

Report of the External Advisory Committee, Instituto de Estudos Medievais (IEM), Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova, Lisbon (Portugal)

December 9, 2016

Meeting

The meeting of the advisory committee took place on Friday, 25 November 2016, at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, in the presence of the new director (Dr. Maria João Branco), subdirectors (Dr. Alicia Miguélez Caveró and Dr. João Luis Ingles Fontes), the team leaders of the two principal research programs (Dr. Mário Farelo and Dr. Catarina Barreira), the editor of the online journal *Medievalista online* (Dr. Bernardo Vasconcelos e Sousa), and other faculty members, doctoral students, and post-doctoral students.

Committee members present:

Prof. Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho, Universidade de Coimbra
Prof. Simon Doubleday, Hofstra University, New York
Prof. Silvia Maddalo, Università degli Studi della Tuscia-Viterbo
Prof. Denis Menjot, Université de Lyon 2, UMR 5648/CIHAM
Prof. Ermelindo Portela Silva, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela
Prof. Harvey L. Sharrer, University of California, Santa Barbara

Assessment

The IEM continues to be a nationally and internationally-recognized hub of research into medieval studies, with an impressively active program of interdisciplinary investigation and a demonstrable commitment to the dissemination of knowledge, integrating many of the medievalists from different disciplines (history, art, literature, archaeology), in the faculty of Letters and Human Sciences at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Their research has been appropriately reorganized around two main thematic strands: “Territories and Powers: a global perspective”; and “Images, Texts, and Representations”. The total number of affiliated members has increased from 143 (in 2014) to 179 (in 2016). The IEM, awarded a rating of “Very Good” by the FCT external evaluation committee in 2014, has maintained its momentum following a change of directorship in June 2016.

Many members of the IEM are involved in international research projects, establishing a wide range of partnerships, and have successfully sought external funding from private grant-awarding bodies, despite the economic difficulties faced by Portugal and by Europe more generally. Among these projects are: “In the Service of the Crown” (supported by the Foundation VW); “ArchiFam” (a project associated with the Casa de Velázquez, the Universidad del País Vasco, the Université de Pau et des Pays de l’Adour, and the Universidad Publica de Navarra); and “Maritime Conflict in Atlantic Europe” (University of Leiden). IEM members have also served as consultants in the projects such as the successful effort (2014-15) to ensure UNESCO recognition for the Beatus manuscripts.

One measure of the high international profile of the IEM has been the huge and enthusiastic response to the advertisement of doctoral and postdoctoral scholarships at IEM; applications have evidently been received from as far away as Russia and the US. The committee notes the very serious intellectual training of doctoral students – who are deeply involved in the work of research teams at the IEM and beyond (including internationally) – and is pleased to note that an exchange program with Oxford University is already in place. The committee observes that the number of postdoctoral students has increased from 13 (in 2014) to 17 (in 2016), in addition to one Marie Curie Fellow, and applauds the decision to appoint two postdoctoral students as subdirectors: this decision, made in June 2016, suggests openness to generational change and to new approaches in the field. The committee looks forward to tracing the progress of a projected e-learning doctoral programme in Medieval Studies.

The last two years have seen the production of several important new books from IEM members: *Do canto à escrita: novas questões em torno da Lírica Galego Portuguesa. Nos cem anos do Pergaminho Vindel*, eds. Graça Videira Lopes e Manuel Pedro Ferreira (2016); *Rethinking the Archive in Pre-Modern Europe: Family Archives and their Inventories from the 15th to the 19th Century* (2015); and *Inquirir na Idade Média: Espaços, protagonistas e poderes (séculos XII-XIV) – Tributo a Luís Krus*, ed. Amélia Andrade (2015). The committee reiterates its surprise that the FCT does not allow the sale abroad of FCT publications: it is essential to rectify this aberration, to ensure that the excellent work of IEM scholars is better known internationally. We also recommend that the FCT allow IEM publications to be sent to leading foreign research libraries, and indeed further funding for publication would enhance the number of books that could be produced.

Equally, the IEM has organized numerous scholarly meetings, to name just a few: “Poder, Mitos e Memórias na Sociedade Medieval – Contributos de Luís Krus”; “A Bíblia Medieval - do Românico ao Gótico (sécs. XII-XIII): textos e imagens, produção e usos”; “Batalha: lugar de memória da dinastia de Avis. À procura de uma leitura integrada do monumento e das suas imagens”; “Sephardic Book Art of the 15th Century”; “Money, Power, and Profit”; and “D. Filipa de Lencastre e o seu tempo: arte, ciência e cultura (colóquio comemorativo dos 600 anos da sua morte)”, a meeting which will produce a book to be published by Palgrave in 2018. IEM members have also participated in many other conferences, workshops, and symposia internationally. Among these gatherings are the major international congresses at Leeds (UK) and Kalamazoo (Michigan, US); and smaller, more specific research symposia such as “Noble houses and their archives”, held at Princeton in November 2015.

Meanwhile, the IEM continues to advance knowledge through the production of sophisticated databases such as those on the Cantigas Medievais Galego-Portuguesas; the Cantigas de Seguir (under construction); INVENT.ARQ (on family archives); Bibliografia sobre Lisboa medieval; and the Dicionário online do Oficialato periférico da Coroa (14th – 15th Cs). There are nine such databases in total. Finally, *Medievalista Online*, whose first issue appeared in 2005 and which has produced two issues a year since 2008, continues to be the only Portuguese journal dedicated entirely to medieval studies, adhering to a rigorous process of double-blind peer review. Welcoming submissions in a variety of languages, it is already indexed on Latindex, Dialnet, Revues.org, DOAJ, SCielo, and ERIH Plus, and it is currently seeking to be indexed in SCOPUS, a move which would undoubtedly solidify its reputation.

The committee wishes to note that the institute has been extremely responsive to all recommendations made in our previous (2014) report. This includes:

- The submission of research to international journals (print and electronic) in order to advance the diffusion and dissemination of work being carried out by IEM members. In 2016 alone, affiliated members of the IEM published some 23 articles in international peer-reviewed journals. Particularly noteworthy is the special monographic issue of the *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* (8.2) guest-edited by Alicia Miguélez Cavero, and devoted to the theme of “Interdisciplinary Approaches to Medieval Iberian Heritage”. This special issue was the subject of a roundtable, on November 24, 2016, at the Instituto Cervantes in Lisboa.
- Enhanced attention to social media—in particular, Facebook—as a means of raising the profile of the IEM. The website has also been updated, and represents an extremely useful resource for researchers. Moving forward, it would be useful for the website to be available in an English-language version, and for a regular blog and a YouTube channel to be created.

The IEM has made substantial efforts to disseminate knowledge to a broader public. This kind of community outreach has encompassed collaboration in TV programs (such as *Visita Guiada*, RTP2) and radio programs. It has also meant forging relationships with local town councils (such as Castelo de Vide – where a project aimed at reconstituting a rural community in the Alentejo is well under way). There have also been workshops and new manuals for high school teachers, and workshops for children; among the latter is the workshop *Conhecer os manuscritos iluminados da Biblioteca da Ajuda: Workshop “Iluminar com luz”* (aimed at 7- to 13-year-olds),

Conclusion

The achievements of the IEM are even more impressive considering enormous cuts in external funding (the budget was cut by roughly two thirds in 2015). The IEM is, in the view of the committee, a centre of scholarly excellence whose work should be supported vigorously by the FCT and by the UNL, in both financial and human terms. A full-time secretary is essential, as are improved office spaces suitable for allowing team members to work in good conditions.

Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho

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