

The Name of the Game; or What's in a Name: Teaching, Research and Critical Agendas in the “Internationalization” of “Portuguese Historiography”

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After Rui Santos's commendably heroic attempt to move the discussion onto the surer footed ground of facts and figures, my contribution may well strike a little like a spanner thrown into the works. But like Schaub and Ramada Curto I think that a biographical note of contextualization is here pertinent and like Costa Pinto, though somewhat more indulgently, I find anecdotal remarks from the field uniquely telling. Moreover, and to introduce a pedantic note all of my own, I am not convinced that either of the terms “Portuguese historiography” or “internationalization”, upon which the discussion centres, are being used with anything like a clear or unproblematic sense. Indeed, reading the meaning of internationalization oppositionally, off the multitude of sins that in the various contributions is described as the condition of its lack, internationalization seems at times to mean little more than publishing in English and at others nothing other than professionalism, scholarship, accountability and standards. Portuguese historiography, in turn, appears to range in meaning from historical research and writing authored by historians in Portuguese institutions, historical research on Portugal (wherever and whoever by), through to an almost hegemonic reading of world history as Portuguese history (I am uneasy, for example, with Jorge Pedreira's reference to Alpers' work as concerned with the ‘history of Portugal and her empire’. Unlike, say, David Birmingham and others of his generation who did come to write on the history of *Portugal* from an engagement with Portuguese Africa and the colonial wars, Alper's engagement with the Portuguese colonial context in Mozambique is incidental to his study of *African* history in the East African and Indian Ocean context. This is a distinction that, it seems to me, is worth making).

Mine is an assumedly marginal take on this debate. As an historian I came late to Portuguese history. My undergraduate years in the Oxbridge-without-the-deadweight-of-institutional-inertia, which is very much how the York history department saw itself, and at UCLA, where I chose to do my Year Abroad, were solidly unencumbered by references to Portugal. Only in my final year did I decide to face up to that O'Neillian ‘issue I have with myself’ and, capitalising on my knowledge of the language, take up a Portuguese topic for a dissertation which, after initial hesitation, ended up focusing on trends in the post-‘74 historiography of the Portuguese Discoveries. Though almost a clichéd choice, it was, retrospectively, clearly the right one at which to cut my teeth. It both served me as a sort of crash course on the best and worst of Portuguese historiography and pretty much set my path to King's College. Having started my doctorate there in the blissful days before the introduction of taught postgraduate programmes, when I eventually became a lecturer in Portuguese history I did so, for better or for worse, without ever having been *taught* Portuguese history.

On the one hand, therefore, I came into contact with the Portuguese academic establishment and historiography as an outsider and my initial concern in this encounter was to have my work recognised in Portugal — that outsider status, with all the advantages and disadvantages that it brings continues to structure the terms of my engagement with institutions and colleagues and certainly my take on the present debate. On the other, I came to Portuguese history as an historian, not as someone who emerged from within the discipline of Portuguese studies, but I teach Portuguese history in a Portuguese Studies department. My concern and priority, therefore, have always been to be recognised as an historian who happens to specialize on Portugal, to place the discussion of Portuguese history beside the study of other histories, as an individual case among others. This

doubly marginal status and the correlative strategies of academic insertion in each of the two contexts affords a different, perhaps a Janus-faced, though certainly not an Olympian, take on this debate on internationalization.

Whatever else Portuguese historiography is, as it is shaped in Portuguese institutions it is sociologically defined by generational cohorts and discipleship. There are no original Portuguese contributions to historical practice, theory or methodology to speak of. It was (is?) the bureaucratic/charismatic centred relation to research supervisors, the reproduction of approaches to the parcelling out of *coutadas*, the incestuous genealogies of citation clusters (reflected and reinforced by the norm of in-house journal publication and amply attested in the shamelessly tributary nature of the 'review of the literature' chapters of Portuguese double-decker PhD theses), and the institutional placement and positioning of graduates, that largely defined the various 'historiographical schools'. The first generation of cosmopolitan (read Oxford parochial) narrative historians simply substituted an *avant moi le déluge!* ritual of bibliographical and footnote referencing for the tribally totemic. Whether the more recent internationalization of careers through visiting lectureships and research fellowships will simply define yet another institutional variant or represent a more thorough challenge is yet to be seen.

One thing is worth remembering, though. As a quick glance at Anthony Grafton's wickedly funny but deadly earnest remarks on West German and Italian traditions of historiographical footnoting practice will caution, parochialism is hardly the preserve of Portuguese historiography. Not to mention also that, as I am always humbly astonished to learn from that strangely compelling and most parochial of genres, the *Elogios* of the Academia Portuguesa da História, even parochial historiography has not been without its own traditions and strategies of internationalization. Conversely, at least in the British historiographical tradition on Portugal, a certain disregard of historical writing by Portuguese historians long cultivated as a virtue—in the manner of the old Orientalist suspicion of the natives' ability to be objective about their own cultures—has not, I fear, completely disappeared; thus only universalizing one parochialism as the avowed repudiation of another.

I congratulate the editors of the e-journal for promoting this debate. Most of all, because I consider it an important critical reflection upon the very nature and function of this journal. I have followed the discussion with great interest, but also not a little scepticism. For my part, I will limit my comments here to four observations.

Firstly, the terms of reference of the debate have perhaps been defined a little too narrowly. This because, it seems to me, a culture of historical scholarship and research is laid at undergraduate level and a discussion that ignores this fails to address the issue at root. At the risk of sounding a little too *Sérgiano*, the problem passes through the lecturer-student relation and the classroom culture. It is also fundamentally related to the use of bibliographies and libraries rather than anthologised text readers; to class participation and critical engagement, and to overcoming both the *Professor-Assistente* hierarchy and the distance/subservience of the teaching relationship cultivated as a mark of authority. A number of other key considerations justify stretching the discussion back to undergraduate level. One much needed restructuring, I would suggest, is the introduction of combined Degree models, so that students of History of Science, Technology or Medicine or Cultural History have been schooled in History *and* Medicine, or Biology, or Physics or Engineering or Literature or Music or whatever. Another, more fundamental, is a minimum language requirement of two foreign languages, not only stipulated but, more importantly, supported through language teaching for historians (i.e. centred on reading not oral skills).

I agree with those who have argued that the internationalization of Portuguese historiography means historians in Portuguese institutions researching and teaching the history of other countries as specialists schooled in those areas and it is inconceivable that (as at present) this should include historians who do not have language competence in those (especially non-Western, it goes almost without saying) areas. This is one factor in the internationalization of the domestic scene. Limited library resources have constituted a serious obstacle to research and effective teaching in non-Portuguese history. But electronic journal databases have transformed the nature of this problem. Reference-only access and downloadable articles, searchable journal stores and archival collections

progressively reaching further and further back in time have effectively eliminated the main problem; while mega and meta library catalogues and the scope and openness of electronic literature searches, have, quite by themselves, rendered the old closed referencing practices unsustainable. But, and this is my second point, it is just as important to overcome the problems of access to Portuguese history materials. Authors' and private editions, small print Municipality or regional government sponsored editions, or small private foundation and non-government organization publications, subsidized editions with limited distribution and even lesser incentive to distribute, house journals with restricted circulation, the evasion of deposit or copyright library obligations by many publishers, all these and not only the wilful disregard of the work of others constitute very real obstacles to good scholarship. This problem does not, of course, affect the starry few at the top of the profession, nor the lucky few more in the mutual admiration clubs, all of whom can count on their complimentary and signed copies, but the issue of professionalism in Portuguese historiography will hang on the question of nationalising broad academic access much more than upon enforcing the international projection of the few. Correlatively producing electronic versions of Portuguese journals in Portuguese and their back catalogue, nationally and internationally, is just as fundamental to internationalizing Portuguese historiography as broadening access to foreign journals.

My third point is really a very pedestrian one. It is perhaps best stated through a number of petty observations and anecdotes. Outside Portugal, articles on Portuguese journals are not primarily published in specifically History journals. There are Hispanic and Lusophone journals, which by definition tend to be multidisciplinary but weighted towards literature and culture, area studies and comparative studies journals, and social science, cultural studies and other journals, and neither their editorial boards nor advisory panels will necessarily have Portuguese specialists, let alone Portuguese history specialists. They are, though, no less properly refereed and justifiably respected journals in their fields. This leads to some curious effects. I have, for example, turned down an article submitted to one journal I referee for as absolutely unpublishable, on account of its ignorance of the Portuguese bibliography on the topic, only to see it come out in another very reputable international journal half a year later without a single alteration. I have, on another occasion, raised the charge of plagiarism, and bad plagiarism at that, with an article submitted to another journal, which offered a poor caricature of arguments I was familiar with from a Portuguese book published a few years earlier, only to find out that the author of book and article were the very same, but had omitted any reference to the previous Portuguese publication to pass for original, and the loss of the subtleties that had characterised the book and rendered the English version article so poor were actually the fault of the translator. I have also, at times, recommended publication of articles by Portuguese authors in English language journals, none of which said absolutely anything new in relation to their own previous work published in Portuguese, thus breaking the journals' stated rules of publishing only original material, on the excuse that it is new *in English*, so as to bring it to a wider audience. There are other problems. I believe one of the most effective forms and truest expressions of the internationalization of Portuguese historiography is the publication of Portuguese case studies in comparative edited collections (something which Prestage, rather than Boxer, pioneered in English language historiography). Yet, the relative unfamiliarity of the Portuguese material can result in pressure, self imposed or from editors, to provide general introductory summaries, or footnote background to events or personalities referred, but necessarily of such concision that they end up being a travesty of the author's own knowledge of the subject. Correlatively, lack of command of the Portuguese material can sometimes lead reviewers to pass silently over the Portuguese contributions for fear of treading insecurely, thus undoing the very point of including the Portuguese chapters. Internationalization and professionalism — or at least internationalization as *divulgação* and internationalization as professionalism— in other words, do not always go hand in hand. There are two other related points to mention here. No one will say that the publication of Mascarenhas Barreto's *The Portuguese Columbus*, by Macmillan of all publishers, in 1992, represented a breakthrough for the internationalization of Portuguese historiography. It was owed to the logic of the market and a gamble in the quinqucentenary year. But what of Carcanet's publication of José Hermano Saraiva's *Portugal: A Companion History*? Certainly not the logic of the market. Carcanet's 'Aspects of Portugal' is essentially a heavily subsidized showcase series, and Saraiva's volume was

subsidized by the Gulbenkian Foundation, the Instituto Camões, the Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro and Portugal 600. But neither does the subsidizing alone explain it either. The fact is that in the absence of a critical mass of teaching of Portuguese history in non-Portuguese universities or of a broader general readership to sustain commercial publishing, whether we are talking of scholarly monographs, chapters in books, articles in journals, or conference papers, the determining factor at present continues to be the logic of personal networks, established, brokered and filtered through gatekeepers on both sides: foreign scholars with an interest in Portugal and Portuguese scholars with international projection. No amount of statistical analysis of citation indexes and articles can ignore that fact.

Lastly, I cannot help wondering why out of seven historians invited to comment so far no contribution has yet appeared by a woman historian.