

The friendship of Abbé Correia da Serra with the Founding Fathers of the American Republic*

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The bicentennial of Abbé Correia da Serra's death, the founder of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, occurred in 2023. As Abbé had lived in Washington from 1812 to 1820 (where he maintained a close, friendly relationship with the Founding Fathers, particularly with Thomas Jefferson) the Ambassador of Portugal in Washington, Francisco Duarte Lopes, took the initiative of organizing a session to evoke this singular Portuguese figure. The event occurred at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., on May 23rd, 2024. Having requested my collaboration in the planning of the event, we decided to organize a panel with the participation of the President of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences, Professor José Luís Cardoso; Professor Gordon Wood, the most renowned historian of the American Revolution; and myself, for my role calling attention to this compelling figure of a Portuguese touched by the Enlightenment.

The session took place in the Cosmos Club's main room, all available seats sold out.

Below are the three communications read that afternoon.

* “Corrêa,” as the Abbé published under, is the old surname spelling; “Correia” is the modern spelling, even though some families have opted to keep the latter. For the purposes of this publication, the latter is used, with the sole exception of references to the title of Richard Beale Davis's 1993 edition of Correia da Serra's writings, published as *The Abbé Corrêa in America, 1812–1820: The Contributions of the Diplomat and Natural Philosopher to the Foundations of our National Life*.