

The Activities of the CNCDP: A preliminary assessment

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1. The Discoveries Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries (*Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses* - CNCDP) was created at the end of 1986 (Decree-Law No. 391, 22 November 1986). After initially operating with an apparent lack of any really clear definition (Programme, 1988), it underwent a number of “profound changes in its structure and working methods” in September 1988 (Plan, 9; Cruz, 2001, 20). Vasco Graça Moura was then appointed Commissioner-General and, in April of the following year, he was also appointed coordinator of the Executive Committee, remaining in both positions until the end of 1995. António Manuel Hespanha, who succeeded him, was appointed Commissioner-General on 28 November of that same year, later being replaced by Joaquim Romero Magalhães, who was appointed in February 1999 and remained in this position until the Discoveries Commission was abolished at the end of 2002.

The Discoveries Commission was composed of a president, a commissioner-general and a group of voting members representing the country in as many different ways as possible. In fact, the Discoveries Commission, whose first president was Commander E. H. Serra Brandão, and thereafter the Prime Minister, had the following composition: one representative of each of the members of government responsible for the areas of National Defence, Finance, Planning and Territorial Administration, Foreign Affairs, Education, the Sea, Youth and Culture; one representative of each of the Regional Governments of the Azores and Madeira; as well as one representative of the Governor of Macau. Also represented on the Commission were the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, the Portuguese Episcopal Conference, the Commissariat for the 1998 Lisbon International Exposition (EXPO 98), the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Council of the Vice-Chancellors of Portuguese Universities, the Coordinating Council of the Higher Polytechnic Institutes, all the official academies (Sciences, History, Navy, Fine Arts, the Geographical Society and the Portuguese Military History Commission) and the Portuguese Commissar for the 1992 Seville Universal Exposition (Graça Moura). The possibility also remained open for the introduction of other institutions or personalities that were considered useful, some of whom did in fact become members of the Executive Committee. At the time of the last Commissioner-General, its members numbered 34 individuals (Moura, 1994, 206; Hespanha, 1999, 164; Magalhães, 2002, 126).

At the head of the organisational structure was an Executive Committee, dependent on the president of the Discoveries Commission, which was coordinated by the Commissioner-General. This committee was assisted by a Scientific Council, created in 1988, “which was responsible for issuing opinions on matters of a historical and scientific nature” (Moura, 1994, 209; Programme, 25 and others; Cruz, 2001, 20). The presidents of this council were Luís de Albuquerque (Order 36/88, of 2 December), Luís Adão da Fonseca, Joaquim Romero Magalhães and Luís A. de Oliveira Ramos. An Interdepartmental Council coordinated the various actions undertaken by the different government departments (Plan, 9) and a group of enthusiastic and committed men and women comprised the operational structure, providing an excellent example of productive team work (Programme, 68; Hespanha, 1999, 27). Responsibility for organising the commemorations of the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese Discoveries at primary and secondary schools was entrusted to an autonomous, devoted and dynamic body, the Working Group of the Ministry of Education for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries, a title that replaced what had started out as a commission and unfortunately bore an equivocal formal similarity with the Discoveries Commission. The activities of this Working Group were integrated into the programme drawn up by the CNCDP (Cruz, 2001, 21).

2. The responsibilities of the Discoveries Commission, as expressed in its founding charter, were obvious: “preparation, organisation and coordination, at the domestic and international level, of the celebrations of the historic events” with which the commemorations of the Portuguese Discoveries were related. The above-mentioned Decree-Law also gave the Discoveries Commission, through its executive committee, responsibility for “the design, preparation, realisation and management of the Portuguese Discoveries Pavilion at the 1998 Lisbon International Exposition.” Because of the way in which it was conducted, this particular duty would later give rise to much criticism, including, as it did, the political question of commemorating transcendent facts from national history (Hespanha, 1999, 93 ff.).

The Discoveries Commission was given complete freedom to draw up its own commemorative programme, further taking into account carefully considered proposals from outside, whilst also listening, for example, to the scientific councils of universities. After the Commission’s restructuring, the basic guidelines of its programme were announced at the end of 1988 and then developed shortly afterwards into a medium-term plan of action, covering the period from 1990 to 1995, the activities for 1989 having already been outlined in the previous programme, drawn up after the Commission’s launch in 1987/88. At the same time, the Executive Committee was given the task of presenting to the Discoveries Commission the annual programme to be followed both in Portugal and abroad, so that the commissioner-generals’ summarised reports represent extremely valuable documents for analysing and understanding the commemorative activities. It is, in fact, these documents, together with some others, that have been used as the basis for this assessment of the performance of the CNCDP with regard to its production of historical research and publications.

3. The Discoveries Commission and its chief executive, on the one hand, and certain sectors of civil society, on the other hand, were not always in agreement, however, about the meaning of the concept of a “Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries” at the end of the twentieth century. For this very reason, the commissioner-generals who headed the commission in 1998 and 2000, and the first of these in particular, favoured a break with the past and not merely a continuation of previous activities. They then had to defend their positions in a context of much controversy, as is indicated by the above-mentioned reports, which speak of “commemorations and history” or, “by way of reflection,” the defence of continuities.

In any case, there was a programme to be fulfilled, dating from at least 1988 and itself representing an attempt to reconcile different currents of opinion, although it nonetheless followed a clearly defined path.

The programme sought to involve the whole of civil society and to spread abroad the affirmation of the Portuguese contribution to the opening up of the modern world, an expression that had been formally adapting itself over the centuries to the realities of different cultural systems, including those governed by the Portuguese language. In contrast, however, with the stated intentions of the initial Commission of the Ministry of Education, at least with regard to its guidelines for activities to be undertaken in 1987, which included such ideas as a homage to those who took part in the discoveries and a revival of national pride, together with a celebration of the coming together of civilisations and the union of the Portuguese citizens scattered around the world as they took part in the celebrations (Cruz, 2001, 15), the CNCDP in 1988 placed “the meaning of the commemorations” amongst the main programmatic guidelines for research and publication, activities that were considered to be the first and second of its concerns, immediately followed by cultural promotion (Programme, 1988, 3; Cruz, *A Escola*, 231). Amongst the activities planned by the Discoveries Commission, and of particular importance in this present context, the most notable were in fact those relating to research and the creation of culture, to be provided in its best possible expressions for the future or, at least, as a memory of the celebrations.

Throughout the commemorations, there was one firm underlying principle, which was repeatedly stated by the CNCDP as being fundamental: the commemorations, “rather than being initiatives of an ephemeral or transitory nature, shall help to highlight the importance of these enduring points of historical reference [...] in Portugal and in the world” (Programme, 1988, 41; Cruz, 2001, 24). The passage that has just been transcribed is interwoven into the aim of “urban improvement and

enhancement of the cultural heritage.” The marks of the commemorations should therefore remain in the form of buildings and architecture. But this idea confronts the so-called “ephemeral architecture,” and which despite its transience, can have a strong and long-lasting emotional impact on succeeding generations. Nothing more than this was intended by the so-called “living history” programme, which recreated historical events and settings around the country or even outside it, such as the choreographic production that 7000 young people performed at the Seville Universal Exposition (1992), a performance that showed what is most enduring in the realisation of the most ephemeral.

The Portuguese Discoveries Pavilion, conceived by the government for EXPO 98, “should express the historical values that represent Portugal’s decisive contribution to the history of humanity” (Moura, 1994, 206). But whilst, in fact, “the prime aim of the Commemorations was to highlight the Portuguese contribution to the history of the world [...],” “marked by the capacity for innovative knowledge and techniques, by determination and by audacity” (Hespanha, 1999, 140), there was no better means for achieving this than by investing in research, the opportunity for creating a new historical vision and engaging in profound and free discussion of the questions raised by the Portuguese Discoveries. Such issues were to be studied in the context of a road leading towards integration in the European Union and globalisation, a process that had first been attempted using different means and with different ends 500 years earlier and had engaged the efforts of various peoples, most notably the Portuguese.

For this purpose, a variety of sectoral programmes was drawn up leading to the realisation of this objective, which included support for institutional or individual research, for the creation of research centres to provide support for the Commission’s current activities or the development of historiographical knowledge, for the establishment of national and networks overseas that might constitute diversified research and teaching areas, and, naturally, suitable means for their expression in writing, sound recordings or audiovisual forms.

4. For roughly fifteen years (1987-2002), an autonomous organisation engaged in research and cultural promotion centred around the celebration of the main historical events linked to five or six centuries of discoveries (starting in 1415) flourished in Portugal. This organisation enjoyed autonomy in its coordination with the many different government departments, as necessarily had to be the case, but it also enjoyed its own independence. It remained open, however, to the diversity of others and to the idea of rethinking Portugal in the contemporary world, based on both the country’s earlier achievements and its present realities, some of them traumatic because of the way in which the fifteenth-century navigations had since sunk beyond the horizon of memory.

This rethinking of national identity was to include the pursuit of a first dream, which was partly realised, namely the creation of a university-level centre, where research could be carried out, regular courses given and international summer courses held, where “Portuguese problems, in their broadest sense, would occupy a privileged position” (Plan, 22). The summer university was given the name of the Convent Conferences, later renamed the Arrábida Conferences, and ascribed general teaching themes. As in other conferences of more than a century ago, the intention was to “generate new knowledge, rethinking and critical analysis of the problems of mankind (especially Portuguese) in the past and present,” now based on seminars about “Portuguese expansion and presence in the world” (Moura, 1994, 55). Within the context of the overall programming devised for the commemorations, this was one of the “special programmes” begun in 1992 with the “Reinvention of Europe” course, but undoubtedly greatly cherished and already included in the 1988 Programme. Directly managed by the Commission from the commissariat of António Manuel Hespanha onwards, and with the later support of the Fundação Oriente, the General Studies programme provided promontories from where the sea could also be heard talking about itself, over successive years, through an annual group of roughly twenty courses, opened and closed by a supporting lecture, normally given by foreign specialists. The last posters of the event, now catalogued under the title of “academic and research programmes,” portrayed these courses quite prosaically, but perhaps with greater international appeal, as the Summer University, formerly planned also to have the name of the Atlantic University, the first protocol to this effect being signed on 5 May 1990 with the Fundação Oriente, on whom the future headquarters was to depend (Projects, 10).

The General Studies course, open both to different themes and different people, was included in a vast national and international programme of research and teaching dedicated to the issues arising from the commemorations of the Discoveries. Research that urgently needed to be redone was carried out, with this activity being included “amongst the most important objectives of the CNCDP.” The aim was, in fact, “to give decisive support to the development of historical and multidisciplinary research into the Portuguese Discoveries and, consequently, to contribute, at the level of publishing, to the enrichment of the bibliography on the Portuguese Discoveries” (Plan, 1988, 22).

In the midst of all these efforts, and as far as internal historiography was concerned, it can be said that there was nobody who was working in the area of the Discoveries or its time that did not feel its effects, if they wished to do so, judging by the number of activities that were supported, encouraged or created, beginning with the universities and institutions of Higher Education. To this end, 1990 had marked the creation of “an autonomous programme specially designed to support activities related to research, the history of the discoveries and relations with the universities” (Projects, 5). The aim was, at one and the same time, to prepare new researchers, investigate sources and publish them, and organise research programmes.

In this sense, and in relation to Portugal itself, the CNCDP provided various different forms of support (scholarships for preparing dissertations, bibliographical and logistical support) for the running of Master’s Degrees courses in the area of the Portuguese Discoveries at the Arts Faculties of Porto and Lisbon Universities, at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon, and at the Department of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences of the University of the Azores.

The Art History Institute of the Arts Faculty of Coimbra University was, in turn, provided with the necessary resources to introduce into its Bachelor degree courses a curricular and optional subject in the History of Colonial Art and the Art of the Discoveries, as well as summer courses, a week of Luso-Brazilian studies, seminars in its summer courses for foreigners and various exhibitions (Projects, 10).

In partnership with the National Archive of the Torre do Tombo, the Damião de Góis Study Centre was set up, where archives were catalogued and sources and studies published. Some indexes of the royal chancelleries were scanned onto computer disks, and, for all those who have already been able to use this service, this turned out to be a most useful surprise, because many scholars had grown used to working with microfilm readers. Support was also given to the Gil Eanes Study Centre, in Lagos, in conjunction with the respective Municipal Commission of the Discoveries, which has already published the papers presented at the various conferences that it held (Cruz, 2001, 167). All of the 305 municipalities existing at that time were, in fact, invited to take part and create municipal commissions, as a way of involving the whole of society. This was an area to which the Working Group devoted special attention, being linked, as it was, to the country’s schools and giving secondary school teachers the opportunity to bring their knowledge up to date, whilst also developing new knowledge. At the same time, children and young people were afforded the chance to take part in the commemorations, which they did in a variety of forms, particularly at the level of local history or as apprentice journalists through competitions set up for this purpose.

In addition to the university bodies or associations related to the production of knowledge that were directly supported at an institutional level, there was also a proliferation of individual or group research projects, both in Portugal and abroad, many of them undertaken by researchers belonging to teaching and research institutions. In fact, in 1991 alone, 60 programmes were registered (some of these being collective efforts) by Portuguese and foreign researchers working in various areas (Projects, 9 ff.; Moura, 1994, 48-52), and this did not include the Damião de Góis Centre, particularly beloved by the Commission, which alone ran 26 programmes in 1996-1998 (Hespanha, 1999, 47-48). Taking the projects as a whole, it can be seen that there were more or less the same number of projects designed for the treatment of sources (publication, research work instruments such as bibliographies, re-editions and translations) as there were studies of a different nature. Because these are not very common amongst historians, I draw attention to the so-called “Science Programmes,” which were designed to investigate “the genetic influence of the different peoples discovered in the Portuguese population” and the “study of the chemical composition of Portuguese coins determining the origin of the metals used.” But, together with the projects, 27 conferences and congresses were also planned, clearly demonstrating the commitment of the academic community to the study of the commemorations and the renewal of research. The idea of “An Association of Historians in the Portuguese Language” was put forward, with

the aim of “developing historiographical studies of interest to all Portuguese-speaking countries” (Plan, 14). A vast historiographical community, spreading far beyond Portugal itself, would in this way sustain a common effort on behalf of the Discoveries and certainly in support of the history of those countries that have subsequently assimilated the language spoken by the navigators of five hundred years ago.

In its idea of a historiographical renewal regarding the Discoveries, the CNCDP began quite appropriately to consider the creation within the planned university centre of a “Department of Atlantic, African and Oriental Studies.” The commemorations of the fifth centenary of Vasco da Gama’s arrival in India made this centre necessary, or at least the study of the respective languages, as an indispensable condition for elaborating other visions of the Orient and the Discoveries, the need for which was clearly felt by the Commissioner-General António Manuel Hespanha, who strived to resuscitate interest in the studies made in this area in Portugal towards the end of the nineteenth century. He also appeared in 1999 as the curator of an exhibition on orientalism in Portugal, organised to mark the end of the commemorations of 1497-1499 (Magalhães, 2002, 68; Rodrigues, 1999). As he painfully noted at the time, “we lack the necessary instruments for the teaching of Oriental and African languages, we lack collections of local sources, we lack series of classic journals on non-European studies, we lack the institutionalisation of stable and efficient systems of relationship between Portuguese research centres and similar institutions in Africa and Asia” (Hespanha, 1999, 137). The *Culturas do Índico* (Cultures of the Indian Ocean) exhibition, held with great conviction, was a demonstration of both faith and knowledge (Perez, 1998; *Oceanos*, 1998). But the *Outras Margens* programme (‘Other Margins’, which was also the title of a collection published by the CNCDP), involving the listening to others through all possible means of communication, required a confident sense of reciprocity and a pedagogical attitude that had not been developed by the responsible bodies, whose efforts were geared more towards the spaces resulting from their own navigations or conquests: the implantation of Portuguese scholarly missions abroad. As is known but not generally practised, it is only after studying others that we find ourselves in a position to understand one another.

What has been and is still being searched for, and with just reason, is the knowledge of ourselves amongst others and as we are seen by others, perhaps in the presumption of certain continuities in the melting pot of humanity. In this sense, by seeking to make known what the world owes to the contribution of the Portuguese, the CNCDP also played a remarkable role, right from the outset, by setting up permanent university chairs or by providing support for their creation. These measures were also extended to the creation of specific programs of temporary study at universities abroad.

Amongst the first university chairs that the CNCDP supported and sponsored was the Vasco da Gama Chair at the European University Institute (Florence), which began its activities on a regular basis in Autumn 1991. Portugal joined the Institute in 1989 and, in June 1990, the CNCDP had proposed to the Institute the creation of the “Vasco da Gama” chair, “dedicated to the study of the discoveries in a European dimension.” The chair was endowed with a permanent professor, chosen by competitive application, two Portuguese visiting professors, a Portuguese research assistant (also recruited by competitive application) and two three-year scholarships for people studying for doctorates in the area of the History of the Expansion, besides the organisation of a computerised bibliography that was updated on a permanent basis. The permanent professor appointed at that time was Kirti N. Chaudhuri, from the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University (Moura, 1999, 31-32), who later, with another Portuguese professor, Francisco Bethencourt, was to coordinate the writing of a “History of the Portuguese Expansion” in five volumes, the publication of which was begun in January 1998, thus giving visibility to a research project supported by the CNCDP (Moura, 1994, p. 32). The chair has continued to be filled by internationally known professors.

At the same time (May 1991) the Jaime Cortesão Chair was created at the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University of São Paulo in Brazil, which represented “a privileged space for teaching and research into the cultural and historical relations between Portugal and Brazil, in general, and the Portuguese Expansion and Discoveries, in particular” (Moura, 1994, 32). Its activity was begun in March 1992, on the occasion of the *America 92* congress and the São Paulo Biennial Book Fair, when nine Portuguese historians were present in Brazil. In that same year, courses were begun that successively called for the presence of Portuguese university lecturers.

Another chair, created after a major financial investment by the CNCDP, was that set up at

Brown University (Providence, Rhode Island) with the title of *Vasco da Gama Chair on Early Modern Portuguese History*. This is a permanently endowed chair (1997), which was set up by a consortium of Portuguese institutions: CNCDP, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Luso-American Development Foundation, Fundação Oriente and the Portuguese Oriental Institute (Macau). The Portuguese institutions contributed 1,500,000 USD to a fund of 2,000,000 USD, with the CNCDP spending 600,000 USD. The collaboration had already begun in 1993, with the creation of the *Vasco da Gama Lectureship*, a teaching and lecturing project, financed by a group of American Universities. From 1993 onwards, the initiative was supported jointly by the CNCDP and the Instituto Camões, and some Portuguese professors were later to work there (Moura, 1994, 37). In this same year, support was given, at the University of Pondicherry, to a master's degree course with the aim of studying the Portuguese presence on the Malabar coast and India's eastern coast.

In 1999/2001, support continued to be given to Portuguese studies, and in particular to studies related to the Discoveries, at international academic institutions. In addition to those already mentioned, support was given to a further nine institutions: the John Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland, with a teaching and research project); Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut, where there was a Teaching and Research Programme in the History of the Discoveries and Portuguese Expansion in the World); the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Brasilia, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Mondlane University, the University of Rennes, the Higher Institute of Sciences and Technology (Mozambique), the Higher Institute of Education (Cape Verde) and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris (Romero, 2002, 84).

In the years 1992/1993, a Portuguese History Fellowship, financed by the CNCDP and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, was in operation at the University of New Hampshire (Durham, New Hampshire), as well as activities undertaken under the scope of the "International Conference Group on Portugal," of which both projects were subsequently continued (Moura, 1994, 37; Hespanha, 1999, 43). The CNCDP's activities also extended to other American universities, where they stimulated both teaching and research (University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth), and to the Camões Center, created in 1990 at the School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University (New York), where a programme was introduced for the teaching of the History of the Discoveries and Portuguese Expansion in the World and, as early as 1990, the conference "Portugal and the Making of the Modern World" was held. This school published, at least at that time, "the Camões Center Quarterly, in which planned initiatives are regularly publicised" (Moura, 1994, 36: Projects, 12). The CNCDP also gave its support to George Washington University, so that it could organise conferences about the "Spain and Portugal of the Navigators" or, simply, "The Iberian Peninsula. Europe and New Horizons."

Further, at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi), the Diogo do Couto Chair in Indo-Portuguese Studies was given support (as was the Portuguese Studies Department at the University of Goa, Pangim).

An agreement had already been signed with the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris) in 1991, through the Portuguese Studies Centre. This agreement sought to provide support for the organisation of courses, seminars and conferences related to the theme of the Discoveries. In 1991/1992, various conferences were held, together with a seminar on "La rupture Luso-Castillane de 1640. L'évènement et ses effets". These activities continued into the following years, resulting in exchanges between researchers in 1996-1998 (Projects 1991, 12; Hespanha, 1999, 43). The "Maison des Pays Ibériques," at the University of Bordeaux III, was another of the institutions supported in France, where a permanent seminar was held with a research team, after lecturing activities there had begun with brief seminars (Projects 1991, 12).

The sponsorship provided by the CNCDP spread to many other foreign institutions, in addition to those already mentioned. At Linacre College in Oxford, for example, a multidisciplinary centre was set up in 1991, dedicated to the study of the Portuguese Discoveries (Moura, 1994, 34; Projects 1991, 12), with support being given to the "D. João II Chair. Centre for the Study of the Portuguese Discoveries." This action later resulted in the holding of a conference, the proceedings of which were published in 1992 (Moura, 1994, 34; Projects, 12-13). Through the auspices of the Portuguese Language Centre of Instituto Camões, there still exist today at Oxford University (2003) research projects and projects for the dissemination of Portuguese History, as well as exchange and cooperation

programmes with English historians.

Whilst the increase in the activities taking place in the field of university relations spread mainly to Europe and America, support for postgraduate and doctoral studies spread mainly to Africa. In fact, the Bartolomeu Dias programme granted long-term scholarships to citizens from five Portuguese-speaking African countries and from East Timor wishing to undertake postgraduate studies at Portuguese institutions. In 1996-1998, there were 35 such scholarships, (Hespanha, 1999, 49) and, in 1999-2001, 34 (Magalhães, 2002, 83). In addition to these scholarships, there were roughly another 150 scholarships, awarded to Portuguese and foreign citizens for various purposes of a scholarly nature either on a short-term basis or for research, throughout the course of the three commissariats (Moura, 1994, 53; Hespanha, 1999, 48-49; Magalhães, 2002, 83).

5. Support and incentives for research, as expressed through the granting of scholarships (many of them awarded to people wishing to undertake or complete dissertations for doctorates and master's degrees) or the provision of bibliographies and their computerisation at various national and foreign institutions, reached their high point in the creation of a research award in the area of the Discoveries. The prize had the name of the Dom João de Castro award and was intended to reward the best first-time publication in this area, both nationally and internationally. The prize, worth 1,500 contos (7,500 euros), was first awarded in 1989, with the jury consisting of the Scientific Council. In 1993, ten authors were awarded the prize (Moura, 1994, 54), which continued to be awarded whenever works of recognised value in this area were published, naturally not those written by authors connected to the CNCDP (Hespanha 1999, 49, for prizes from 1995-1996).

Another incentive for research involved the creation of facilities for academic conferences at which research in progress could be publicly presented. Further attempts were also made to disseminate this research through lectures or specific publications. Congresses, conferences and lectures were organised either directly by the CNCDP or, in many cases, only through collaboration or gifts of financial support.

We have not followed the same criterion in the syntheses of the three reports tracked, nor are they exhaustive in their description of the Commission's real activity, as there is a slight time lag between the presentation of the reports and the taking of office on the part of the Commissars (there is no mention, for example, of activities in 1995 and 2002 or of those prior to 1988). Even in the incomplete list, however, 163 activities of this kind can be found, with more than half (85) belonging to the period from 1988 to 1993, (a much longer commissariat, lasting roughly twice as long as the others), although these figures do not include the lectures, which are spread throughout the other reports under a different heading. The activities described in the 1988-1999 report were undertaken in 52 different places, 41 of these being located in Europe, Asia and America. (Other activities were undertaken at that time in Africa, which had its own Special Programme: Moura, 1994, 150 ff.; Plan, 13-14; Hespanha, 1999, 34; Magalhães, 2002, 107).

The highest number of activities in Portugal took place in Lisbon, followed by Coimbra and Porto, whilst the highest number of activities outside Portugal, during this cycle of commemorations, took place in Paris.

In the subsequent commissariats, attention was devoted to congresses and academic conferences either organised or co-organised by the Commission itself, which represent a third of the total number of the events, in contrast with the first period. In this aspect, as in others, the last two commissariats pursued different policies.

Amongst the events of this type, attention should be drawn to those connected with the commemorations of Bartolomeu Dias (1988), with the five volumes of the proceedings of the conference held in Porto running to more than 3,000 pages; the conference on early modern Japan (1993); the 6th centenary of the birth of Prince Henry the Navigator (1994) and the Treaty of Tordesilhas (1994), in the period when Vasco Graça Moura was Commissioner-General, with the city of Porto and its institutions playing an important role at two of these commemorations (Bartolomeu Dias and Prince Henry the Navigator), accompanied at the latter commemoration by another eight towns and cities in mainland Portugal and the island of Madeira (Moura, 1994, 182 ff. and 190 ff.; V Centenário; Infante 94). António Manuel Hespanha led the commemorations centred on the exploits of Vasco da Gama (1998), for which, amongst other activities, two large conferences were held, one of

them in Lisbon (“Vasco da Gama. Men, voyages and culture”), as well as exhibitions, including one in Paris, organised by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, with support also being given, in 1997, to the international conference held to mark the third centenary of the death of Padre António Vieira; Joaquim Romero Magalhães was responsible for the multiple and diversified commemorations relating to Pedro Álvares Cabral (2000), which included discipline-specific congresses organised by the Commission in Geography, Law, Economics, Sociology and Anthropology, Language, Literature and Arts, Politics and International Relations, Environment and Development and History, followed by the commemorations connected with Newfoundland (Terra Nova, also sometimes referred to as the Terra do Bacalhau), in addition to others that were also supported (Hespanha, 1999, 29 ff., 35-36; Magalhães, 2002, 91 ff. and 107).

6. The new results of the research endeavours, as well as fundamental texts for the history of the Portuguese Discoveries, were either published or re-edited. The quantity and quality of the works that were then reproduced, ranging from the proceedings of congresses, colloquiums and conferences to journal articles, doctoral dissertations and other types of research, all helped to enhance the image of the commemorations, as this was an aspect to which the CNCDP always devoted great attention.

First of all, mention should be made of the importance the Commission devoted to having its own journal, in which it was possible to publish the research that it sponsored. To this end, the journal entitled *Mare Liberum* was created, an International Journal of the History of the Seas. Its publication began in 1990, and the first 13 issues are available on CD-ROM, in the Ophir collection. Twenty-two issues were published up to December 2001, some of them monographic.

In addition to this journal intended for the publication of more specialised studies, the CNCDP launched another review, entitled *Oceanos*, intended for a larger audience. This magazine became an emblem of the organisation itself, in view of the luxurious form of its presentation and the nature of its contents, which were generally monographic, in harmony with the timing of the events that were being commemorated. By the end of 2001, 48 issues had been published.

In a very different style, and in an attempt to reach a younger audience, the Commission also published, through its Working Group (Cruz, 2001, 259), the magazine *Na Crista da Onda* (On the Crest of the Wave), with 37 issues published up to February 2001, to which should be added other similar publications produced by the same Working Group of the Ministry of Education.

Considering only those publications mentioned in the three summarised reports, new or even old research considered worthy of being republished resulted in a total of 472 titles, to which should be added at least the 74 titles of sources and studies published by the Working Group, drawn from a total of 164 publications it sponsored (Cruz, 2002, 234 ff.).

The CNCDP’s initial publishing policy was simply to give support to books and reading, especially through the respective Institute responsible for the promotion of this activity, except in certain circumstances (Plan, 23-24), although it ended up publishing its own research directly, namely when António Manuel Hespanha was the Commissioner-General. At that time, in this particular aspect and in regard to its incentives, the CNCDP had the image of a fruitful mother of knowledge, whose children were not all born in the time of Hespanha’s commissariat. This situation did, in fact, lead his successor, perhaps for this very reason, to speak, for the first time in the history of the CNCDP, of “financial constraints,” caused by prior commitments, even though the period after 2001 was already a period that had not initially been planned for. In any case, these direct publications, and here I am referring only to titles and not to volumes, made throughout the three commissariats, represent 39% of all the publications financed either in whole or in part by the Commission, including exhibition catalogues, with the last commissariat responsible for 48% of direct publications. Yet, if we consider the titles published during the time of the last Commissioner-General (not including the issues of each journal), direct publications amounted to 74% of the total. Of the support given by this commissariat to publications, 38% of the total relates to foreign publications.

These publications only refer to those printed on paper. To these should be added, at least, the contents of *Ophir*, the “virtual library of the Portuguese Discoveries,” in which useful research instruments were republished, such as the “Dicionário Bibliográfico Português,” by Inocêncio Francisco da Silva and Brito Aranha (23 volumes), the “Bibliotheca Lusitana,” by Diogo Barbosa Machado, “Corografia Portuguesa” by Padre António Carvalho da Costa, as well as all the works of Gil

Vicente, the “Décadas da Ásia” by João de Barros and the complete works of Padre António Vieira. By the end of 2001, 15 CD-ROMs had been published, the first of which contained the 53 volumes of the journal *Studia* and issue No. 3 of the “Boletim da Filmoteca Portuguesa.”

7. Some of the research work produced was intended to support and prepare the exhibitions held at that time, many of which included original and sometimes unique works, with the Commission actually acquiring some new material.

The Commission’s exhibition activity can be considered from many different aspects, one of which is certainly the scholarly viewpoint, and which can claim the catalogues produced, many of them being accompanied by specialist studies. All together, more than a hundred exhibitions were held, not including those that were repeated. “Large exhibitions” represented 42% of the total of all those that are mentioned in the reports. Between 1996 and 1998, there were 53 itinerant exhibitions travelling around Portugal and abroad, and there were 31 such exhibitions in 1999-2001. Between 1988 and 1993, the CNCDP held exhibitions in 34 different foreign cities, not including “A cartografia portuguesa e a construção da imagem do mundo” (Portuguese cartography and the making of the world picture), an exhibition that was taken all over the world (Moura, 1994, 17-18).

The holding of exhibitions of the quality organised by the CNCDP organised, with themes that accompanied the events that were being commemorated or ideas associated with them, was already a way of producing culture, one of the ways of commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese Discoveries. This was carried out with the same enthusiasm that had been channelled into historical research, given that works of art were created and events were not just restricted to the representation or repetition of already known shows and performances. This amounted to a cultural enrichment of the country (Moura, 1999, 100 ff.; Hespanha, 1999, 67 ff. and 147; Magalhães, 2001, 95 ff.) achieved through theatre, opera, music, dance, painting, cinema, television, architecture, restoration (as described in Moura, 1994, 114) or the production of recorded music; street entertainment, the Portuguese presence at International Book Fairs in Europe and Brazil (the Portuguese participation at the Frankfurt Book Fair was afforded 100,000 contos (500,000 Euros) of financial support in 1996), as well as the support given to national fairs; participation in the exhibitions of Seville 92, Genoa (1992) (Moura, 1994, 162) or Expo 98 in Lisbon (Hespanha, 1999, 36-37). At the same time, one must remember the acquisition and restoration of the pieces of art and paintings needed for the exhibitions, the support given to some museums for these purposes, the historical restoration of certain sites in mainland Portugal and the former overseas provinces, still linked even today to the heroic exploits of the Discoveries, as in Mozambique (on the Island of Mozambique, beginning in 1996: Capela de Nossa Senhora do Baluarte, Palácio de São Paulo, Igreja da Misericórdia; restoration of the collection of Portuguese painting at the Maputo National Museum; rebuilding the fortress of Maputo); Angola (a survey of Angola’s heritage of colonial buildings and their state of conservation); Guinea-Bissau (support for the recovery of the city of Bolama); Cape Verde (monuments in São Nicolau, a replica of the Torre de Belém in Mindelo, restoration of the old town) (Moura, 1994, 151 ff.; Hespanha, 1999, 84; Magalhães, 2002, 107).

During the commissariat of António Manuel Hespanha alone, roughly five million contos (twenty-five million euros) were spent in three years on “cultural activities with a lasting impact” (including publishers), which reflects the vitality of this sector considered indispensable for the country’s cultural progress (Hespanha, 1999, 17).

The CNCDP, which began its activity with a fund of 50,000 contos (250,000 euros), awarded by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, ended up managing in 1998, for example, a budget of almost three million contos (2,920,000 contos – 14,565,000 euros) and, the previous year, a little over two million contos (2,130,000 contos – 10,625,000 euros), and more than 2,700,000 contos (13,470,000 euros) in 1999-2000 (Magalhães, 2002, 117).

It should, however, be borne in mind that only roughly 30% of this money was spent on running the Commission, freeing 70% for activities, and that roughly 30% of income was produced by the activity of the Commission itself, through the issue of commemorative coins and other products.

This productivity and accumulated knowledge led the Commissioner-Generals to defend a specific vision of the Commission’s legacy for the period when the Commemorations would come to an end (Hespanha, 1999, 147 ff.). Routine would certainly lead to a loss of the enthusiasm felt by an

autonomous body such as the Commission, and which is a necessary ingredient of productivity. But perhaps one essential idea would remain from the commemorations, promoted by the historians, namely the new forms of studying the whole question of the Portuguese Discoveries and, in short, the redefinition of Portugal. With the idea not being able to be taken any further forward, it seems that the legacy should be transferred as a whole to an academic institution, even because the Commission, which began by setting up a centre of documentation and research, ended up acquiring sizeable and valuable reserves, which made it possible to take even greater care of the production of some of the best critical editions of historical texts that have appeared amongst us in recent years (Moura, 1994, 63 and 143-144)

8. Some criticism was made of certain guidelines adopted by the CNCDP, more in relation to their execution than perhaps their definition. This was directed at what should also have been understood as a celebration of the discoveries made some five hundred years ago, at a crucial turning point in the history of Portugal. It might perhaps not have been possible for this evocation of the past, conducted through one of its more particular forms, historical knowledge, to have been any greater in terms of its re-elaboration, in view of the limited resources that it proved possible to make available. For a period of 15-16 years, the country and many study centres abroad were swept by a prodigious wave of cultural production, which coincided in Portugal with the increase in the numbers of researchers working in the area of History. Now that the cycle of the commemorations of the Portuguese Discoveries has come to a close, it is quite likely that the rate of publication will decrease, and not just because of the current economic situation. Those researchers that were caught up in the dynamics of the commemorations of the five hundredth anniversary of the Portuguese Discoveries know how much support they owe to the Commission - support that had synergies with other institutions, which was certainly also a way for these to become associated with the commemorations.

The works directly published or simply sponsored by the CNCDP were reviewed by specialists or, at least, subject to decisions that implied this activity. Such attitudes are, of course, an indication of quality, which, however, only the public can judge. It will therefore be necessary to set up teams of researchers who express their opinions not only about the work that was directly produced, but also about the work that the Commission supported in various ways. One fact, however, remains immediately clear: it will no longer be possible to study the history of Portugal for the period covered by the commemorations without being necessarily obliged to consult many of the works published, amongst which are some that have become decisive for the current knowledge of certain issues linked to the Discoveries made by the Portuguese. There are no definitive works in History, but there are pillars of knowledge that last through many generations. Some of them were thought up and written about under the auspices of the CNCDP, which, most importantly, did its very best to ensure that others could talk historiographically of the Portuguese wherever they were to be found five hundred years ago, building bridges of understanding across the banks of a river of misunderstanding. The image that is best suited to expressing diversity would suggest that it bears a look of difference.

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