

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**CORDEIRO (de Sousa), Luciano Baptista** (Mirandela, 1844 – Lisbon, 1900)

Luciano Baptista Cordeiro de Sousa was born in Mirandela on 21 July 1844 to Luciano José Cordeiro de Sousa and Leopoldina Cândido Álvares Ferreira. His mother, born in Montevideo, was the daughter of Chief Surgeon Francisco Bernardo de Santa Ana Álvares Ferreira. The occupation of Luciano's father is unknown, though some sources suggest he may have been a civil servant. This hypothesis could explain the family's frequent relocations, moving from Mirandela to Lisbon, then to Funchal, and later back to Lisbon. However, according to Luciano Cordeiro's son, his grandfather was forced to relocate to Madeira for political reasons during a turbulent period in national life in the late 19th century. Between 1838 and 1841, his father (or possibly a namesake) contributed as a correspondent for the newspaper *O Panorama*, published by the Sociedade Propagadora dos Conhecimentos Úteis. Additionally, it is known that in 1820, João Batista, Luciano Cordeiro's uncle, and later his father, obtained their "habilitação de genere" — a necessary requirement to access ecclesiastical or public offices in a scholarly capacity.

The family moved to Lisbon a few months after Luciano's birth and, a few years later, to Madeira. Luciano began his secondary education in Funchal and completed it in Lisbon. His dream was to become a naval officer, and in 1862, he was commissioned as a Naval Aspirant. He subsequently took the entrance exam for the Polytechnic School, where preparatory courses for the Naval School were taught. However, a serious health issue prevented him from pursuing a naval career, leading him to leave the navy in 1868. Unable to pursue a career in the navy, he enrolled on the *Curso Superior de Letras*. At the same time, he studied German at the Torre do Tombo and pursued self-taught studies in economics and politics. One of his earliest professional pursuits was journalism. With strong liberal beliefs, he was invited to manage the newspaper *A Revolução de Setembro* [The September Revolution] when its director, António Rodrigues Sampaio, took office in 1869. However, Luciano's tenure was brief.

In 1871, he began teaching Literature and Philosophy at the Military College but resigned in 1874.

In 1872, he applied for the position of professor of Modern Literature on the *Curso Superior de Letras*, competing against Pinheiro Chagas and Teófilo Braga, with Braga ultimately securing the role.

Luciano Cordeiro maintained a prolific journalistic career. Though he stepped down as director of *A*



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*Revolução de Setembro*, he continued as an editor. He also contributed to *A Voz Académica* [The Academic Voice], *O País* [The Country], *A Atualidade* [Current Affairs], *O Jornal de Comércio* [The Journal of Commerce], *O Comércio do Porto* [Porto Commerce], *Diário de Notícias* [Daily News], among others. He served as director and owner of *Comércio de Lisboa* [Lisbon Commerce] and co-founded *Revista de Portugal e Brasil* [Magazine of Portugal and Brazil]. In addition to articles for various periodicals, he published books on a wide range of subjects. As a professor, he wrote extensively on literature and pedagogical aspects related to instruction and education. His independent studies in economics and finance also influenced his writing. His passion for history led him to produce works on archaeology, epigraphy, and geography.

In his historiographical works, Luciano Cordeiro placed great emphasis on studying various figures and the relationships, both nationally and internationally. His book *A Segunda Duquesa* [The Second Duchess] focuses on the biography of Princess Joana de Mendonça, the second wife of Duke Jaime, the fourth Duke of Bragança. *Uma sobrinha do Infante* [A Niece of the Infante] centres on Princess Leonor, daughter of King Duarte and niece of Prince Henry the Navigator, who married the German Emperor Frederick III. *Berenguela e Leonor, rainhas da Dinamarca* [Berenguela and Leonor, Queens of Denmark] explores the marriage of Princess Berenguela, daughter of King Sancho I, to Valdemar II of Denmark, and the marriage of his son, Valdemar III, to another princess, Leonor, Berenguela's niece. In *O Tesouro do Rei D. Fernando* [The Treasure of King Ferdinand], Luciano Cordeiro examines a little-known treaty in Portuguese historiography, signed in 1377 between Ferdinand I of Portugal and the Duke of Anjou, son of Charles V of France, to unite against Aragon. In *A urna funerária de Afonso de Albuquerque* [The Funerary Urn of Afonso de Albuquerque], he describes the process that led to the discovery of Afonso de Albuquerque's urn in Goa and its subsequent transfer to Lisbon, where it was housed at the Geographical Society. He also wrote about renowned navigators, including Diogo Cão and Diogo de Azambuja.

Cordeiro also worked with António Enes and other authors on *História de Portugal (1876-[1883])* (vol. II) [History of Portugal (1876-[1883]) (vol. II)], which covers the reigns from King Dinis to King John I. This project likely deepened his interest in topics that would later inspire his other works.

Luciano Cordeiro played a key role in organising several major commemorations, including the centenary of Camões' death in 1880, the Marquis of Pombal in 1882, the birth of Prince Henry the Navigator in 1894, and the centenary of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India in 1898. However, Cordeiro's activities extended beyond journalism and literature. After briefly teaching at the Military College until 1874, he transitioned to politics, taking on important civil service roles. As a member of the Regenerator Party, he served as an MP for the Mogadouro electoral district from 1882 to 1884, and then for the Leiria in 1884. During his time in office, he addressed numerous issues that he had dealt with in his roles at the Ministry of the Kingdom, where he held various management positions across different departments, including Director-General of Public Education. In 1872, he and his brother Francisco founded the *Companhia Carris de Ferro de Lisboa* (Lisbon Railway Company), aiming to modernise the capital's public transportation system with animal-drawn vehicles



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running on rails, known as "americanos" (American streetcars).

However, perhaps the most significant focus of Luciano Cordeiro's career was colonial policy and the study of overseas territories' geography. At the end of the 19th century, European powers were increasingly focused on occupying African territories. It was a time of land exploration expeditions in Africa. In Portugal, two institutions were established to expand geographical knowledge of the colonies: the Permanent Central Geographical Commission in 1876 and the Lisbon Geographical Society in 1875. The former operated under government supervision, while the latter was a privately run institution. Luciano Cordeiro was closely connected to both; he served as secretary of the former and was a driving force behind the creation of the latter, where he became its first Perpetual Secretary. In 1880, the Permanent Central Geographical Commission was merged into the Geographical Society, but in 1883, the government formed the Cartography Commission.

It was through these various organisations that colonial geographical knowledge expanded, with Luciano Cordeiro playing a pivotal role in all of them.

"Intervention" is perhaps the word that best captures Luciano Cordeiro's personality and approach to life. He was a member of thirty-eight scientific, literary, and artistic organisations around the world and collaborated with eighteen charitable institutions. Throughout his career, he was actively involved in national politics, serving in Parliament and holding numerous senior positions in the civil service, many of which were at senior management level. He also used writing, both in newspapers and books, as platforms to promote the ideals he fought for. Some of his writings were initially published in periodicals before being compiled into books.

What were the ideals Luciano Cordeiro fought for? First and foremost, patriotism. At a time when intellectuals like Oliveira Martins and Ramalho Ortigão noted the absence of a true national sentiment among the Portuguese, many of Cordeiro's historical writings aimed to underscore the centuries-old uniqueness of Portugal, which had asserted itself through marriages and alliances with prominent European nobility. Cordeiro emphasised Portugal's ties to the peoples of Northern Europe, viewing these relationships as essential to the country's national identity. His historiography was fundamentally positivist, with a strong emphasis on documents, including epigraphs. On the other hand, he strongly opposed those who supported the ideas of Iberism, believing that, since Portugal had been a distinct nation from the other Iberian kingdoms since its independence, there was no reason to integrate it into a union encompassing the entire peninsula.

Another way Luciano Cordeiro reinforced Portugal's uniqueness among European nations was by celebrating its greatest figures and key historical moments. This perspective frames his involvement in the various commemorations mentioned earlier.

Of particular note was the commemoration of the centenary of India in 1898. One of the primary goals of this event, which sought international recognition, was to affirm the long-standing Portuguese presence in overseas territories, thus reinforcing their status as Portuguese. Long before 1898, Cordeiro had been writing on this topic, persistently defending Portugal's claims to its overseas territories. The centenary celebrations

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provided a platform for a surge in literary works related to the Age of Discoveries, a period that marked the start of Portugal's overseas expansion. Luciano Cordeiro passed away in Lisbon on 24 December 1900.

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