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Special issue on recent Portuguese historiography

Editorial note

This special issue of the *e-JPH* brings together a series of contributions presented at a seminar that took place at the Portuguese National Library on 8 May 2010. The aim proposed for this seminar by the editors of the *e-JPH* was to initiate a debate amongst the Portuguese historiographic community about recently published histories of Portugal. The initiative was warmly welcomed and was attended by 110 participants, who testified to the interest and importance of the contributions that had been requested beforehand from a panel of historians, who have now kindly agreed to revise their papers and publish them.

How are these histories put together? What language is used in their writing? What are their aims and purposes, their merits and limitations? Who are their target audiences? What are the immediate repercussions and prolonged effects of works that, displaying different capacities for synthesis but in all cases intended for non-specialist readerships, seek to stabilize or reinvent the great milestones of the History of Portugal?

In a country where the market for the publication of books about the history of Portugal does not seem to be showing any signs of slowing down, these are some of the questions that undoubtedly merit a more in-depth discussion. This is a debate that also promotes a serious reflection on the essential contents of works that do not limit themselves merely to disseminating facts, but end up making an important contribution toward educating a broad public interested in knowing more about the history of their country.

Most of the contributions gathered together here focus on the *História de Portugal* edited by Rui Ramos, and written by Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa, Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro and Rui Ramos (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2010). Although reference was made to a more diversified range of histories of Portugal (beginning with the inaugural address by José Mattoso, whom we wish to thank for doing us the honor of opening this debate), the seminar deliberately centered on the discussion of the above-mentioned work. This is, in fact, how one can best understand the spread of the contributions across the three great divisions that form the structure for this work (medieval period, modern period and contemporary period). We should like to express our sincere gratitude to the authors of this book, Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa, Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro and Rui Ramos, for their readiness to participate in the seminar held at the Portuguese National Library and for the interested and committed way in which they reacted and responded to the observations that were made about their work.

A special word of thanks is also due to the Portuguese National Library and its director, Jorge Couto, for having hosted the seminar at which these newly published papers were first presented.

Since the publication of the *e-JPH* first began, one of the main priorities on its agenda has been the holding of debates about themes of a historiographic nature. The problems of the internationalization of Portuguese historiographic production, as well as its respective supports for publication in the form of academic and university journals, have already been the subject of

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attention in the pages of the *e-JPH*. We hope that this new dossier will lead to this debate being extended into forthcoming issues of the journal, and we therefore invite all those interested in this matter to submit their own original contributions, in the expectation that these will help to broaden and enrich the historiographic debate that is now initiated with this issue.

The editors of the *e-JPH*

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