

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**CAVALHEIRO, António Rodrigues** (Lisbon, 1902 – Lisbon (?), 1984)

Historian, teacher, politician, and olissipographer with strong links to the Estado Novo, António Rodrigues Cavalheiro was born and lived virtually all his life in Lisbon. With a degree in Historical and Geographical Sciences from the Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa [School of Arts and Humanities of Lisbon], he was a teacher, first in secondary education and later at the Escola Naval [Naval School], where he taught Maritime History.

Politically, he was a disciple and friend of António Sardinha, belonging to the second generation of Integralismo Lusitano [Lusitanian Integralism] (IL), like Manuel Múrias, César de Oliveira, Pedro Teotónio Pereira, and Marcelo Caetano. With them, he was involved in the creation of the magazine *Ordem Nova* in 1926, which marked the beginning of his departure from the movement, from which he had become disenchanted after Sardinha's death. He left the IL for good in 1927, with the ambition, albeit brief, of reorganising the various monarchist integralist segments, materialised in the ephemeral idea of forming an "Integralist Action League". Like so many others in the monarchist and traditionalist circles, he then drifted politically towards the Estado Novo (the PIDE considered him, according to a 1949 record, "one of the most enthusiastic and zealous nationalists of all time"), under which he was a member of the National Assembly between 1942 and 1945 and a proxy in the Corporate Chamber from 1961 to 1965 on behalf of the men of the humanities. During the Salazar regime, he also held the positions of head of the Secção de Bibliotecas e do Arquivo Histórico da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa [Libraries Section and Historical Archive of the Lisbon City Council] (1932) and director of the Serviços Culturais da Mocidade Portuguesa [Cultural Services of the Portuguese Youth] (1944).

Throughout his career, he published several historiographical works, including *Erratas à História de Portugal* [Corrigenda to the History of Portugal] (1939, with João Ameal), *Infante D. Henrique* [Prince D. Henrique] (1948), *D. Carlos I e o Brasil* [D. Carlos I and Brazil] (1957), *Homens e Ideias* [Men and Ideas] (1960), *Política e História* [Politics and History] (1960) and *João Franco e os intelectuais do seu tempo* [João Franco and the Scholars of his time] (1963). He was a member of the Academia Portuguesa de História [Portuguese Academy of History] and wrote for its *Boletim*. He also collaborated with various publications, including *O Debate*, *Boletim da Mocidade Portuguesa*, *Ler*, *Nação Portuguesa*, *Ordem Nova*,



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and *Sulco*.

The formative influence of António Sardinha and Integralismo Lusitano permeated his work. He corresponded frequently with Sardinha at the beginning of the 1920s, informing him of current affairs in Lisbon and exchanging various political and historiographical impressions. The connection to Sardinha was quite impressive and can be seen, for example, in the tribute Cavalheiro paid to him in January 1958, on Emissora Nacional, the national radio broadcaster, on the anniversary of his death, or in the way he continued to refer to him as a “friend and teacher” (Note from 09.01.1958 to Ana Júlia Sardinha, A. Sardinha Estate).

Rodrigues Cavalheiro’s undergraduate thesis at the Faculdade de Letras [School of Arts and Humanities] (*Gomes Freire, mau português e mau soldado* [Gomes Freire, a bad Portuguese and a bad soldier], 1928) reproduces long passages from an article he had published in 1922 in the magazine *Nação Portuguesa* under the title “À margem dum processo (A questão de Gomes Freire)” [On the margin of a lawsuit (The issue of Gomes Freire)], along the revisionist lines with which Integralismo sought to counter liberal historiography at the time. In it, Cavalheiro explicitly stated that he wanted to look at the “liberal heroes” from a new perspective – in this case, linking the General to foreign interests and denouncing what he considered to be the construction of a fictitious hero in liberal historiography (*Nação Portuguesa*, II series, no. 5, 1922, pp. 222-226).

The shadow of António Sardinha is also noticeable in articles such as “O génio peninsular” [The Peninsular Genius] (*NP*, II series, no. 4, 1922) or “À margem da obra de Gil Vicente” [On the margin of Gil Vicente’s work] (*NP*, III series, No. 1, 1925, pp. 87-90), with Hispanist traits that accompany the shift in the IL ideologue’s thinking in the last years of his life – although there were steps that he took differently from the latter, such as joining, with Rolão Preto and Manuel Múrias, the 1<sup>st</sup> of December Commission (from 1927 onwards, Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal [Historical Society of the Independence of Portugal]), from which Sardinha always kept his distance. In any case, the latter’s death in 1925 coincided with Cavalheiro’s political withdrawal from the movement, but not in terms of the cornerstones of his historiographical work. In fact, at the end of the 1930s, together with João Ameal, he recovered the notes that Sardinha had left for his *História de Portugal* [History of Portugal], in a set of texts entitled *Erratas à História de Portugal* [Corrigenda to the History of Portugal]. In the introduction to this collection, he stated that he was “embarking on a task of blatant moral, intellectual and national significance, since, quoting the historian from Monforte, “the best way to serve your country is to love it and defend it in the integrity of its History” (*Erratas à História de Portugal*, 1939, n.p.). Significantly, he also claimed to respond thus to the “denationalisation” carried out by the dominant historiography in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: “[...] during the 20<sup>th</sup> century [*sic*] [...] the representatives of the victorious liberal faction indulged in a systematic deformation of our History [...] All the essential heritage of the Portuguese community suffered the violent attack of the new iconoclasts. ‘History’ was made out of everything: pamphlets, slander, Masonic insidiousness, falsehoods, subversive utopias, demagogic effects of low rhetoric [...]. This is the absurd ‘History of Portugal’ that we propose to



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amend or replace” (*Idem*).

Part of Rodrigues Cavalheiro’s final works, during the 1970s, consisted of commentaries, annotated re- editions or apologies and defences of António Sardinha’s thought (he was, it should be noted, together with Hipólito Raposo, one of the tireless organisers of the posthumous editions of several of his works). Take, for example, the publication of “Um inédito de António Sardinha sobre a Monarquia do Norte” [An unpublished essay by António Sardinha on the Monarchy of the North] in the magazine *Sulco* in 1968 or, more strikingly, the polemic he had in 1972 with Franco Nogueira and Pequito Rebelo, his former IL colleague, about Hispanism, in the pages of *O Debate*, which was later published in the book *António Sardinha e o iberismo: acusação contestada* [António Sardinha and Iberism: Contested Accusation] (1974). In this book, Cavalheiro supports Sardinha’s Hispanist thesis of Portugal and Spain as equal bases of a transnational Iberian civilisation in the face of criticism from Franco Nogueira, who revived the old fear that drawing closer to our Iberian neighbour would lead “inevitably, inexorably, to the submission, absorption, dilution of Portugal in the Spanish Peninsula, and only Spanish” (*António Sardinha e o iberismo...*, p. 76). Cavalheiro, moreover, had followed part of Sardinha’s construction of Hispanist ideas from a distance, as evidenced by a series of letters exchanged with the IL ideologue between 1922 and 1923, in which he informed him of how they were “gaining ground” (Letter dated 25.04.1922, A. Sardinha Estate, UCP Library).

This is not to say that throughout his life, especially in the 1940s and 1950s, he did not publish any study with historiographical substance, such as *No centenário de João Franco* [On the centenary of João Franco] (1956), *D. Carlos I e o Brasil* [D. Carlos I and Brazil] (1957), *A evolução espiritual de Ramalho* [Ramalho’s spiritual evolution] (1963) or *João Franco e os intelectuais do seu tempo* [João Franco and the intellectuals of his time] (1963). At any rate, in all of them, in a more or less subtle way, we can see a line of historiographical analysis that is either apologetic or seeks to revise the historical narrative from a certain point of view – that of the regime’s official historiography, which was nationalist and mythologising (for example, in the 1948 booklet entitled *Infante D. Henrique*) and which, in many respects, was close to the perspective it had taken in the 1920s in the pages of *Nação Portuguesa*. Although he occasionally diverged from this line – for example, in the aforementioned Iberian controversy – Rodrigues Cavalheiro’s works were almost always largely aligned with the conservative ideals of the Estado Novo, on the one hand, but also with the aim of presenting events and characters from the past as models of civilisational values to be recovered (or maintained), ultimately reflecting his formative background.

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