

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**JORGE, Ricardo** (Porto, 1858 – Lisbon, 1939)

Ricardo de Almeida Jorge, born in Porto, son of a blacksmith, attended secondary school at Colégio da Lapa and studied at the Porto Medical-Surgical School (1879), where he became a professor on 5 May 1880. A doctor by training, he was a complex and eclectic personality in Portuguese scientific and cultural circles, whose activities spanned the fields of health, literature, social and human sciences, and history. Although not a historian by training, Ricardo Jorge made contributions to the field of historiography through his use of information and his clear historical research on health issues and in areas such as art, literature and the population. Egas Moniz presented him as “the great chronicler of Porto of his time and even of the city’s past”, noting that “he had a marked tendency towards historical studies, particularly those related to our science” (*Lisboa Médica*, no. 9, 1939), but his contribution is more wide-ranging. The recognition of the role of history in the scientific field emerged early on in his inaugural dissertation presented at the Medical-Surgical School of Porto - *O Nervosismo* (1879). Questioning the appropriateness of the “history of the issue” in the face of the “severe positivism” that prevailed, Ricardo Jorge argued that “today’s medicine, despite being enriched by the discoveries brought about by direct observation and experimentation, must listen carefully to the lessons of history in order to give due value to the monuments it has brought down, to gather those it left standing and subject them to the superior means of judgement acquired through its progressive evolution, in order to avoid either coexisting with past errors or plagiarising the discoveries of the past” (*Um ensaio sobre o Nervosismo*, 1879, p. 2). An evolutionist, he naturally started from the new beliefs of his time, seeing history as “the sole and irrefutable determinant of the laws of progress and the chain of systems, an unshakeable principle, which is nothing more than one of the many faces of evolutionism that today presides over all our scientific constructions”. The dissertation then provides a history of approaches to “nervousness”. Another text along the same lines followed, “The motor locations in the brain” (1880), for a competition at the Medical-Surgical School of Porto, and he became a lecturer on the eve of his 22nd birthday. However, these were texts on psychiatric and neuropathological connections inspired by the innovative contributions of Charcot at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, who used experimental and anatomical-clinical methods. Ricardo Jorge’s focus on neurology indicated a desire to join the Conde de Ferreira Hospital for the Insane (endowed in a will in 1866 and inaugurated on 24 March 1883), an innovative institution in Portugal. This challenge was shared



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by two students at the time, Ricardo Jorge and Júlio de Matos, who had been friends and companions since childhood. It was this ambition that took Ricardo Jorge to Paris and Strasbourg in January 1883. The position of director of the hospital had already been awarded in 1881 to António Maria de Sena, a professor at Coimbra, but the team was still incomplete. Sena preferred Júlio de Matos as his assistant, perhaps for reasons of exclusivity. On his return, Ricardo Jorge still retained some of his enthusiasm for neurology, setting up a histology laboratory while working as a substitute professor in the surgical department, where he trained Magalhães Lemos for his dissertation (*A Região Psicomotriz* [The Psychomotor Region]), before joining the hospital. Later, Eduardo Coelho corroborated a confidence made by Ricardo Jorge, stating: “he threw himself enthusiastically into neurology, even thinking of running the Conde de Ferreira Mental Asylum”, before becoming a hygienist and epidemiologist, devoting himself to the “cult of the Pasteurian creed” (Coelho, “Ricardo Jorge Mestre...”, 1946, pp. 247-251).

This marginalisation must have been painful for Ricardo Jorge. He still published texts in the field, on electrometry and electrodiagnosis, in 1884 and 1886, but, in a change of direction, he made a foray into thermalism and burst onto the public health scene with his lectures on Social Hygiene in 1884, which highlighted the poor sanitary conditions in Porto and the underlying epidemic threats. These lectures paved the way for public health, an area supervised at the Medical-Surgical School by José de Gouveia Osório, in the Department of Hygiene and Legal Medicine. Gouveia Osório rose to become mayor of Porto (1886-1887), but died soon after (23 August 1887) and was replaced in his chair by Silva Pinto and, as president, by another lecturer at the school, Oliveira Monteiro (1887-1892). In this municipal medical environment, Ricardo Jorge was called upon to study municipal sanitation and, later, to organise and direct municipal health services. It was only in 1895 that he became professor of Hygiene and Legal Medicine.

Focusing on the historiographical aspect of his work, we would highlight that this is most evident in his lectures on social hygiene (1884), namely hygiene in Portugal, the evolution of burial, interment and cemeteries, and cremation. The historical perspective runs through these texts, with particular emphasis on the first (*Hygiene Social aplicada à Nação Portuguesa*, 1885).

If he used history to explain science, Ricardo Jorge also called for the cultivation of other emerging areas, such as sociology and psychology, in the texts published in *Revista Científica*, of which he was one of the creators and editors (1882). Years later, when presenting the collection of these texts in *Ensaios Científicos e Críticos* (Scientific and Critical Essays, 1886), Ricardo Jorge acknowledged his eclecticism: “in pointing out these scattered fragments of biology, philosophy, history, pedagogy and criticism, before this multicoloured and heterogeneous fabric, I felt a vague and intimate voluptuousness; as if the spirit smiled at me, portraying itself in the changing colours of that kaleidoscope” (*Ensaios científicos...*, 1886, p. 17). He reaffirms himself as an evolutionist, following in the footsteps of Spencer (whose translation of “Education” he prefaces), arguing that all “instruction must be essentially scientific,” that science must take the place previously occupied by classical studies, “of false brilliance,” since the scientific stance should sustain consciousness and knowledge and override dogma (*Idem*, pp. 128-129).



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His stay abroad, which allowed him to come into contact with new medical trends and practices, influenced his proposal for “renewal in education, especially in the Porto School”, which was set out in the Report Presented to the Higher Council of Public Instruction as delegate of the Porto Medical-Surgical School (1885). This text includes a first chapter entitled “History and Statistics”, which provides a documented chronological overview of the emergence of the Porto School, teaching conditions and medical and surgical practices. The historical exercise returned in 1888, with Gerês Thermal, which examined the “interesting details of history and bibliography, in addition to the hydrological explanations” of this resort, where he had interests in the exploitation of the concession and took over the clinical management. Shortly afterwards, he devoted a chapter to the history of Caldas do Gerez - Guia Thermal (1891).

Following his collaboration with the City Council, he published *Saneamento do Porto. Relatório apresentado à Comissão Municipal de Saneamento, 1888* (Sanitation in Porto. Report presented to the Municipal Sanitation Commission, 1888). After addressing urban sanitation and proposals for intervention, he added information on the past of municipal hygiene, using the municipal archives, which he considered “an incomparable repository of precious documents on communal history”.

The fight for sanitation expanded in 1892, when she became head of the Municipal Health and Hygiene Department. She created a Bacteriology Laboratory and organised Demographic Statistics, collected monthly and published in a Bulletin, proposing to “dig up and construct numbers, averages, relationships, differences and proportions”. She sought to pave the way for “social medicine”, which she considered undervalued and slandered both within and outside the professional class, given that it bypassed the “immediate service of the sick” and was an activity that “because it is of interest to everyone, sees its prestige diluted”. But the field of “demo-medicine” was growing, hygiene combined medicine and sociology to study the “physical ills of the social unit itself and their causes, to cut them off and prevent them, to sustain and invigorate the collective man so as to make him attain maximum physical happiness” (Demography and Hygiene, pp. V-VI).

This resulted, in 1897, in the text *Origins and Development of the City of Porto – Historical and Statistical Notes*. This was his first work with truly historiographical objectives, combined with statistics: to study the urban agglomeration, which “increases its population through two processes: the reproduction of its own inhabitants and the acquisition of foreign inhabitants”, at the intersection of the biological and social processes. Here, history pursues the goal of tracing the “topographical demography of Porto,” a difficult task in a land with “its history yet to be written and even its documents yet to be compiled.” He evokes the pioneering, but short-lived, role of Herculano. Referring to the scarce historical works on Porto, he documents the organisation of the municipal archive in 1888, with the president, Oliveira Monteiro, appointing a commission composed of Ricardo Jorge, José Carlos Lopes and José Caldas, in a process that was important for the defence of the municipal archive.

In 1899, *Demografia e Higiene da Cidade do Porto* (Demography and Hygiene of the City of Porto) appeared, volume I of the *Anuário do Serviço Municipal* (Municipal Service Yearbook). The work includes the revised text of *Origens e desenvolvimento da População do Porto* (Origins and Development of the



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Population of Porto), incorporating data from the 1890 census at national and local level, with an international comparison. Classifying Porto as a “cemetery city”, this demographic study, based on a historical view of the population, highlighted the need for history to produce health knowledge, setting a model followed by other doctors.

In 1899, the report “The Bubonic Plague in Porto”, recounting the progress of the epidemic at the time, opens with the transcription of a letter from King João II to the Porto City Council, dated 1493, on the “pestilency” experienced in the city. The Historical Archive continued to help explain health issues! However, the situation created by the “plague” forced Ricardo Jorge to move to Lisbon, given the unrest in the city in the face of the health measures adopted by the government, which imposed the isolation of the city and brought about economic paralysis. Hostile reactions of great violence were directed against him, the messenger of bad news.

His transfer to the health services of the Ministry of the Kingdom (and to the Lisbon Medical-Surgical School) resulted in the reorganisation of the services, with the creation of the Central Institute of Hygiene (1899) and the production of a key document – the General Regulations for Health and Public Welfare Services (1901), whose preamble provides a historical overview of the situation. Ricardo Jorge was appointed inspector general of these services and, shortly afterwards, director general. Admitting himself to be a bureaucrat of the central government, he often alluded to the lack of means to implement measures. However, it was in these roles that he began representing Portugal at the Office Internationale d’Hygiène Publique, travelling around the world to meetings and congresses, leaving scientific memoirs and travel accounts in periodicals, as well as finding time for other studies.

His historiographical vocation returned with the publication of *Cartas de Ribeiro Sanches* (Medicina Contemporânea, 1907), a text in which he frames and edits two interesting letters from the 18th-century doctor to the Oratorian Teodoro de Almeida.

In 1914-1915, Ricardo Jorge published his first texts on Amato Lusitano (“Comments on the life, work and times of Amato Lusitano”) in the Archives of Portuguese Medical History, writings he produced between 1907 and 1909 on this 16th-century figure in medicine – João Rodrigues de Castelo Branco, a New Christian, a Renaissance man who travelled throughout Europe, was a professor at the University of Ferrara, physician to Pope Julius III, and was later persecuted by the Inquisition. Fragments of the text appeared in other publications, but a posthumous edition in 1962 brought the various texts together in one volume. Initially developed as a commentary on Maximiano Lemos’ biography of Amato, the text took on a life of its own, focusing on the doctor’s travels across the Iberian Peninsula and his pioneering role in the study of Indian drugs, recreating the 16th-century atmosphere of university circles and the situation of the “Portuguese Jews”.

In the context of the Great War, Ricardo Jorge did not shirk his civic duties and class position. With his speech at the Lisbon Medical Science Society, as president, on 5 December 1914, entitled *A Guerra e o Pensamento Médico* (War and Medical Thought), he accused Germany: using history to show the clinical and



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sanitary evolution of medicine in the face of war and denouncing the racist doctrines of Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain adopted in the theses of German racial supremacy, a “Teutomania” that culminated in military conflict, which he condemns, since “war is the art of killing, medicine the art of living”.

These digressions into history and culture brought new contributions published in the *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra*. This is the case of El Greco (no. 1, 1912, pp. 648-694), a psychiatric approach to the painter’s work. And the more extensive study, Francisco Rodrigues Lobo, a biographical and critical essay, in successive issues (from 1912 to 1917) and, later, the comprehensive compilation (1920). Surrounding his analysis with multiple historical notes, the study on Rodrigues Lobo allowed him to deepen his knowledge of 17th-century culture. It became a much-referenced work due to Ricardo Jorge’s accusation of plagiarism against Teófilo Braga in 1916, in the newspaper *A Capital*, in a pamphlet that sparked controversy and was later expanded in *Contra um plágio do Prof. Theophilo Braga* (1918).

In 1921, Ricardo Jorge returned to Porto, 22 years after his tumultuous departure: on 27 July, he gave one of the plenary lectures at the Luso-Spanish Scientific Congress, entitled *A intercultura de Portugal e Espanha no passado e no futuro* (The interculturality of Portugal and Spain in the past and in the future), later included in *Sermões dum Leigo* (Sermons of a Layman, 1925). His historical knowledge underpinned this speech, marked by fraternal rhetoric and proposals for exchanges between the two countries.

He returned in 1923 to the Faculdade de Medicina do Porto [School of Medicine of Porto] for a tribute to Maximiano Lemos, a former colleague and the most renowned medical historian of the Porto School. Ricardo Jorge considered that Maximiano Lemos had developed a 40-year body of work on the history of medicine in a modest environment, which in other cultures would have received wide recognition. In this text, Ricardo Jorge expresses his views on historical knowledge: “All science is inconceivable without a historical foundation. It is history that gives perspective to the pictorial framework of our knowledge, it is history that ensures its continuity and direction, that tells us where we came from and guides us to where we are going” (*Sermões dum Leigo*, 1925, p. 248). And if the 19th century seemed to him to have been the “century of general history”, he prophesied that the 20th century would be the “century of the history of science”, given the trends observed in various countries and, thus, the future recognition for Maximiano Lemos.

Ricardo Jorge returns, through culture, to the Porto milieu in a very interesting book – *Camilo e António Ayres* (1925), recovering the satirical poem *As Comendas*, by António Ayres de Gouveia Osório, preceded by a long text in which he recalls the conflict between the two nineteenth-century intellectuals, describing the atmosphere of monarchical liberalism in a fresco full of memories, but also of research.

In a preface to Samuel Schwarz, *Os cristãos-novos em Portugal no século XX* (The New Christians in Portugal in the 20th Century) (1925), he highlights his knowledge of the Jews in Portugal: he had studied the biographies of several Jewish doctors and there were even those who identified him as being Jewish himself, even because of his appearance, a situation he comments on, stating that he has no information about this.

In 1928, the age limit forced him to retire from administrative duties. Ricardo Jorge continued to participate in international conferences and publish travelogues sprinkled with history and culture. He published volumes





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of these accounts in his own unique vernacular style (somewhat reminiscent of Camilo), demonstrating his keen powers of observation and profound cultural depth, leaving a testimony to the times he lived through between the two world wars: *Canhenho dum vagamundo* (1923), *Passadas de erradio, Impressões e estudos de viagem* (1928), *Brasil! Brasil!* (1930), volumes that show his wanderings as a public health official and his interpretations of a troubled historical period. A posthumous volume, *De Ceca e Meca* (1961), brings together texts that he had planned for *Terra Santa e Terras de Mafoma*, which was never published.

The medical history aspect of his work increased in the 1930s. In 1933, Ricardo Jorge published *Summa Epidemiologica de la Peste – Épidémies anciennes et modernes*, one of his significant contributions to the history of medicine, presented as an “analytical and synthetic exercise, a work of selection and condensation of theses to be deduced and demonstrated”, based on previous works. This was a communication to the *Comité Permanent de l'Office Internationale d'Hygiène Publique* in October 1932: the historical perspective is central to the referencing of the cycles of the plague in Europe, the nosological identity of the various types of plague, virulence, lines of propagation, prophylaxis, epidemic mutation, doctrinal mutation, vector variation, new theories and the decline of the plague.

In 1932, he joined the Portuguese Group for the History of Science as a founding member and President of the Lisbon Section. In 1934, he became a corresponding member of the *Académie Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences*, joined the Organising Committee of the International Congress of the History of Science, held in Coimbra, Portugal, and presented the paper *La médecine et les médecins dans l'expansion mondiale des Portugais* (Medicine and physicians in the global expansion of the Portuguese) in Coimbra.

A relationship with the former king Manuel led him to preface *Os Livros Antigos Portugueses* (The Old Portuguese Books) and to write about the codex *Regimento Proveitoso contra a Pestenença* (Profit-Making Regulations against Pestilence). In 1934, he returned to the study of Rodrigues Lobo in *Cartas dos Grandes do Mundo* (Letters from the Greats of the World), dated 1612, with a preface and notes to the edition of the codex deposited in the British Museum. He continued to write, preparing new reports for the meetings of the *Office International d'Hygiène* and leaving literary and/or historical texts.

Egas Moniz focused his historiographical bent on the history of medicine, with a penchant for retrospective diagnoses of historical figures (*Lisboa Médica*, no. 9, 1939). Eduardo Coelho noted his Cartesian spirit, his “methodical doubt as a principle and rule of the mind”, his recognition of error and, hence, the importance he attached to the medicine of the past, considering that Ricardo Jorge “would never have been the epidemiologist he was if he had not studied in depth the history of the epidemics he described and experienced” (*Boletim do Instituto...*, 1946, p. 256).

What conceptions of history did he espouse in the context of his time? Let us return to the text *Contra um plágio* [Against Plagiarism] by Prof. Theophilo Braga. Ricardo Jorge sets out the lines of his historiography in his own defence. He contrasts historical methodology with the romanticist practices attributed to Teófilo: recent historiographical practice had overcome “old sins” and was regenerated by the example of “austere masters” and with “the promulgation of the procedural code for their investigations and elaborations”, through



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rules that served as a guide to avoid the errors and discrediting of “narrators of the past”. A “history worthy of the name can only be that which is subject to the injunctions of critical analysis and the inspiration of the spirit of science”, a practice to be shaped by the authors of the observational sciences. The experimental method should be applied to history, with the rules of “disinterested curiosity, severe probity, laborious patience, submission to facts, difficulty in believing — in believing oneself as in believing others —, incessant need for criticism, contrast and verification”, to quote G. Lanson. He also refers to Langlois and Seignobos to say that history is “the discipline where it is most necessary for workers to have a clear awareness of the method they use”, a requirement that was lacking “because its subject matter is so popular and accessible to so many”, quoting Georg Waitz — “perhaps no science has suffered as much from dilettantism as history”. He called for “historical propaedeutics, a rigorous and cautious teacher of truth and honesty, proper to everything that is science or claims to be”, and, in a note, reveals his inspiring teachers: “Ch. and V. Motet, P. Lacombe, G. Renard, G. Lanson, G. Monod, Ch. V. Langlois, Ch. Seignobos,” without forgetting Bernheim and Spencer and the “treatise writers on applied logic.”

Ricardo Jorge thus refers us to the French and German masters of positivist and/or methodical history, who attempted to bring history closer to the methodology of the natural sciences: defining object and method, the history of the human past was constructed using documents, selected through critical examination of sources, which were then ordered, classified, interpreted, and related to each other, and finally written down, mediating between the past and the present. This methodical history sought the “truth”, eliminating errors or inaccuracies, seeking the original document as reliable testimony, through research and criticism, avoiding taking sides through exaltations or condemnations for patriotic or other reasons, given that the purpose of history was only knowledge, excluding the production of feelings or moralism.

This was the historiographical model for Ricardo Jorge, not least because of his familiarity with the exact sciences, always seeking the original “document”, which he sifted through internal and external criticism, valuing archives. Hence, some works dragged on over time, in a succession of articles with additions and corrections, in preparation for final publication, minimising the subjectivity inherent in production, seeking confrontation with other authors’ versions, and saturating the text with quotations and notes. Without literary embellishments, the choice of words and images used to reconstruct the past nevertheless reveal Ricardo Jorge’s completely original vernacular style, with neologisms and unexpected terms borrowed from other areas.

Did Ricardo Jorge see himself as a historian? Criticising Silva Carvalho for omitting any reference to his contributions to the History of Portuguese Medicine, he published the text *Um pseudo-historiador justificado* (A pseudo-historian brought to justice, 1932), modestly enrolling himself in the historiographical tribe: “Without wishing to claim to be a historian, I am one of the very few who have dug into the historical soil; Throughout my long career, from its very beginning, I have been dominated by a love of medical and non-medical history, social, national, literary and artistic history. From the revival of each subject through the past to monographs and biographies, there is everything, for what little it is worth, in this varied series of writings. Above all, in

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everything I touch, there is what might be called a historical feeling – the method that leads one to project the subject in question onto the past in order to better assess its current state and clarify critical judgements. (Um pseudo-historiador..., 1932, p. 14)

Methodology and neutrality are the recurring themes in Ricardo Jorge's historiographical work, which runs through much of his multimodal bibliography, the most extensive survey of which seems to be Contribution à la bibliographie du prof. Ricardo Jorge publiée par le prof. Eduardo Coelho et complétée à l'Institut Supérieur d'Hygiène (Boletim do Instituto Superior de Higiene Ricardo Jorge, 1946, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 13-25): a list of 255 titles and a notice for an undefined number of "scattered" works.

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