

Luís Adão da Fonseca, Editor-in-Chief of the *e-Journal of Portuguese History*

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Abstract

The *e-JPH* editors trace the important role played by Luís Adão da Fonseca in the conception of this journal at the beginning of the millennium. They also highlight the merits of his leadership over eighteen years, namely in obtaining financing and institutional partnerships, and also in the internationalization of collaborations and members of the advisory board.

Keywords

Historiography, Luís Adão da Fonseca, *e-Journal of Portuguese History*, Portuguese history

Resumo

Os editores do *e-JPH* descrevem o importante papel de Luís Adão da Fonseca na criação dessa revista nos inícios deste milénio. Destacam ainda os méritos da sua liderança ao longo de dezoito anos, nomeadamente na obtenção de financiamentos e parcerias institucionais e, também, na internacionalização das colaborações e membros do comité de aconselhamento.

Palavras-chave

Historiografia, Luís Adão da Fonseca, *e-Journal of Portuguese History*, História de Portugal

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Attempting to talk here about the role played by Luís Adão da Fonseca in the creation and growth of the *e-JPH* is a thankless task. Because we know that Luís himself would love to refute or disagree with some of the things that are said here, while, at the same time, underlining and applauding others. This is a testimony written by people who accompanied Luís very closely in this exciting adventure, which he always lived with such great enthusiasm.

The present moment is a particularly hard and painful one, as we know that his lucid thinking can no longer be revealed to us with the lightness of the spoken and written word that was his great hallmark and that is now shrouded in a fog of emotions that restrict our gestures. It is truly distressing to experience the gradual erosion of a conviviality that we sense we will never again be able to enjoy in the way that we previously did.

However, this is not meant to be a sentimental chronicle. Therefore, let us move on to the story of what proved to be such a striking moment in the professional and academic career of Luís Adão da Fonseca.

Everything began with some casual conversations on a trip to Brazil in late September 2000, involving a significant number of renowned Portuguese historians. This is an almost impossible mission that only Luís would be capable of planning and executing with his outstanding organizational skills and his undeniable ability to raise funds. He planned to bring Portuguese and Brazilian historians together in São Paulo to discuss the past, present, and future directions of the historiography being written in the Portuguese language on both sides of the Atlantic. The meeting was given the ambitious subtitle of “Agenda for the Millennium,” and its outcomes are all perfectly visible and duly published so that nobody will ever forget or ignore what happened. On the Portuguese side, there were twenty-three papers presented at this conference, which certainly helped to improve people’s knowledge of the dynamics of the research taking place in the most varied historiographical fields (Arruda and Fonseca 2001).

Because the time available was elastic, the conversations continued into the night, allowing for the slow germination of the idea of creating a journal with a different format to the one that was customarily used at that time. This was undoubtedly an invisible part of the millennium agenda. In Luís’s mind, the seed of the idea had already been planted and it began to find a suitable echo in the minds of his closest collaborators. Mafalda Soares da Cunha and José Luís Cardoso, were the first to fertilize the ground, which they then continued to plough slowly throughout 2001, after which António Costa Pinto immediately joined them. A little later, in mid-2002, with the journal already in a stable phase of programming, Onésimo T. Almeida joined the project. This last move proved to be decisive, for it was to

give rise to a solid partnership between the University of Porto and Brown University. From then on then able to count on the professional and dedicated support of successive collaborators from Brown's Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies.⁶ When the journal was already sailing at cruising speed, our editorial team of the *e-JPH* was further strengthened with the entry of Iris Kantor in 2013, adding a significant representation from the Brazilian historiographical community. In 2006, the role of editorial assistant had been taken over by Cristina Pimenta, who has done much more for the journal than our readers can ever imagine.⁷ More recently, in 2019, our editorial team began to enjoy the collaboration of Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, an addition envisioning the handing over of the baton to the next stage in the life of the *e-JPH*.

The journal began with a foundational semester (from June 2002 to January 2003), during which it benefited from a subsidy attributed by the FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology) through the Scientific Community Support Fund, destined to cover the costs of the journal's preparation and launch. The report presented to the FCT on the conclusion of the project's initial stages described the preparatory tasks, which included: the definition of the journal's editorial policy and the contents of its various sections; the choice of who would be invited to serve on the Editorial and Advisory Boards; the establishment of the rules for publication and the required format for the submission of articles; and the conception and design of the journal's covers and the online platform that would accommodate it. These foundational details were discussed at various meetings of the editorial team, always chaired by Luís with his indomitable and conciliatory spirit, which served to consolidate the levels of trust at both the personal and academic levels, that were essential for ensuring the journal's successful launch.⁸

In the arguments presented to the FCT to obtain a regular subsidy for the journal's operations, a proposal was made that initially involved creating a platform of digital tools to be placed at the disposal of researchers in the field of history. One of main goals of our electronic journal was to centralize the information that was already available on multiple websites about history teaching, scientific production, research centers in various

⁶ Namely, Stefan Halikowsky-Smith, Rex Nielsen, Robert Newcomb, Kate Beall, Jennifer Currier and Anna-Lisa Halling, who were successively responsible for the copy-editing of the manuscripts approved for publication and all the tasks associated with making the journal available online. In preparing the manuscripts written by authors who are not native English speakers, John Elliott's work as a translator and proofreader has been invaluable.

⁷ Before Cristina Pimenta, the tasks of editorial assistance had been performed by Maria Cecília Cameira.

⁸ We are particularly pleased to recall the first meeting of the editorial team after the Editorial Board had been expanded to include guest members. The meeting was held at the Quinta das Lágrimas in Coimbra, under the symbolic and historical protection of Pedro and Inês.

historiographical subfields, contests, and listings of projects in progress, academic associations and societies, guides to libraries and archives, digital databases, and repositories of master's degrees and PhD theses. All of this resulted from the carefully planned strategic vision that Luís tirelessly insisted on justifying and exemplifying, the fruit of his experience and systematic accompaniment of similar initiatives in other countries, particularly his work with the European Science Foundation.

The project for creating a digital platform for disseminating contents in the area of history was supplanted by the pragmatic realization of the more immediately achievable idea of creating an international open-access electronic journal. However, the aim of complementing the journal with a dynamic and informative website, nurtured above all by Luís Adão da Fonseca, ended up leading to the creation of sections in the journal itself dedicated to “Surveys and Debates” and “Institutions and Research.” This is one of the hallmarks of the *e-JPH* that owes its existence to Luís's plan of providing a public service, something that was made clearly evident by the information collected in the first years of the journal about master's degrees and Ph.D. theses, institutions and research projects in history, as well as about the activities of centers of Portuguese studies in American universities.⁹

The editorial team members that launched the *e-JPH* in 2003 shared common points of view about the reasons justifying the creation of a journal that was different from those that already existed in the Portuguese editorial market, some of which had deep-rooted institutional traditions. The need to bring the research of Portuguese historians, for too long confined to the Portuguese-speaking world, to the international academic scene, was the primary motivation in the minds of the *e-JPH*'s founders. The editors believed that the poor knowledge of Portuguese history often exhibited by foreign historians when dealing with Portugal in their comparative studies was partly due to the Portuguese historians' reluctance to engage in dialogue through a language that would attract a wider international audience.

The introduction of the requirements mandated by international scientific standards (conveyed through journals indexed by the bibliometric measurement systems) as a criterion in evaluating academic careers was met with understandable resistance since senior historians privileged old-style monographs written in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, it was a path that, at the beginning of this new millennium, the agencies and institutions responsible for defining and monitoring innovative scientific policies sought to follow, offering clear incentives for increased international visibility of the added value produced by Portuguese

⁹ With the same aim, the information about PhD theses completed at Portuguese institutions between 2010 and 2018 was recently updated (*e-JPH* vol. 17, no. 2, December 2019).

researchers in all academic areas, naturally including history. Thus, today's presence of our *e-JPH* in the most important international bibliometric citation indexes (Scielo-Web of Science, Scopus-Elsevier, Qualis-CAPES, ERIH-ESF) is a result of the internationalization strategy, made possible in significant part by Luís Adão da Fonseca. His persistence and vision were vital to this accomplishment.

Furthermore, the founding editors of the *e-JPH* were equally concerned with helping to change the bad working habits of most of the history journals published by Portuguese institutions, which were almost exclusively dedicated to disseminating the research results of authors who are themselves linked to these same institutions. In order to counter that endogamous climate, it was made clear that the journal's editorial and advisory boards would be composed of historians belonging to a wide range of Portuguese and foreign universities and that they would be guided by the rules of a rigorous peer review system. This option would mean the compulsory filtering of all articles—both those that were freely submitted by their authors and those that were commissioned by the editors when seeking to publish special thematic issues—through the reading and advice of two anonymous referees.

Twenty years ago, what today is considered to be a generally accepted and established procedure represented a factor of confrontation (almost always silent, and only rarely causing much disquiet) between different forms of academic culture. Although educated in traditional institutional environments not sensitive to the demands of modern scientific standards, Luís Adão da Fonseca was firm in choices and goals. Thus, his vision allowed our *e-JPH* to gain the trust and confidence of authors interested in making their scholarship available to an international audience. Therefore, it was not by accident that the first issues of our journal carried out a debate on the internationalization of Portuguese historiography. Luís Adão da Fonseca marked the beginning of this debate with a presentation of his own, in which he outlined the main objectives of the *e-JPH*. The theme would once again be implicit in the special issue (*e-JPH*, vol. 8, no. 2, Winter 2010) about the recent Portuguese historiography, with special emphasis given to a critical approach to the great works dedicated to the history of Portugal and the collection of biographies of the Portuguese monarchs. Although they have Portuguese readers as their target public, the discussion of their national scope in the pages of the *e-JPH* was designed to extend the knowledge of the most important contributions to appear in the Portuguese publishing market to a broader and more international audience.

The conference held at Brown University in September 2012, in order to mark the tenth anniversary of the publication of the *e-JPH*, was enthusiastically programmed by Luís

Adão da Fonseca (with the indispensable local support of Onésimo T. Almeida) and proved to be a milestone in this effort to situate Portuguese historiography in a global context.¹⁰

The commitment to internationalization presupposed a different attitude towards the procedures used to assess people and institutions, and naturally for the evaluation of the quality of the academic journals themselves. This was the subject of a workshop promoted by the *e-JPH*, which took place at the University of Évora in November 2007, whose detailed programming was also the work of Luís Adão da Fonseca (in this case with the local support of Mafalda Soares da Cunha). The participation of representatives from the European Science Foundation and of the leaders of the FCT allowed for a fruitful discussion about the importance of establishing strict criteria for assessing the merit and quality of the instruments and agents of scientific production in the area of history (people, institutions, and journals).

Over the course of eighteen years, before being suddenly interrupted by the brutality of his illness, Luís Adão da Fonseca gave excellent proof of the qualities that one expects of an editor-in-chief. He was tireless in his effort to attract authors willing to submit papers; rigorous in his scrutiny of the articles received and the opinions requested; attentive to the meeting of deadlines in all the procedures of scientific revision and editorial production; meticulous in his preparation of the agenda for editorial meetings; persistent in his contacts with institutions that were willing to support the costs of organizing the journal (especially the translations, linguistic revisions, and formatting of the articles for their publication on the *e-JPH* platform); and endowed with an enormous patience in the treatment of the impenetrable minutiae of the everyday bureaucratic and administrative management (whether with the Rectorate of the University of Porto, the Luso-American Development Foundation [FLAD], Scielo, or the Regulatory Authority for the Media).

We grew used to regarding Luís as an example of leadership and to receiving the clear testimonies of his friendship. We will never forget the dinners that would invariably mark the end of our editorial meetings in Lisbon, or occasionally in Porto. Without this entertaining and relaxed atmosphere, we would have found the professional collaboration that we maintained for twenty years far less captivating, twenty years in which the seed of the *e-JPH*, first planted by Luís, sprouted and grew into a ripe fruit. We are certain that the new team that is set to take over the editorial reins of the *e-JPH* will prove itself worthy of

¹⁰ The papers presented at this conference were published in the section of “Surveys and Debates” in various issues of the *e-JPH*, between 2013 and 2016.

the legacy that Luís Adão da Fonseca helped so greatly to construct.¹¹ Thank you so much, Luís, for your dedication to this project.¹²

¹¹ Besides the partnership between the Faculty of Arts and the Rectorate of the University of Porto and the Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies of Brown University (through the collaborators mentioned in footnote 2), with this latter body being responsible for the online edition of the journal, the *e-JPH* has benefited from the institutional support of the Center for History, Culture and Societies (CIDEHUS) of the University of Évora, the Institute of Social Sciences (ICS) of the University of Lisbon, the Research Center for the Study of Population, Economy and Society (CEPESE), and the Jaime Cortesão Chair of the University of São Paulo. Since its launch in 2002, the journal has benefited from the financial support provided by the Foundation for Science and Technology, the Luso-American Development Foundation, the BCP Millennium Foundation, and the Camões Institute, I.P.

¹² This piece is contributed by the editors of the *e-JPH*.

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