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**The Centenary of the Republic and the Republic of Letters:
Arabic Studies in Portugal 1910–2010**

Abstract

The present essay deals with a specific phase in which Arabic language has been introduced as a new discipline in the university curriculum in Portugal. From 1914 until 1974 it was taught practically in only one university, after 1974 new universities were created and some of them have included this discipline in their curricula mainly as an optional subject or a free course model. We shall analyse the conditions in which its study has been carried out and the principal factors that contributed to the advancement of this discipline. This essay is based on the bibliography listed below that covers a significant part of the chronology considered and is complemented by recollection of information from scattered sources of differentiated reliability, pamphlets issued by universities and other institutions and in some cases on oral basis only. Therefore certain gaps or inaccuracy of dates may involuntarily occur.

The proclamation of the Portuguese Republic on October 5th 1910 influenced the country's evolution in multiple ways. Among others it had a deep impact on culture and education. The latter underwent many structural changes and one of them was the creation of the Lisbon University (*Universidade de Lisboa*, 1911)¹ that evolved from a former body of the *Curso Superior de Letras* putting thus an end to Coimbra's monopoly in the academic landscape of Portugal and introducing new disciplines taught at university level. This applied also to Arabic language as a chair of it was established at the Lisbon University in 1914.

¹ Decree published at the *Diário do Governo*, nº 109, May 11th 1911.

This decision changed completely the hitherto practice followed in Portugal as far as teaching of Arabic was concerned. Compared to other European countries Portugal was a new comer in this field despite its longstanding contacts with Arab-Islamic realities first in its own territory as far as today's Portugal made part of the al-Andalus (714/716–1249) and where a part of Muslim population remained after the end of the reconquest formally until 1521. Furthermore in the wake of the Portuguese overseas expansion (Ceuta, 1415) new contacts with Arabs and Muslims in Africa and Asia arose in which Arabic was widely used as a language of diplomacy and trade.

The first chair of Arabic language was instituted in 1772 and functioned during five years only to be restored in 1794². Portugal offers a unique case in the European context in which Arabic language was taught exclusively in the framework of an ecclesiastical institution namely within the Franciscan order at the Convent of the *Nossa Senhora de Jesus* at Lisbon. The teachers and principal Arabists were friars. The interest in Arabic language and its teaching at that time derived from a very specific political conjuncture of a new diplomatic relationship with the Barbary states and it required people skilled not only in Arabic language but also knowledgeable in political, religious and economic matters of this region³. The chair of Arabic functioned with much success up to the 30ties of the 19th century and afterwards with some ups and downs and two reorganizations until 1869 when it became formally abolished because considered of no direct interest for the Portuguese diplomacy focussed at that time on the Sub-Saharan Africa⁴.

Despite this abrupt shift that occurred in the orientation of Portugal's policies towards the Maghreb, it was the diplomatic sector that still showed interest in Arabic studies in the wake of monarchic diplomats like the Colaço family⁵. At the beginning of the 20th century José de Esaguy⁶ continued this erudite tradition researching history of Portuguese-Moroccan relations⁷, promoted archaeological excavations at the Wadi al-Makhazin (1938–1939) and prepared practical manuals for learning Arabic⁸.

The institution of the chair of Arabic language at the Faculty of Letters in 1914 brought this subject for the first time at the university forum in Portugal⁹. David

² J. Figaniér (1949), passim; A. Sidarus (1986).

³ E.-M. von Kemnitz (2010), passim.

⁴ The two reorganizations occurred in: 1836 and 1844. The Decree that abolished the course of Arabic was issued on December 18th 1869, published in the *Diário do Governo* of December 23rd 1869. Cf.: L.F. Thomaz (1996), p. 391; E.-M. von Kemnitz (2010), pp. 371–378 and 511–516.

⁵ J. Forjaz (2004), passim; E.-M. von Kemnitz (2010), pp. 308–315; 535–536.

⁶ José de Esaguy (1899–1944), graduated from the Political Sciences Department at the Toulouse University, appointed chancellor of the Portuguese consulate at Tanger in 1934. Member of the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* and of the *Instituto de Coimbra*. Cf: *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. IX, pp. 981–982; L.J. da Costa (1938), p. 6.

⁷ *Marrocos (Marrocos Misterioso, Histórico e Monumental)* (1933); *Relato Inédito sobre o Desembarque d'El Rei D. Sebastião em Tânger* (1935); *Cartas do Diplomata Jorge Pedro Colaço* (1937).

⁸ *Vocabulário Português-Arabe* (1936) and *Elementos de Gramática Árabe* (1936).

⁹ To be exact we have to mention the appointment of Paulo Hodar as professor of Hebrew and Arabic at the University of Coimbra in 1773. In fact he never taught Arabic for the lack of students interested in the subject. Cf.: M.A. Rodrigues (1971), p. XXXIII; M.A. Rodrigues (1985), p. 5.

Lopes¹⁰ was the professor appointed¹¹ and given the above mentioned circumstances his academic preparation in this field was naturally obtained abroad. He took his degree in Arabic at the *Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes* in Paris and pursued his studies at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes* (1889–1892)¹². His stay in Paris made him acquainted with new methodologies of linguistic and historical research. Already for the 10th Congress of the Orientalists convened at Lisbon in 1892¹³ he prepared his first study published by the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa – Extractos da Conquista do Yaman pelos Othomanos. Contribuições para a História do Estabelecimento dos Portugueses na Índia* (1892). His principal interests and research were centred on philology and history of the Portuguese presence in Morocco and in the Orient mainly in the 16th century. In this field David Lopes published a lot. Here we shall mention only his most relevant publications¹⁴: *História dos Portugueses no Malabar* (1898); *Textos em Ajamia Portuguesa* (1897 and 2nd revised and updated version in 1940); *Anais de Arzila de Bernardo Rodrigues* (1920); *História de Arzila durante o Domínio Portugues* (1925); *Les Sources Inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc* (1939); *Cousas Luso-Marroquinas* (1942).

His close contacts with other scholars and scientific bodies projected his writings for an enlarged international audience and his regular participation in international congresses made his name known and his work appreciated abroad. The early recognition of his merit led to a honourable invitation to participate in a large-scale project on sources for the history of Morocco present in foreign archives developed by his colleagues Pierre de Cénival and Robert Ricard in France. David Lopes was also a member of important national and foreign scholarly bodies like the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* (1906), the *Academia de Historia de Madrid* and the *Académie Arabe de Damas*¹⁵.

His activity as professor of Arabic at the Faculty of Letters, post that he held until 1937, contributed largely to stirring up interest in Arabic and in Arab culture and history among his students. His successor Joaquim Figanier originated from this group. Some other among David Lopes' students enriched the country's scholarly stage with many valuable contributions concerning the history of the Portugal's Islamic period and in the field of philological studies¹⁶.

¹⁰ David de Melo Lopes (1867–1842), usually referred to as David Lopes. After his return to Portugal he obtained his degree in Romanic Philology in 1895 and worked initially as professor of French language and literature until 1914. Cf.: R. Ricard (1945), p. 8. provides a list of principal publications of David Lopes.

¹¹ Decree of August 17th 1914 published in the *Diário do Governo*, nº 205, 2nd Series of September 2nd 1914.

¹² R. Ricard (1945), p. 7; *Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura*, s/d, vol. XII, p. 494.

¹³ Short before the date established for the opening the Lisbon Congress was cancelled. The so called “anti-10th Congress” took place in London in the same year. Cf.: J.D. Ramos (1996), p. 135; E.-M. von Kemnitz (2010), pp. 507–509.

¹⁴ For the complete list of David Lopes' publications see: J.P. Machado (1967), pp. 125–129; J.A. Freiras Gonçalves (2007), pp. 70–71.

¹⁵ J. Figanier (1945), p. 135; R. Ricard (1945), pp. 12–13.

¹⁶ Let us mention: Luis Filipe Lindley Cintra, José Pedro Machado, José D. Garcia Domingues, Francisco José Veloso.

The premature death of Abílio Roseira in 1935¹⁷, made David Lopes indicate another of his students to pursue the specialization in this field. It was Joaquim Figanier¹⁸ who was granted a two years scholarship that enabled him to study at the *Institut des Hautes Etudes Marocaines* in Rabat. Upon his return to Portugal he taught at the Lisbon University in 1938–1939, again in 1941–1942 having obtained his appointment as professor in 1943¹⁹. In 1946 the chair of Arabic was transferred to the *Instituto de Linguas Africanas e Orientais* that emerged as result of the reorganization of the *Escola Superior Colonial* preparing overseas officers staff substituted by the *Instituto de Ciencias Sociais e Política Ultramarina* in which Professor Figanier taught Arabic with some interruptions until 1959²⁰. His teaching at an irregular basis at the university had naturally a corollary in the difficulty of developing a regular university career that had impact on the output of his scholarly production. Despite this not comfortable situation Joaquim Figanier published extensively on Arabic studies in Portugal producing a general encompassing essay on the subject (1945)²¹ and another monographic study dedicated to the pioneer of Arab studies Friar João de Sousa and his epoch (1949)²². Like his master and predecessor he paid much attention to the Portuguese expansion in North Africa having produced a historical study on Agadir (1945)²³. Furthermore he was author of a comprehensive numismatic study (1952)²⁴.

After his retirement the teaching of Arabic followed an irregular pattern. From 1968 on António Dias Farinha continued it for a short period of time at the same institution.

In the meantime the chair of Arabic was restored at the University of Lisbon²⁵ but in reality the course began only in 1965 with Pedro Cunha Serra²⁶. This scholar studied in Madrid having obtained his Ph.D. degree in 1961 at the Faculty of Philosophy

¹⁷ Abílio Manuel Roseira (1898–1935) took his degree in Arabic at the *Escuela de Estudios Arabes in Madrid*. Cf.: J.P. Machado (1964), p. 30; J.P. Machado (1973), pp. 470–475; A. Dias Farinha (1978), pp. 302–303.

¹⁸ Joaquim Fernando Abreu Figanier (1898–1962). Cf.: R. Ricard (1962); See a short bibliographic note by Dias Farinha in *Catálogo da Biblioteca Joaquim Figanier* (1972), pp. IX–XI.

¹⁹ J. Figanier (1945), p. 138.

²⁰ These interruptions were due to the accumulations of other functions at the secondary school level that did not permit him fully develop his research. Robert Ricard, a French scholar, transmitted this testimony: *Il [Figanier] laisse le souvenir d'un parfait honnête homme que des circonstances défavorables empêchèrent de remplir tout son mérite et à qui nous devons une estime et une gratitude particulières pour l'effort scientifique qu'il ne relâcha jamais dans des conditions parfois ingrates et difficiles*. Cf.: R. Ricard (1962), p. 468.

²¹ *Contribuição para o estudo da cultura arábica em Portugal*.

²² *Frei João de Sousa, Mestre e Interprete da Língua Árábica*.

²³ *História de Santa Cruz de Cabo de Gué (Agadir)*.

²⁴ *Les Monnaies de Quatorze Dynasties Musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord*.

²⁵ In 1957.

²⁶ Pedro Cunha Serra (1919–2002). Graduated from the Department of Classical Philology at the University of Lisbon (1943). Cf: A. Sidarus (2005), *Necrologicas – Pedro Maria da Rocha Cunha Serra (1919–2002)*, “Aljamia”, nº 17, Universidad de Oviedo, pp. 49–55. This brief obituary notice comprises also a listing of his principal publications.

and Letters with his dissertation on: *Contribuição topo-antroponímica para o estudo do povoamento do noroeste peninsular*, published in 1967²⁷. His specialization was centred on philological studies and mainly on toponymy that contributed to a better exploitation of Arabic and Latin sources concerning early settlements during the Islamic period²⁸. Pedro Cunha Serra held his position until his retirement in 1988.

It was António Dias Farinha²⁹ who followed into his footsteps. In order to ensure the continuity of the Arabic chair at the University of Lisbon (*Universidade de Lisboa*) he resigned from his post at the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*. Historian, physician and Arabist Dias Farinha also studied Arabic abroad at the *Ecole Nationale des Langues Vivantes* in Paris 1964–1967³⁰. His research regards mainly the overseas expansion in Morocco: *História de Mazagão durante o domínio Filipino* (1970), *Os xarifes de Marrocos-Notas sobre a Expansão portuguesa no Norte de África* (1983); *Portugal e Marrocos no século XV* (1990) and *Os Portugueses em Marrocos* (1999)³¹. Apart from his university activities Dias Farinha served as Secretary General of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon and for his academic achievements was awarded a Golden Medal for Culture by the ALECSO (2006)³². Many of his students carry out research in the field of history with much success but none of them is an Arabist properly said. Dias Farinha's retirement from the University in 2010 leaves the issue of his succession open and raises again the question of the future of the Arabic chair³³ at the *Universidade de Lisboa*.

The prospect does not seem very bright as the impossibility or incapacity to develop an enlarged curriculum over the past years including diversified subjects like Arabic history, literature, sociology, arts, Islam and contemporary issues of the Arab-Islamic world is in fact a regrettable failure. The University that accepted the challenge by instituting the chair of Arabic in 1914 apparently did not know how to cope with it as Arabic has always been an optional subject integrated in the Department of History and History of Overseas Expansion but never a subject on his own capable of encouraging and implementing an independent development. The most blatant issue is the chronic lack of human resources produced by the university to run teaching and promote research in this field.

²⁷ A letter by Pedro Cunha Serra addressed to the author of this paper, dated May 12th 1986.

²⁸ Among his most relevant publications we should single out: *Alguns Topónimos Peninsulares de Origem Árábica* (1967, 1981); *Sobre a intercultura entre Mouros e cristãos* (1973); *A Influência Árabe na Península Ibérica: Aspectos da sua Dimensão e Profundidade* (1986).

²⁹ António Dias Farinha (born 1940, Lisbon).

³⁰ E.-M. von Kemnitz (1987), p. 33.

³¹ Dias Farinha edited and prefaced an important 17th century chronicle *Crónica de Almansor, Sultão de Marrocos (1578–1603)* by António Saldanha (1997) and published also works of philological nature: *Contribuição para o estudo das palavras portuguesas derivadas do árabe hispânico* (1974) and *A civilização árabe na obra de Alexandre Herculano* (1977).

³² The ceremony took place at the Academy of Sciences on June 5th 2006. Cf.: The invitation issued by the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*. In 1834 this institution inherited the building and the library of the former Convent of the *Nossa Senhora de Jesus* – the first institution in Portugal that offered classes of Arabic.

³³ In the meantime renamed the *Instituto de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos David Lopes* but offers practically no more than Arabic classes and some elements of history related to the *Al-Andalus* and the Portuguese overseas expansion.

This brief evocation of the history of the Arabic chair at the University of Lisbon does not cover however the whole panorama of Arabic studies in the country. In 1965 the teaching of Arabic was restored at the University of Coimbra the classes being given according to existing and very variable demand by Manuel Augusto Rodrigues, a Hebraist and Arabist.

1964 can be viewed as a turning mark in the overall process as it marks the beginning of institutionalised dissemination of Arab Islamic issues outside the structure of the university. The first centre of this kind was the Section of Luso-Arabic Studies established in the framework of the venerable *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*³⁴ that has pursued lectures and conferences with differentiated regularity. At the same time surfaced another body the *Circulo David Lopes* named after the aforementioned Arabist that promoted activities related to Arab culture and edited publications focussing on Arab heritage of the country³⁵.

In this context the organization of the 4th Congress of Arab and Islamic Studies in Lisbon and Coimbra in 1968 was an event of some importance. It provided occasion for renewed proposals of the urging necessity of fostering Arabic studies in Portugal and further enhance the knowledge of its Arab-Islamic legacy³⁶.

The institution of the *Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa* in 1968 representing the Sunni community constituted another important moment with far reaching effects as far as among its objectives the teaching of Arabic and the dissemination of knowledge of Islam as religion and culture were included. Its founder Suleyman Valy Mamede³⁷ was a lawyer and a tireless defender of the Muslim cause in the Portuguese press. He edited the first magazine devoted to issues of Islam and Arab culture in Portuguese 1968–1994 and founded the *Centro Português de Estudos Islâmicos* in 1988. The presence and the growth of this Muslim community constituted by Portuguese Muslims from the overseas territories that chose to settle in continental Portugal after 1974 had some impact on the visibility of issues related to Islam either in the national context or at a later stage as related to international perception of Islam.

A decisive change occurred in 1974 with the *Carnations Revolution* that on one hand led to the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Arab countries followed by economic and cultural exchange and on the other hand like the previous revolution of 1910 it influenced the reorganization of university structures. Subsequently the so

³⁴ This institution founded in 1875 to foster the scientific exploration of Africa and specially that of the Portuguese African Colonies was the institution that convened the 10th International Congress of Orientalists to Lisbon in 1892 and supported Oriental studies through publication of many works in this field. Cf.: J.D. Ramos (1996), p. 135; E.-M. von Kemnitz (2010), 507–509.

³⁵ Created due to the initiative of José Pedro Machado it had unfortunately a short lived existence 1964–1970 as many other cultural institutions in Portugal.

³⁶ See the intervention of Manuel Augusto Rodrigues at the closing session. Cf.: *ACTAS do IV Congresso de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos* (1971), pp. XXXIV–XXXV.

³⁷ Suleyman Valy Mamede (1937–1995) of Indian extraction was born in Mozambique and came as student to Lisbon in 1960.

called “new universities” were created with the objective of fostering regional centres of university education.

Among them, the University Institute of Évora, later renamed the University of Évora, created a two-years Free Course of Arab Language and Culture in 1978 offering thus not only the classes of Arabic but included also the classes of Arab history, literature and history of art. This innovative approach was due to initiative of Adel Yussef S i d a r u s³⁸, an Egyptian naturalized Portuguese who assumed the direction of the course. The launch of the course was meant as a first step towards developing a future centre of Arabic studies in a university located in the Alentejo region rich in monuments of Arab-Islamic past. This promising experience was unfortunately short-lived due to manifold difficulties some of bureaucratic nature.

In 1981 the Second Session of Experts dealing with the Arab cultural legacy in Europe organized by UNESCO took place in Lisbon what may be regarded as another attempt to vivify the national interest in this field. “The Arab literature in Europe”³⁹ was the theme of this meeting that had the participation of Adel Yussef S i d a r u s, António Dias F a r i n h a, Roberto G u l b e n k i a n and Suleyman Valy M a m e d e.

As part of the dynamics created in the meantime, Portugal hosted the 11th Congress of the UAEI which sessions took place in Évora, Faro and Silves in 1982. All of these towns played an important political and cultural role in the *Gharb al-Andalus* as the today’s territory of Portugal is referred to in general terms during the Islamic dominion. The organization of this scientific event arose anew a debate on the necessity of fostering Arabic studies in Portugal⁴⁰ linked to the question of research focussing different aspects of Arab-Islamic culture both in the national and international framework. A few important contributions on the development of Arabic studies in Portugal in the past were presented on this occasion⁴¹.

Another Free Course of Arabic and Arab Culture was instituted at the Algarve University in Faro in 1983 and was run by José D. Garcia D o m i n g u e s until 1988. José Garcia D o m i n g u e s⁴², philosopher and Arabist having been denied a university

³⁸ Adel Yussef S i d a r u s (1941, Cairo), obtained his Ph.D. degree from the Munich University in 1973. Arabist and an internationally renowned specialist of Coptic studies. Professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Évora 1977–2008, retired 2009. Currently visiting professor and research fellow at the *Instituto de Estudos Orientais* at the Portuguese Catholic University of Lisbon.

³⁹ In the context of this essay we are happy to recall that Poland was represented by Professor Dr. Krystyna S k a r ż y ń s k a - B o c h e ń s k a who presented an encompassing paper on reception and translations of Arab literature in Eastern Europe [original title: *La littérature arabe en l’Europe de l’Est*] including the situation in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Soviet Union.

⁴⁰ See the opening address of the Portuguese Minister of Culture and Scientific Coordination at the Congress: F. Lucas P i r e s (1971), *ACTAS ...* pp. 29–32. It was echoed by the Portuguese press: *Cultura árabe em Portugal – uma história a recomeçar*, “Expresso”, October 9th, 1982, pp. 25–27; *Árabe em Portugal: língua morta?*, “Expresso”, October 16th, 1982, p. 29.

⁴¹ A. S i d a r u s (1986), pp. 37–54 and 55–73; J.P. G o m e s (1986), pp. 147–154.

⁴² José Domingos Garcia D o m i n g u e s (1910–1989). Student of David L o p e s (1931–1932) at the University of Lisbon and of Fernando F i g a n i e r (1952) he pursued his studies at the Universidade Complutense de Madrid and at the University of Cordova. Cf.: E.-M. v o n K e m n i t z (1987), pp. 35 and 37; E.-M. v o n K e m n i t z

career in the field of philosophy by the former regime he switched to Arabic studies and devoted much of his work to historical⁴³ and philosophical issues in the context of the Islamic past of Portugal having produced several essays on Arab poets and scholars⁴⁴ and on Arabic heritage of the Algarve region⁴⁵. His doctoral dissertation on the mystic and religious and political leader Ibn Qasī, has remained regrettably unaccomplished. His long time commitment to Arab culture much influenced by his Silves' origins materialized in creating the *Instituto de Estudos Árabes do Algarve* (1982)⁴⁶ with the formal seat in Silves but factually carrying out its principal activities in Lisbon. This non-lucrative private institution of cultural and scientific character was devoted to promoting teaching of Arabic and disseminating the knowledge of Arab culture through lectures, exhibitions, research, editing studies and translations from Arabic. The creation of a museum of Arab Art in Silves was also envisaged although not fulfilled.

Like many of his Portuguese colleagues Garcia Domingues represented a scholar who could not devote his work exclusively to his specialization having been compelled to exercise profession of a secondary school teacher for existential reasons. This precarious situation has affected the lives of José Pedro Machado and António Losa.

José Pedro Machado⁴⁷ focussed his interests on philological issues and also on some aspects of Arabic culture in Portugal⁴⁸. His fundamental work on the influence of Arabic in the Portuguese language was the *Influência Árábica no Vocabulário Português* (1958–1961). Furthermore he was author of an annotated Portuguese translation of the *Qu'rān* in 1979⁴⁹.

António Losa⁵⁰ taught Arabic at the Centre of Humanistic Studies of the Oporto University and later at Braga where he was responsible for a Free Course of Arabic and Arab Culture (1976–1983). He was an assiduous participant in international congresses and wrote on diverse topics ranging from cultural history to numismatics and architecture⁵¹.

(1997), *In memoriam José D. Garcia Domingues* in: J. Garcia Domingues, *Portugal e o al-Andalus*, Lisboa, HUGIN Editores, pp. 35–47. On his complete bibliography see: A. Sidarus (1997), *Bibliografia Arabística de J.D. Garcia Domingues* in: J. Garcia Domingues, *Portugal...*, pp. 17–33.

⁴³ *História Luso-Arabe*, first published in 1945 and reedited in 2010 on the occasion of centenary of his birth.

⁴⁴ *O místico louletano Al-Oriani* (1954); *O pensamento filosófico de alfaqui e asceta Abu Imrane de Mértola* (1955)

⁴⁵ *Património Arabico-Algarvio* (1956); *Silves* (1989). Most of the essays and minor writings by Garcia Domingues were edited in one volume posthumously. Cf.: J. Garcia Domingues (1997).

⁴⁶ The Institute ceased its activities about 1988.

⁴⁷ José Pedro Machado (1914–2005), Romanist and Arabist, a current contributor to the *Grande Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira* and to the *Dicionário de História de Portugal*. Member of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon. Cf.: E.-M. von Kemnitz (1987), pp. 31–32; *Guia da Cidade de Lisboa* of September 2005.

⁴⁸ See the bibliography annexed.

⁴⁹ Published by the Junta Científica de Investigações Ultramarinas and reprinted in 1980.

⁵⁰ António Gonçalves Losa (1914–2000), Romanist and Arabist. Studied Arabic in Lisbon and benefited from a traineeship at the University of Madrid (1958). Cf.: A curriculum of António Losa, dated October 2nd, 1984.

⁵¹ Including the Congresses of the UEAI in 1962, 1964, 1982, 1984, 1986.

In this global panorama we have to mention also Martin Velho⁵² without doubt the best prepared of all the Portuguese Arabists but who opted for the exclusivity of independent research work not holding any position either within university or outside. He obtained his degree in Arabic from the *Institut des Lettres Orientales* in Beyrouth and in Islamic Sociology from the Saint Joseph University. He studied also Persian at the American University of Beyrouth. Based on throughout knowledge of Arabic Maghribi chronicles he published various studies dealing with the Portuguese medieval history⁵³.

Fernando Amaro Monteiro⁵⁴ represents a scholar who combined academic career with the service in overseas administration in Africa. This interrelation of theory and practice proved fruitful regarding the teaching and research specializing in Islam in the Portuguese Africa from which stemmed his principal publications: *A Guerra em Moçambique e na Guiné* (1989); *O Islão, o Poder e a Guerra (Moçambique 1964–1974)* published in 1993. He lectured on Islam, politics and strategy in Lourenço Marques [Mozambique] and at the *Universidade Livre* (1981–1982) and at the *Universidade Internacional* [both in Lisbon] and at the Portucalense University of Oporto (1987–2000).

Portugal's adhesion to the European Community (1986) and the actual membership in the European Union has had a positive impact insofar as the country became involved in common policies regarding North Africa and Middle East and this circumstance has stimulated interest in languages, culture, economy and politics of these regions creating a new demand in this specific knowledge. Current communitarian policies of multiculturalism and multilingualism have further contributed among others to a greater and more diversified offer of publications available on these subjects mainly translations as well as translations of works of authors from the Arab-Islamic world.

Although Arabic studies did not experience much advancement in terms of regular university curriculum they were nonetheless pursued in terms of research. Adel Y. Sidarus carried out individually the cataloguing of Arab manuscripts in Portuguese libraries⁵⁵ and another important project of establishing a critical bibliography of Arab

⁵² Martim Velho de Alcoforado de Barbosa e Sotomayor (1921–1989), graduated from Law Department of the University of Coimbra (1948). After having given up his lawyer's career he pursued his studies in Beirut 1964–1971. Cf.: E.-M. von Kemnitz (1987), p. 32 based on a *curriculum vitae* of Martim Velho, dated, July 1977. Neither indication of the exact date of his passing away nor of the whereabouts of his literary spoils are available at present.

⁵³ *Um texto árabe de Ibn Bassam de Santarém* (1964); *Varões Árabes Ilustres do Andaluz. Ocidental* (1968); *A Magnum Bellum de 1139* (1979); *Estudos Críticos sobre a batalha de Ourique*; *Incursoão de Tashfin ibn 'Ali a Fahs al-Sahab ou o fossado da Ladeia*. Furthermore he translated the *One Thousand and One Nights* into Portuguese (1972) ... from French.

⁵⁴ Fernando Amaro Monteiro (1935, Lisbon), graduated from the University of Lisbon, obtained his Ph.D. degree from the University Aix-Marseille in 1968. Participated in intelligence missions among Muslim populations in Mozambique and the Portuguese Guinea (1970–1973). Cf.: Curricula of Amaro Monteiro of 1989 and 1997.

⁵⁵ *Manuscripts arabes du Portugal* (1978) in: *ACTES du 8ème Congrès de l'UEAI, Aix-en-Provence. La Signification du Bas Moyen-Age dans l'Histoire et la culture du Monde Musulman*, Aix-en-Provence, EDISUD, pp. 283–288; a two-volume catalogue of the Library of the Sciences of Lisbon: *Catálogo de Manuscritos, Série Vermelha*, vol. I (1978) and vol. II (1986); *Manuscritos Árabes em Portugal* (1991) in: *Estudos Orientais*, Lisboa,

Islamic Studies in Portugal⁵⁶. Furthermore Adel Y. Sidarus was responsible for implementing a large-scale research project on the “*Sudeste Peninsular na época árabo-islâmica*” encompassing the study of sources concerning Arab history, literature and Islam (1998–2000) in the South-Western Iberian Peninsula. This project supported by the *Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical* (IICT)⁵⁷ enabled to form an international team of scholars who produced three important volumes of studies⁵⁸. Another research project that had a relevant collaboration of Adel Y. Sidarus dealt with the globalizing context of production of knowledge on the Orient in the Portuguese-speaking world (16th–19th centuries) from which a few dissertations arose but none concerning the Arab Islamic world.

In 1997 the CULTURGEST Foundation promoted a three-day International Seminar focussed on the Contemporary Arab World⁵⁹ encompassing panels on politics and society, economy and Islamic banking and on literature, arts and urbanism that brought to Lisbon such scholars as Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Baghat-Korany, Suha Özkan, Mahmud El-Helw and Janusz Danecki amongst others.

A greater global mobility of academic staff stimulated partly by bilateral cultural agreements⁶⁰ made available several native Arab speakers mainly Moroccans who have been teaching Arabic in Oporto, Coimbra, Aveiro, Lisbon, Faro and Silves for about ten years.

In a more recent panorama of Oriental scholarship in Portugal we are happy to register what may be regarded as a qualitative change and a new challenge. In 2001 the *Universidade Católica Portuguesa de Lisboa* created the *Instituto de Estudos Orientais* with Luis Filipe Thomaz⁶¹, a well known orientalist educated abroad as its head. The Institute started its programme the following year offering a wide range of subjects

Instituto Oriental; *Portugal* (1993) in G. Roper (general editor), *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, London, Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, pp. 623–637.

⁵⁶ The *Bibliografia Crítica Luso-Árabe e Islâmica (BICLAI)* started in 1984 and partially published by the Universidade de Évora.

⁵⁷ This project was integrated in a wider framework of the PRAXIS XXI started in 1995 that envisaged specifically the advancement of Arab-Islamic and Oriental studies in Portugal in its mission statement.

⁵⁸ AAVV, (1999), *Fontes da História de al-Andalus*, Lisboa, IICT; AAVV, (2001), *Islão Minoritário na Península Ibérica (mudéjares, mouriscos, literatura aljamiada): novas pesquisas e perspectivas*, Lisboa, Hugin Editores; SORAVIA, Bruna and SIDARUS, Adel eds. (2005), *Literatura e Cultura no Gharb al-Andalus*, Lisboa, Hugin Editores. Apart from publications the project included also organization of round-tables and seminars.

⁵⁹ Integrated in the framework of a week of Arab culture “*Arabs among us*”. Cf.: *Os Arabes Entre Nos*, Lisboa, Culturgest, 1997. The author of this paper was charged with scientific organization of this Seminar. One of the objectives was to foster a network among Portuguese and foreign scholars.

⁶⁰ With Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt.

⁶¹ Luís Filipe Thomaz (1942), graduated in history from the University of Lisbon (1965), pursued Oriental studies at the *École Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (1978–1984) and at the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* (INALCO) specializing in Malay-Indonesian and the cultures of South Western Asia and took a degree in Indian Classical Studies at the *Sorbonne Nouvelle*. Professor of the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* (1984–2002). This University granted him a Doctorate *Honoris Causa* (2002). A very prolific author in the field of his specializations and a co-founder of the *Instituto de Estudos Orientais* at the *Universidade Católica Portuguesa de Lisboa*.

covering different civilization areas from Japan to the Islamic world and encompassing also ancient India and Oriental Christendom. The teaching staff is composed by Portuguese specialists and some foreigners principally language teachers. Initially a post-graduation in Oriental Studies was available and since 2008 the Institute has been offering also M.A. degrees according to the Bologna system. In 2010 first graduates submitted their M.A. dissertations. There exist agreements with foundations and other institutions in order to ensure the material and human means for pursuing these studies.

We shall conclude saying that as long as Portuguese universities will not be able to consolidate academic structures and establish adequate *curricula* capable of producing their own specialists in the field of Arab and Islamic studies and reinforce global interest going in tune with Portugal's own historical and cultural trajectory in which Arab and Islamic components had played a relevant role in shaping its identity, the advancement of this branch of knowledge will depend on individual endeavours as long as they last. This is not a new diagnostic but it deserves to be remembered⁶².

Caxias, October 31st 2010

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⁶² The urgency to reorganize Arab-Islamic and Oriental studies has been advocated by José Garcia Domingues, Adel Yussef Sidarus and Luís Filipe Thomaz. Cf.: A. Sidarus (1988); L.F. Thomaz (1996), pp. 406–414.

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