

Histories of Portugal

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In 1999, at a conference on the teaching of history promoted by the Portuguese Association of History Teachers, it seemed possible to me to state as follows: “Present-day historiographic practice has not only abandoned the great syntheses of the past, but it has also made it practically impossible to produce smaller syntheses. It calls into question the very notion of “epoch”, and, furthermore, of “period”, that used to form the fundamental bases for the work of reconstructing the past and its interpretation.”² The theme that was chosen for today’s meeting, the fact of our dealing precisely with a recently published synthesis (that of the *History of Portugal* edited by Rui Ramos), and of this having met with great success as a publication, seems to contradict what I considered to be evident at that time. I also wonder if it is still possible to maintain what I said then about the notions of epoch and period.

What is the problem? Is the success enjoyed by this *History of Portugal* proof of the fact that, in this regard, just as in so many others, the Portuguese public and our historians are once again demonstrating an effective cultural “backwardness” in relation to the present-day historiographic guidelines? Or did I, at that stage, misinterpret the signs of the times? Are the syntheses of national histories and the division of history into periods really out of fashion?

Let us look at the facts relating to the History of Portugal. During the period from the beginning of the twentieth century until 1970, or, in other words, for seventy years, I can remember four works published with the same theme: Fortunato de Almeida in six volumes, Alfredo Pimenta in just one volume, António Mattoso in two volumes, João Ameal in one, as well as *The History of Barcelos* in eight. For obvious reasons, I refrain from making any comments on this list. All that I’m interested in is contrasting this situation with what came next. Between 1970 and 1990, there appeared the histories of Oliveira Marques in two volumes (1972-1974) and Hermano Saraiva in just one volume (1978). Twenty years later, i.e. in the period from 1990 until the present day, we find that ten histories have been published, three of them written in English and two in French. Now, in this last period, other histories of Portugal were published, in several volumes, with the collaboration of specialists, covering either longer periods or more specific thematic areas. I am referring to the work edited by Oliveira Marques, the *Nova História de Portugal*, the one that I myself edited and which was published by Círculo de Leitores, and the ones by João Medina and Hermano Saraiva. At another level, I should also like to mention the extraordinary undertaking of Veríssimo Serrão, who succeeded in covering all the periods and all the areas in his seventeen volumes (1978-2008). And there is also the collection of biographies of the kings of Portugal edited by Teodoro de Matos, with its 34 separate

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² “A História hoje: que História ensinar?”, *Obras completas*, Lisbon, Círculo de Leitores, vol. 10, p. 89.

volumes (2004-2006). It seems that the change of the millennium has suddenly afforded the Portuguese Clio a fertility that was quite unexpected, given the advanced age of the muse.

It seems therefore that the writing of historical syntheses is alive and well, at least in the case of histories of Portugal. One may wonder if such production is one of sufficient quality, modern, up-to-date and capable of responding to readers' current demands. Whatever the case, I certainly have to revise what I said eleven years ago about historical syntheses. I should also like to say something about the problem of periodization.

First of all, the syntheses. Looking beyond our borders, what seems to have ceased to interest historians and their readership are those undertakings that sought to cover panoramic themes about the understandability of the past, of the kind that involved histories of mentalities, the family, women, etc. These were works that, sometimes quite brilliantly, tried to correspond to the ideal of "total history" defended by the *Annales* school. As is known, this type of historiography never met with any great acceptance in Anglo-Saxon countries. Having been abandoned by the French themselves since the 1990s, it has since been replaced by these writers, as far as the coverage of particular problematics is concerned, with attempts to revise concepts that the historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries used in an anachronistic fashion, by applying them to previous periods. This is the case with concepts such as "property," "territory," "border," "nationality," "individual conscience" and others of the same nature. Such a situation has given rise to new syntheses that cover entire periods, such as the one written by Jérôme Baschet about the feudal civilization, and above all critical reviews of general formulations, such as the one written by Alain Guerreau about feudalism, by Patrick Geary about nationality, or more radical questionings about the pertinence of the historical reconstruction of an already dead past, such as those written by Gabrielle Spiegel and other authors inspired by the so-called *linguistic turn*.

In the case of national histories, the problem is presented in a special way. In the syntheses of the *Nouvelle histoire*, it was necessary to use concepts whose pertinence was open to discussion (such as those developed in our modern times, when applied to such different worlds as Antiquity or the Middle Ages) to define and interconnect highly fluid and diversified phenomena, with indeterminate subjects or objects, and depending on structures that it was impossible to establish and identify. In national histories, however, the destiny of a defined object is traced over time; in other words, we follow the progress of a group of human beings established in a given territory and subject to a continuous political power. In thematic syntheses, it is difficult to avoid a certain arbitrariness in establishing causal connections and relationships. In national histories, one can follow a narrative sequence that helps to define the object itself. Synthesis even becomes indispensable. It demonstrates the coherence of the collective behavior in whose name it is possible to talk about the nation. The enduring nature of the territory and the transmission of clearly identified powers along one single time line make it possible to construct the national history. Furthermore, the awareness of national identity can be seen, above all, through the formation of historical memory. It is not by chance that nationalist ideologies owe so much to history, and that the national history frequently becomes transformed into myth.

Contrary to what Marxist theory proclaimed, the mythification of national history and its ideological appropriation by nationalist movements do not affect its pertinence.

Although critics highlight the illusory nature of facts such as the miracle of Ourique, or reduce the proportions of an epic exaltation such as the *Lusiads*, what matters is not to deny the amplifications of memory, but to explain their appearance and the role that they played in the collective destiny. Critics call upon historians to explain why their nation endures over the centuries and what keeps it alive. These phenomena can only be understood and explained from a perspective of national history. The synthesis seems to me to be the best way to understand this.

Let us now see how some recent histories of Portugal, written as syntheses, have resolved the problem of the national history. I shall begin by excluding from the range of my comments the more extensive works, or, in other words, those written by Veríssimo Serrão, and those edited by Oliveira Marques, João Medina, Hermano Saraiva and myself. In these, the collaboration of many authors, frequently with different criteria, is prejudicial to the synthetic nature of the work. The history edited by Oliveira Marques took as its model the university textbook, such as those produced by Cambridge or by Clio, i.e. it presents a great deal of data and information, offers a copious bibliography and attempts to cover all sectors. The one that I was responsible for editing sought to make interpretive syntheses by periods, but it only partially achieved this aim. The heterogeneity of the work directed by João Medina is also quite evident. One positive aspect of this diversity is the fact that readers can find objective information and descriptive data in the *Nova História* by Oliveira Marques and interpretive panoramas or reflections on problematic questions in the other two collections. Before moving on to my analysis, however, I wish to underline the difficulty of historical synthesis. Deliberately excluded from the program outlined by Oliveira Marques, it was only partly achieved by some collaborators in the other two collections.

Therefore leaving this group of works to one side, I now wish to refer to the historical syntheses published in one or two volumes, or, in other words, to the works by Rui Ramos, Nuno Monteiro and Bernardo de Vasconcelos (2009), J.-F. Labourdette (2000), A. R. Disney (2009) and M. Newitt (2009). In order to be complete, I should perhaps also examine earlier works, such as those by D. Birmingham (1993), Y. Bottineau (1977), Carmo Reis (1999), Oliveira Marques (1972) and Hermano Saraiva, in his two versions from 1978 and 1993; but I was more interested in trying to understand the trends that have begun to develop recently.

I shall begin by referring to a significant point: Rui Ramos and his collaborators did not attempt to master the whole of the historical subject. Rui Ramos wrote the text relating to 1807-2008, which is his area of research, and entrusted the rest to two specialists, one for the Middle Ages and another for the Modern Age. He was careful enough to choose authors with conceptions of history that were similar to his own in order to achieve the necessary interpretive unity. In fact, they all follow a narrative line that is based on political facts; they seek to explain what happened at the national level with the help of economic and social facts; they reveal the concrete indicators on which they base their explanations of the facts; they refer to the essential facts about the institutions that were peculiar to each period; and they briefly point out the most significant cultural manifestations at the times when these occurred. They attempt to assess what happened by basing their analyses on quantitative information, such as demographic indicators, the volume of economic production, imports and exports, the evolution of GDP, and other data of the same kind;

they take care to check on the country's regional differences, whenever these gaps are significant. In short, they provide an account of the role played by the leading actors, making use, whenever possible, of particularly expressive contemporary testimonies, as brushstrokes illustrating personal actions. Furthermore, they have avoided making value judgments about figures who until the end of the period of the Salazar regime served as ideological standard bearers not only for republicans but also for monarchists and other traditionalists, without, on the other hand, attempting to conceal somewhat less edifying episodes of their behavior and performance. In this way, they have succeeded in achieving a great interpretive unity. They therefore demonstrate the same idea about what is important and what is secondary in history, and about the correlation between political, social and economic facts. They see history as the narrative of a common action and not as an enumeration of data, a discussion of theses, an ideological justification or an account of individual actions. They have opted for the presentation of a simple text, devoid of artificial emphases or rhetorical devices, and they have taken every possible care over the writing. In this way, the diversity of the authorship and the specificity of the historical periods have been overcome by the unity of conception, the mastery of the historical material and the quality of the form. And that is some achievement.

These qualities are particularly noticeable when we compare the book with those written by Labourdette and Newitt. As they are both specialists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they are not very familiar with the earlier periods, so that for these times their syntheses are poorly written, biased or, at the very least, debatable. Sometimes, they make basic mistakes, as happens with Labourdette, who uses the name *Tanque* to refer to Tariq, the Arab leader of the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, and translates the term *legists* as "legislators." At various stages, the Portuguese proofreader found himself obliged to correct erroneous information given by the author in identifying characters and events. In the case of Newitt, for example, it can be seen that, by passing from the conquest of Lisbon in 1147 to Portugal's involvement in the Hundred Years' War, he reveals his lack of interest in the relationship of Portuguese history with the history of Europe and the world in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, thus contradicting what he announces in the title of his book. The narrative of the conquest of Lisbon is a mere pretext for adding some more pages to his work.

These remarks show that when one seeks to cover several historical periods, it is better to entrust their writing to different authors rather than to just one person. History has become far too complex a discipline for it to be easy for just one author to capture the essential qualities of different epochs, and to present correct syntheses about all of them. In fact, despite the sheer amount of facts and information that are to be found in the seventeen volumes written by Veríssimo Serrão, and the merits of his undertaking, it would be senseless to quote him as an authority on medieval matters. It is a different case with Disney, however, who is a specialist on the modern period and international relations. He also deals with the Portuguese past from its origins until the present day, but I do have to acknowledge, in this case, that he demonstrates a correct knowledge of medieval political facts; however, what he has to say about the society, economy and culture of the same period is nothing more than a series of banalities.

I should now like to mention another type of specialization. Labourdette and Newitt are only interested in political history. The former retains more details in his

synthesis than the latter, which makes his exposition rather heavy and unclear: they both manage to achieve a reasonable integration of Portuguese history into the international history of the modern era; yet, on the other hand, they both ignore the repercussions of social and economic facts upon political life. Disney, who attempts to deal with all aspects of the past in each historical epoch, from pre-history to the present day, reduces to the bare bones what he says about the organization of the court, the royal administration, the organization of the boroughs (*concelhos*), the struggle between the civil power and the spiritual power, etc. On this subject, I should like to express the opinion that matters dating from before the foundation of the Portuguese nationality must be dealt with in an Iberian context and not in a national context, for the simple reason that the nation did not yet exist. The little that we know about the Portuguese Visigoths is based more on the history of the Visigoths as a whole than upon the actual sources relating to the north-east of the peninsula; the Portuguese Roman past can only be understood within the context of the Roman history of Iberia.

As a conclusion to these comparisons, I would say that it is preferable to run the risk of prejudicing the interpretive unity, by attributing each period to its own author, than to fill pages uselessly or deceptively with information that the more enlightened readers quite reasonably prefer to look for in syntheses written exclusively about specific periods. In my opinion, the current state of development of modern-day historiography calls for a specialization in historical periods, in a way that has ceased to be accessible to those attempting to write a more general history. It is true that this opinion may be disputed by the defenders of certain criticisms of modern-day historiography, such as those made by Gabrielle Spiegel, which, amongst other things, call into question the very notion of historical “periods.” The pertinence of some of her criticisms does little to help us find a solid and practical solution to this problem. Periodization does not depend only on historians but also on their readers. The notion of the “Middle Ages” has become so spontaneous and includes such a large quantity of other notions that it seems impossible to create a new conceptual system that is capable of accounting for the phenomena that were peculiar to that time without resorting to such unfounded generalizations as this one itself, or even worse. Without denying that we need to revise some of our common ideas, I believe that this happens above all in the thematic specializations of research and not so much in epochal specialization. In questions such as this, we need to exercise some common sense. It is best not to confuse research with dissemination. Deeper investigative study may not have immediate repercussions on dissemination and synthesis. Furthermore, not everything that we find in the new historiographic fashions is good. Before preaching the revisionist gospel, it is advisable to know exactly what it is that this calls into question. As Agostinho da Silva used to say, “don’t let yourself be overimpressed by something new that appears; don’t afford it an absolute place of honor, but rather gauge it according to the scale that the past provides you with; being modern... means not allowing everything eternal that the present offers to lose its soul.”

Let us now look at another question raised by the intellectual training and nationality of the authors. It is asked whether the Anglo-Saxon background in which Disney and Newitt were trained, or the French background of Labourdette, bring them any advantages or disadvantages as authors of works about an alien country, such as Portugal. They are not, of course—not by a long shot—the first foreign authors to write about our

country. We all know of historians of other nationalities who have specialized in Portuguese historical research. It is sufficient to mention C. Erdmann and Pierre David for the Middle Ages, Boxer for the modern period, Robert Smith for the Portuguese and Brazilian baroque. They are, however, researchers. Can we say the same in the case of less specialized works? It is logical to admit that a foreigner who is well informed about international history may be better able than a Portuguese historian to solve the problems arising from Portugal's political, economic or cultural relations with other countries. This seems to me to be precisely one of the positive aspects of the works by Disney and Newitt, especially for the modern era, about which they are both very knowledgeable.

In fact, until almost the very end of the twentieth century, one of the negative aspects of Portuguese historiography was the way that we conceived of our past as a closed circuit. Little is known about the history of the Iberian kingdoms. Only much later was it understood, for example, that the wars with Castile in the time of Dom Fernando and Dom João I had to be included within the scope of the Hundred Years' War. Portugal's participation in the European wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was afforded less attention than the cultural works of Dom João V or Pombal's anti-Jesuit policy. Great importance was given to the seventeenth-century skirmishes with the French and Dutch in Brazil and Angola and to the loss of the seaborne empire in the East to the English, but without mentioning the debt that the Portuguese resistance owed to the Spanish administration during the Iberian Union. As it happens, these criticisms do not apply to the English and French works that we are commenting on. Problems of this type, which were customary in Portuguese historiography before the 1960s, now seem to me to have been overcome, thanks to the internationalization of research. Knowledge of the Spanish, French, English or American bibliography has become an indispensable requisite in any work of history, whichever period is being dealt with. It is not surprising therefore that, as far as this point is concerned, Rui Ramos' synthesis can perfectly well bear comparison with those of Labourdette, Disney or Newitt.

I should also like to mention the state of specialist Portuguese research, in order to arrive at a global understanding of our history. Do the syntheses that are currently available give us a complete, coherent and precise panorama of our past? Regretting my incompetence in matters relating to the other two periods, I am obliged, in this regard, to restrict myself to the medieval period. In order to say something about this, it is not enough to have a general knowledge of the periods and the problems. I shall therefore refer only to the chapters written by Bernardo de Vasconcelos e Sousa in the *History of Portugal* published by Esfera dos Livros, anticipating the next session of this meeting, which is dedicated to the medieval period.

I have no hesitation in saying that the text by Bernardo de Vasconcelos is clearly of a much higher quality than the corresponding part of the French, Australian and English works that serve as our reference. All that remains is to ask if I consider them to be totally impeccable. I must begin by saying that he was kind enough to allow me to read his text before it was published, and that he took into account the few remarks that I made to him. In fact, I didn't see any reason to alter his views and I didn't discover any important gap. It seemed to me to be a synthesis that I myself might have written, and which nicely resolved a difficulty that is peculiar to the medieval period, namely that of having to deal with institutional, social and economic questions that can only be explained over a long time

span. I believe that he managed to link these aspects most satisfactorily with the development of political events. Only after re-reading them in printed form did I notice what seemed to me to be a weak point: the role of the Church. In this case, however, the insufficient coverage of this aspect does not result from the author's incapacity, but from the state of Portuguese research: some essential questions related with the religious factor have never been properly explained amongst Portuguese historians. In fact, the religious history of Portugal is reasonably well known for the twelfth century, but a lot of research is still needed about the history of the Church from the thirteenth century to the Council of Trent.

For this period, the available bibliography is completely out of date. It essentially consists of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century monastic chronicles that, above all, were interested in the glorious deeds of the respective order or congregation, which gave rise to numerous falsifications and abusive interpretations, further exacerbated by the ignorance of the auxiliary sciences and the absence of any critical appraisal of the sources. The exceptions to this rule are rare, and, when they do exist, they transmit information that is highly incomplete. The nineteenth century produced practically nothing in this sector, except in regard to the rationalist criticisms that were made—normally rather ferocious and summary in nature, and generally more interested in denigrating the Church than in understanding the past. The first half of the twentieth century brought the first reactions on the Catholic side, but the apologetic stance that the authors adopted in seeking to respond to the anti-clerical offensive frequently proved to be either inadequate or partial in nature. Little more was produced than Fortunato de Almeida's *História da Igreja em Portugal*, which is a compilation of the information provided by the previous chronicles, classified into self-contained and watertight sectors, without any obvious links being established between politics and society, its institutions or culture. Apart from Fortunato, whose work was published during the period of the fiercest attacks against the Portuguese Church, we only have the works of Monsignor José Ferreira about the Archdiocese of Braga and the Diocese of Porto, Monsignor José de Castro about the Dioceses of Bragança and Miranda, and Father Francisco Rodrigues about the Society of Jesus. And that is practically all. Beginning in the 1950s, some monographs and journal articles began to appear, including those that were published by the journal *Lusitania Sacra*, and there were also some works written about the Portuguese Padroado in the Far East; but no work looking at the whole subject-matter was ever published, except for the extremely elementary and never replaced textbook written by Monsignor Miguel de Oliveira. Finally, all that is left for me to mention is the recent *História Religiosa de Portugal*, published by the Center of Religious History Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal, which, nonetheless, at least for the Middle Ages, continues not to answer essential questions.

It will be sufficient to mention the comprehensive nature of questions that require in-depth research in order to understand the Church's influence on our national history. Above all else, there is the problem of the relationship between the spiritual power and the temporal power, which is known about through the violent confrontations that took place throughout the thirteenth century. It is impossible to accept the point of view of the agnostic historiography that turned our kings into courageous predecessors of the liberal governments of the nineteenth century. Following in the footsteps of Herculano, those who continued his approach were content to make episodic quotations handpicked from

papal bulls, dispensing with the need to rigorously establish the facts, while ignoring the profound reasons for the conflict and putting everything down to the greed of the clergy. They did not attempt to investigate the development of the administration of dioceses, the setting up of episcopal curias, the application of canon law, the organization of the network of parishes, the strategies of the papacy, the role of the mendicant orders, or the relationship between the bishops and the untouchable religious orders.

This last point deserves to be stressed. The Franciscans and Dominicans exerted a great influence over religious practice, as well as the conceptions of morality and the cultural and social role of the Church, both from the point of view of doctrine and as the mediators of the relationship between the congregation and the Church hierarchy. These themes have been well studied at the level of Christianity. But what role did they play in Portugal? Did the Franciscans and the Dominicans intervene in any way in the conflict between the kings and the bishops? Or did they remain passive throughout this institutional battle? From what is known so far, they do not seem to have played a particularly leading role in events. Why was this? Did the conflict so absorb the attention of all the different sectors of the Church that it led to a withering away of all other religious activities? Can this circumstance explain the weak influence that they seem to have had on Portuguese social and cultural life, when they played such an important role at the level of Christianity? Can we reasonably understand thirteenth-century Portuguese history without clarifying these points?

Let us look at another example of the inadequacy of the Portuguese historical synthesis caused by the lack of any mature research. Traditional historiography presents the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as periods of great religious decadence. Indiscipline and corruption, it is said, were rife in the religious orders, the priesthood regularly had concubines, the bishops set bad examples, the Roman Curia maintained an abusive system for the purchase of privileges, the trade in pardons became scandalous, the Western Schism brought discredit to the papacy, piety was channeled into a devotion for superstitious practices and strange forms of worship, the Inquisition spread witchcraft through torture, etc., etc. It was only after the Council of Trent that better days were to come. This thick screen of generalizations does, however, conceal realities that our historians have completely overlooked. Without it being necessary to ignore well documented facts about the effective corruption of a part of the clergy and the venality of the pontifical Curia, it should be remembered that the introduction into Portugal of the order of Observant Franciscans with their strictly run hermitages dated from the late fourteenth century, and that their determined fight for ascetic discipline gradually overcame the resistance of the Conventual Franciscans until they managed to achieve the unification of the order. And furthermore that, around the same time, there appeared in Portugal, originating from Spain, the new order of the Hieronymites, who combined intellectual study with the austere discipline that was common in deserted places. In the same years, two other typically Portuguese orders were founded, the *Lóios* or the canons of St. John the Evangelist, who also set great store by scholarly study and discipline, and the hermits of Serra de Ossa, a poor and simple order that came about in a popular and spontaneous fashion, but who organized themselves into a more institutional form during the fifteenth century. We should also mention the Dominicans, whose reformed branch was protected by João das Regras and who were entrusted by Dom João I with the custody of the Monastery of

Batalha. Now, it was against such a background that Dom João II founded the Hospital de Todos os Santos and began the reform of the hospitals and brotherhoods that would be continued by Dom Manuel I; that Dona Leonor created the charitable institutions known as the *Misericórdias*; that many nobles founded chapels where they worshipped in memory of their own lineages; that the Books of Hours were disseminated amongst the lay population; that the liturgy of Salisbury was introduced into the royal court; that some bishops began to make visits to their dioceses; that the first parish records were created; that the catechisms appeared in everyday language; that relations were intensified between the most active sectors of the Portuguese Reformation and those of the Italian Reformation, in which the abbot Gomes of Florence played such a vital role; that, finally, certain cores of resistance were to be found that opposed this movement, amongst which was the one directed by the Archbishop of Braga, Dom Fernando da Guerra. It was also in this same context that the king of Portugal attempted to control the issue of pontifical documents setting up the controversial system of “royal consent,” whose meaning cannot be explained solely by political reasons, and even less so by anti-clerical ones.

There was, therefore, a wide-ranging religious movement in Portugal that urgently needs to be studied in depth and as a diversified whole. This could also include what certain historiographers have referred to as the “pre-reformation” period. It would be limiting to consider it to be an exclusively religious problem. Besides having significant aspects from the point of view of both culture and mentalities, it also involved the royal court and broad sectors of society, and it altered the ecclesiastical organization, revealing important facts in the domain of international relations. It shows a social vitality and a cultural originality that have rarely been achieved in Portugal (can Fernão Lopes, Gil Vicente or Nuno Gonçalves be understood without a full knowledge of the backdrop that I have been referring to?). It demonstrates a kind of collective energy that must inevitably be related to the expansion into Morocco, the occupation of the Atlantic islands and the exploration of the African coast. Jaime Cortesão, who very clearly understood some of its aspects, spoke about “Franciscanism” and related it to the cult of the Holy Spirit. Other Portuguese historians studying the Low Middle Ages either noticed none of this or were afraid to explore a forest that was far too thick for them. As for the historians of the Church, who were influenced both by the Protestant vision and the Catholic reaction, these based their studies on the principle that the ecclesiastical reformation only seriously began with the Council of Trent. They therefore ignored the positive aspects of religious feeling in the Low Middle Ages. Neither Catholic nor agnostic historians have realized its importance for understanding the fifteenth century in Portugal. Yet, until such time as modern research begins to investigate this question in such a way that it can be understood as a whole, it will not be possible to fill in this gap in our history.

Since I am now talking about the fifteenth century, I should also like to mention, from another perspective, the place that histories of Portugal have tended to give to the voyages of exploration along the African coast. All of our historians are seriously concerned about these, carefully enumerating the places that were discovered, their leading figures and the royal policy with regard to this issue. I should like to ask if the place that has since been set aside for these obviously important facts (which certainly were not understood as such previously, other than by a small minority of people) is not the result of a teleological conception of history. Or, in other words, the importance that we now give

to this question results from what we know to have happened afterwards. I doubt whether contemporaries, even those who actually sponsored the voyages, could imagine the consequences that they would have in the distant future. The Portuguese presence in Morocco was probably a much more important matter for the Portuguese society of that time: it involved more people, required a greater allocation of resources, had serious consequences for the life of those participating in this enterprise, were they soldiers, merchants, government officers, criminals, priests or women, called for the taking of some of the most controversial political and economic decisions, implied more contacts with international powers, caused more losses of life, inspired more records in the written memory of the period, and exerted a greater influence on the public administration, the legal system and military organization. It can now be understood why the historians of our time, knowing in advance that the Portuguese fortresses in Morocco had their days numbered, have paid less attention to the facts relating to these than they have to the overseas voyages, whose consequences were to bring much greater changes to the world than the Portuguese presence in Morocco. I believe that the difference in perspective, determined by the teleological context and not by the point of view of its leading figures, also has a decisive influence on the history that we must write. In the first case, one looks at the situation from the outside, in the second case one looks at it from within. On this very subject, I cannot avoid mentioning that A. Disney did, in fact, give more importance to these matters than does the *History of Portugal* edited by Rui Ramos. This is one of the rare points in which this latter work seems to me to be less successful than one of the other histories that I have examined for this talk.

We cannot forget, however, that a synthesis is a synthesis. By mentioning this self-evident truth, I merely wish to say that a synthesis requires its author to make choices, that choices inevitably lead to omissions, and that omissions in turn invite criticisms. Most choices do not need to be justified. One is free to choose the vantage point from which one looks at the past. There are various points of view that are equally legitimate and necessary. In an atmosphere of intellectual development, diversity is natural and beneficial. It expresses the strict demands and the fertile nature of intellectual debate and scientific debate. That is what we are here for. I should now like to hear your opinions.

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³ This list was prepared by the editors. When an author is quoted in the text without any mention to a particular work, only one reference title is given.

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