

# Editorial announcement

*Res Antiquitatis* is the most recent editorial project of the Centre for Overseas History, with the aim of becoming a space for reflexion and debate on Antiquity. The study and investigation of several Antiquities, from the Pre-Classical and Near Eastern to the Classic Antiquity, are the main motivation of this project, both for its intrinsic scientific interest and the conviction that such investigation may become, on the whole, a useful conceptual reflexion for the study of other periods and historical questions.

*Res Antiquitatis* is therefore a contribution to the development in Portugal of investigation in fields related to the Antiquity, and it is open to the scientific production of both consecrated researchers and junior scholars. It will seek to highlight the research produced in our country and, to that purpose, English and French will be the main editorial languages. Internationalization is crucial to the affirmation of Portuguese research. *Res Antiquitatis* will contribute to that by publishing in these languages the work of both Portuguese and foreign scholars, thus becoming a common channel of communication and discussion.

Another important goal is to conciliate the research on different Antiquities (Pre-Classical, Classical, Biblical, Oriental) with their “reception” in later periods, i.e. how they were perceived since Antiquity itself up to contemporary times. These cultural perceptions witness a reflexion on the *otherness*, which becomes interesting regarding the self-consciousness that a society or culture gradually constructs. Examples of these perceptions are the Oriental expressions one finds in the 19<sup>th</sup> century European culture. This *Orientalism* is manifest in the literature (including the Portuguese one), in painting, in music and even in the press. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, on the other hand, are copious in accounts of travellers and wandering Europeans in Oriental

lands, who describe and reflect on what they see and on the echoes and expressions of those Antiquities. The Jesuit epistolary frequently makes use of references to the Antiquity and in particular to historical figures of Classical Antiquity or Biblical characters as stereotypes that run their religious, social and political reflexions.

The closest and more frequent contacts that Modern Europe established with Asia have generated curiosity on *otherness* and on Antiquity. European travellers, and in particular several Portuguese ones, roamed through some of these lands, namely the Near East, and saw the remains of ancient cultures. Using the Classical writers and the Bible as guidebooks, they sought to identify in the field ancient references such as Babylon and the Tower of Babel. Their perplexity towards the *otherness* and exoticism of what they witnessed and also the recognition of these echoes of Antiquity, through the observation of their archaeological and historical remains, led those travellers to write accounts of their journeys that reflected their cultural perceptions. The travel accounts of the Portuguese and the Spanish, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, are a testimony of that perplexity in the experience of discovering the *other*. They bear a historical awareness of Antiquity that derives from the Bible and from the Classical culture and is now tested by and faced with direct observation and experience.

*Res Antiquitatis*, an yearly journal, thus emerges as an innovating project in the background of Antiquity Studies in Portugal, open to Portuguese as well as foreign authors and clearly investing in the quality and international circulation of the scientific work it embraces.

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Editor