and by the time he defended his thesis in 1950 he already counted 18 pneumonectomies, 110 thoracoplasties, 26 lobectomies and 3 segmentectomies in his curriculum, besides other 387 thoracic surgeries, not including the early civil hospitals surgical records which were lost.²

His Academic career began in July 1945, when Professor Reynaldo dos Santos invited him to lecture as a free Assistant of the Surgical Pathology Chair at the University, the same year he assumed the coordination of the Santa Marta’s Thoracic Surgery Unit after Prof. Fausto Lopo de Carvalho invited him to head the surgical section of the Pulmonary Diseases Clinic (Clínica de Doenças Pulmonares).²

Also in 1945, he transferred to Desterro Hospital,

assuming the direction of the “Serviço I” (Clínica Cirúrgica). Since 1947 he accumulated a position as a surgeon at the Curry Cabral’s pulmonary Tuberculosis section.⁷ He expanded his experience in thoracic surgery, doing surgery at the Faculty’s Experimental Laboratory on the bronchial stump healing process and its coverage with greater omentum.²

His chosen profession as a surgeon dedicated to Thoracic Surgery was well established, both in clinic and academic environment, culminating in 1950 with his thesis on pulmonary resections, with a final classification of 19 values, with Aggregation exam to the Medical Faculty the year after.^{2,4}

In 1953 he was finally appointed as an Assistant to the Curry Cabral Thoracic Surgery Department and in 1954, the new Lisbon University Hospital (Hospital Escolar de Lisboa) was built to replace the Campo Santana’s teaching building. He was invested with the responsibility of installing the department of “Medicina Operatória”, where he would be responsible for that Discipline’s teaching but also for the surgical section of Professor Lopo de Carvalho’s new department (“Clínica de Doenças Pulmonares”), including 2 operating theaters and 6 recovery rooms on the 7th floor where all the pulmonary surgeries would be performed.^{8,7}

As a college Professor, Regent of Operatory Medicine (“Medicina Operatória”), Ortopedics and later Surgical Clinics (“Clínica Cirúrgica”) he revolutionized surgical teaching, involving the students not only in the cadaver studies but also in live surgery, in the operating theater whenever possible. He never tired of reinforcing the importance of experimental surgery at the laboratory level and battled constantly for the access of the students to the experimental laboratory.

For the benefit of his patients he was accompanied by his good friend and anesthesiologist Dr. Vítor Hugo, including also in the pulmonary team Dr. Francisca Sá Vieira, trying to improve postoperative care with standardized measurement of blood gas values and ventilatory support whenever possible.⁷



Figure 2 Professor Bello de Moraes with Dr Luís Quintela in 1970



Figure 3 Professor Bello de Moraes with his students of the class of 1951-52



Figure 4 Professor Bello de Moraes (front center) with the Hospital S. José's Team in 1956.

(identifiable in the picture, from left to right, first row: : Victor Sá Vieira, Mesquita, A Graça Morais JR Bello de Moraes, Gonçalo Seixas, João Vieira Lisboa, Carreira. Second row: Francisca Sá Vieira, Ribeiro da Silva, Alberto Ratto, Borges Almeida, A Godinho, José Mendes D'Almeida, Pinho David. Third row: Mendes II, Pessegueiro, Luiz Leite Noronha, Pompeu, Anibal Costa, António Mendes D'Almeida, Jorge Girão, Palla Garcia, Farrajota.)


Figure 5

Tribute to Professor Bello de Moraes from the population of Crato, 1967

His search for knowledge never subsided, keeping up with science, he traveled the world, lecturing in Portugal and abroad, changing his practice in tuberculosis treatment after the discovery of streptomycin in 1944, instituting the preoperative study of the lung volumes and postoperative monitoring of electrolytes in lung patients.⁷

Those who knew him as a Professor, colleague or Surgeon have the same memories of a tall smiling well dressed man, frequently with a bowtie, charming with the ladies, without presumptuous manners. Accessible to his patients, even the poorest ones, he always had time for anyone who sought his help either at the hospital, at home in Picoas in Lisbon or in Crato, where rows of people would gather whenever he was expected.

Loyal to his friends, he trained Dr. Victor Sá Vieira, as his resident and right hand, who worked alongside him for many years until his early departure at age 68, after a long and strenuous fight against a laryngeal Carcinoma.

For Posterity remains the Man, the Pioneer and the Human Being, loved by his family and cherished by his friends and patients.

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