

## Preface

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There were four considerations that prompted the editors to organize this special issue of the *e-Journal of Portuguese History*. The first reason why we embarked on this project was the rapid growth of migration studies over recent decades and the work being done across the globe on migration and diasporas in areas of former Portuguese presence. This growing body of work forms part of a multidisciplinary field of research which has, since the 1990s, shifted its focus to the transnational dimensions of migration and the social networks that underpin global interactions in the “age of migration.” Areas of former Portuguese presence in Africa offer a richly sourced continuum of migratory movements and the formation of diasporas in a wide variety of socio-historical contexts over a period of over five centuries. Hence, the time frame of the papers in this special issue ranges from the sixteenth century to the present.

The second reason was to explore the diversity of South-South migrations and under-researched human displacements and associated narratives in and from Africa. The history of migrations in the African case has mostly concerned itself with the forced dispersal of populations, and areas of former Portuguese presence are no exception to the rule. The trans-Atlantic slave trade and coerced forms of labor have largely dominated the study of migrations in the pre-colonial and colonial Lusophone world. The papers in this collection cover a variety of geographic spaces, including Angola, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, and Nigeria. They engage with the migration of African elites, trade diasporas, the circulation of knowledge between homeland and global diasporas, diasporic citizenship, coerced forms of displacement, and cross-border migration and insurgency.

The third reason was to follow up on a conference which had been held in 2004 to mark the centenary of the birth of Charles Boxer (who had died aged ninety-six in 2000). This resulted in the publication of a collection of papers (reissued in 2015) focused on creolization in the Portuguese-speaking world. Creolization, or transcultural interaction and assimilation, now freed from the political taint that it acquired during the *Estado Novo* (New

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State) dictatorship (1926–1974), is widely recognized and researched by scholars of pre-colonial and colonial Africa. Creolization results from the migration and acculturation of people from one cultural environment to another and the subsequent formation of transnational communities with novel, hybrid social identities and cultural practices. It was natural, therefore, for a follow-up from our previous conference to try to focus on migration in its various forms, not least in view of the broadening of the field of migration, development, and cultural studies to encompass the transnational dimensions of human mobility and social change.

The fourth reason was to give young scholars an opportunity to showcase their research, given their limited access to academic journals, especially when their research is often a work in progress. Not only does historiographical research on areas of former Portuguese presence form a niche in the broader field of migration studies, early-career scholars may view the major questions and debates of African history from a different point of view from that which preoccupied earlier generations. Their papers concern themselves with topical issues such as African biography, religious syncretism, coercive development, transnational citizenship, diasporas, and armed conflict. To that end, they are informed by multi-disciplinary approaches and methodologies grounded in history, anthropology, sociology, and political science.

The editors were fortunate to locate a number of scholars whose research focused on aspects of the topic of migration and identity in Africa. Sadly, not all these resulted in papers which we were able to include in this special issue. Nevertheless, all the papers in this collection, apart from the introduction, are representative of the diversity of the younger scholarly community working on areas of former Portuguese presence in Africa. In writing about African history, it is essential that voices of Africans and people of African descent be heard. Not only does this issue include scholars of African origin, but the papers make use of locally produced sources, both written and oral, in order to reflect upon pre-, proto-, colonial, or post-colonial periods.

Is there a reason to single out the history of Lusophone Africa, and is it distinct from that of its Anglophone or Francophone neighbors? The debate on the Portuguese Empire's exceptionalism is inconclusive. It is marked by the legacy of colonial ideologies and intense propaganda by the New State dictatorship and the violent dissolution of empire and of the regime itself in 1974–1975. In the post-colonial era, the term Lusophony (*Lusofonia*) has been employed to identify symbolic bonds between spaces and nations that once were part of an empire and are currently joined together politically in the Community of Portuguese

Speaking Countries (*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*, CPLP) since 1992. Nevertheless, the social, economic, cultural, and political diversity of these countries is in essence no different from those pertaining to Anglophone or Francophone commonwealths.

However, when taking a historical perspective of human societies there are aspects that distinguish Portuguese areas of influence in Africa. Contact with the continent began in the fifteenth century and covers a broad timeframe, significantly longer than that of other Euro-African interactions. It has been characterized by the settlement of the Atlantic islands and Brazil, Portugal's key role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the early 1500s, and dynamics of cultural creolization induced by Euro-African contact beginning in the fifteenth century, as well as voluntary migrations from Portugal to areas of Portuguese presence and between the latter. These linkages principally resulted from trade and migration associated with the coerced uprooting and enslavement of Africans, the forced exile of Sephardi from the Iberian Peninsula, and the sentencing of convicted criminals to serve long or life sentences in distant colonial possessions (*degredo*). These complex human movements gave rise to a diverse mosaic of overseas diasporas with distinctive creole cultures emerging in the Cabo Verdean islands, São Tomé and Príncipe, and parts of the West African mainland in the early sixteenth century. At this juncture, other European states, except for Spain, had yet to establish a firm foothold overseas.

Over several centuries, the migration and settlement of Africans, Sephardi, and Europeans resulted in the formation of a Creole society in the Cabo Verdean archipelago and in the Gulf of Guinea islands, which exerted an influence on maritime West Africa and the Kongo/Angola region. The occupation of part of coastal Angola from 1575 initiated migratory flows and processes of cultural creolization, which also involved the African hinterland. The Portuguese diaspora, which began with the peopling of the Atlantic Islands, was accompanied by the migrations of Sephardim fleeing from forced conversion in the Iberian Peninsula, whose influence spread throughout the Mediterranean and the New World. The trans-Atlantic slave trade, which also expanded during the same period, formed a third element in the peopling of Atlantic islands and the creation of a Lusophone cultural space in the South Atlantic. Acting as the principal agents of expansion, trade diasporas based in West and East Africa, Brazil, and India extended the range of commercial routes and cross-cultural interaction throughout the empire and beyond. The regional and trans-Atlantic slave trade thus forged diverse economic, social, and cultural spaces of the South Atlantic, which had an impact on peripheral areas whilst the endogenous formations influenced pre- and proto-colonial institutions. Whereas they were Portuguese in a formal sense, they were

in fact hybrid products often run and staffed by non-metropolitan Portuguese until colonial occupation imposed a modern imperial political framework. Largely mediated by the Portuguese, much of West and Central Africa was connected with Europe and the New World.

These developments, which cover four centuries of pre- and proto-colonial African history, translate into particular imperial tropes that tend to set areas of former Portuguese presence in Africa apart from their Anglophone and Francophone neighbors. The fact that the Portuguese presence in Africa chronologically extended beyond that of other colonial dominions, until the empire crumbled following the overthrow of the New State in Portugal in 1974 and was marked by several simultaneous and protracted armed conflicts, also distinguishes it from its European counterparts. The massive migration of settlers and their families from Angola and Mozambique to Portugal in the wake of decolonization in 1974–1975 also demonstrates the particular nature of developments in Lusophone spaces. More recent developments regarding migrations in former Portuguese colonies in Africa testify to the continuity of certain phenomena from the colonial into the post-colonial era in these spaces, and their links to broader regional and global economic, social, and political contexts.

Given its importance for migrations, the formation of diasporas and creolized identities, Cabo Verde stands out with two contributions. While Cabo Verde has been a key focus of migration studies, the issue of comparative librarianship and outdated models of the circulation of knowledge between the islands and its global diaspora in the digital age addressed by Marilla MacGregor has, so far, attracted little attention. Similarly, the question of external citizenship and the political engagement of the archipelago's diasporic electorate in national politics as proposed by Aleida Mendes Borges provides a refreshing look at an under-researched topic. Early elite migrations of Itsekiri ruling lineages to Portugal as described by Allegra Ayida touch upon lesser-known Lusophone ramifications of these historical displacements and their impact upon African societies, which are still reflected in the relatively high proportion of Itsekiri seeking an education abroad. Ana Rita Amaral's paper on trade diasporas in Angola uses a locally produced archive and the biography of its author from a biographical angle using a local archive to examine issues of identity and mobility in a trading post, Bié, in proto-colonial Angola. Nikkie Wiegink's study of forced resettlements in colonial post-colonial Mozambique neatly portrays the many but underexposed continuities between the colonial and post-colonial periods in law, administrative practice, and the *mentalités* of the ruling elites. The recruitment of young men into the ranks of a recent Islamist insurgency in Northern Mozambique, presented by

Salvador Forquilha and João Pereira, addresses the complex and less visible economic, social and religious fault lines in a border region where internal migratory movements and transnational networks intersect.

Finally, the editors would like to emphasize the relevance of a micro-and meso-focus on these global and regional human movements and the *longue durée* during which migrations and cross-cultural interactions took place for an understanding of under-researched areas and topics. The papers in this special issue of the *e-Journal of Portuguese History* take African locations as the starting point for an analysis of the history of internal and external human mobility in different phases up to the present which privilege a South-South perspective. These contributions form a welcome contribution to debates on imperial and post-colonial migrations and will, hopefully, inspire other scholars to come forward with innovative research on these topics.

### **Bionote/Nota Biográfica**

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