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DE LISBOA

# OCEANICA

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## STUDYING THE SEA.

### THE EMERGENCE AND ASSERTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY IN PORTUGAL

Oceanography gained its footing within the "national scientific policy" in the late 60's of the 20th century as a strategy to stimulate scientific and economic growth in Portugal, thanks to its prestige and its effective promotion of technical-scientific development, giving the country a place in an area seen as inherent to the national calling itself, strengthened and legitimized in the light of the historical and maritime calling of the Portuguese nation.

Oceanography, as an interdisciplinary area aiming to achieve a scientific definition of the "sea policy", has a strong tradition in Portugal, intersected with the history of cartography and meteorology, with added concerns for navigation safety and the need to know the seabed. It benefited from the charisma and scientific amateurism of several men – many of them from the military, with technical and scientific careers, as illustrated by, among many others, the case of Afonso Chaves.

Framing scientific research institutionally within the field of maritime biology and encouraging its development came with the construction of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium in 1898, inaugurated on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the discovery of the maritime route to India. The Aquarium was created as an institution of "public usefulness", and a few years later received special support from the Society of Natural Sciences, which had King D. Carlos as its Honorary President. The fact that the Vasco da Gama Aquarium was meant for "leisure" and the education of the people, and not directly for scientific research, showed the need for the existence of a Maritime Biology Station. This station was eventually created in 1915, under the authority of the Directorate General of the Navy, but with technical and scientific management by the Portuguese Society of Natural Sciences; in 1919, the Vasco da Gama Aquarium was formally converted into a maritime biology station.

Following World War II, in a context of debate and assertion of the role of science and scientific research in Portugal, the Maritime Biology Station split from the Vasco da Gama Aquarium and became the Institute of Maritime Biology, directly dependent from the Director General of the Navy, with Alfredo Magalhães Ramalho as president. Its scientific work would be mostly devoted to the issues concerning fishery. In 1956, the Center for the Study of Biological Oceanography was created, incorporated in the Guia Maritime Laboratory of the Lisbon Faculty of Sciences, mainly meant to train specialized researchers.

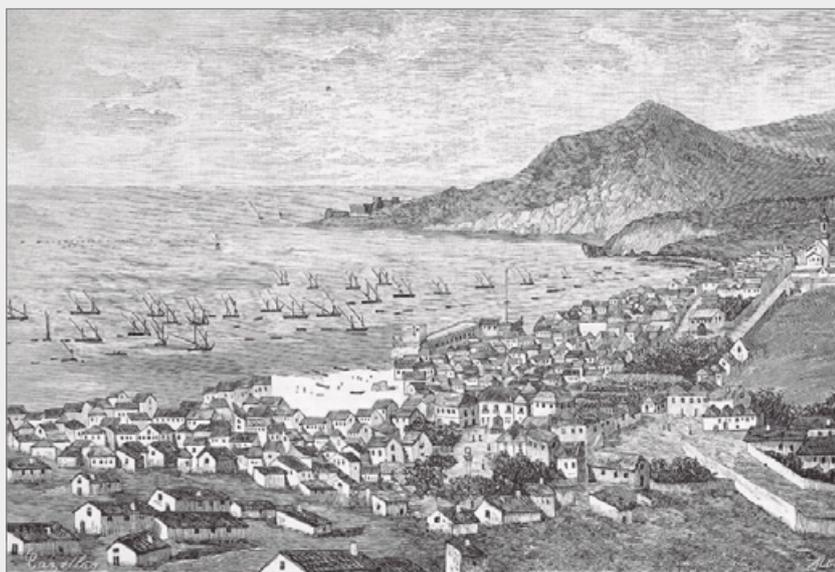
A few years later, Oceanography was mentioned as a strategic option within the framework of the mission to coordinate the national scientific policy given to the Jun-

ta Nacional de Investigação Científica (JNICT) (National Board of Scientific Research), established in 1967 – present day Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Foundation for Science and Technology). However, the coordination of the “maritime development and research of the sea” would remain under the authority of the Navy. It was not until 1979 that the JNICT was able to establish a Standing Oceanology Commission.

Meanwhile, also after April 25th 1974 and the foundation of a democratic regime in Portugal, the Direção-Geral de Investigação e Proteção dos Recursos Vivos e do Ambiente Aquático (General Directorate for Research and Protection of Living Resources and the Aquatic Environment) was created, in 1974; it was followed, in 1977, by the Instituto Nacional de Investigação das Pescas (National Institute for Research on Fisheries); in 1992 by the Instituto Português de Investigação Marinha (IPIMAR) (Portuguese Institute of Marine Research); and in 1997 by the Instituto de Investigação das Pescas e do Mar (Institute of Fisheries and Sea Research), keeping the same acronym, IPIMAR. In 2002, IPIMAR underwent a first merger with the Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária (INIA) (National Institute of Agricultural Research), giving rise to the Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e das Pescas (INIAP) (National Institute of Agricultural and Fisheries Research); in 2007, IPIMAR and INIA were joined by the Laboratório Nacional de Investigação Veterinária (National Laboratory of Veterinary Research) and formed the current Instituto Nacional dos Recursos Biológicos (National Institute of Biological Resources).

Maria Fernanda Rollo, Institute of Contemporary History, NOVA FCSH

Further reading in: Maria Fernanda Rollo, Maria Inês Queiroz e Tiago Brandão, *O Mar como Ciência. Instituições e estratégias da investigação sobre o Mar em Portugal no século XX (da I República à Democracia)*, História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos, vol. 21, no. 3, July-Sept. 2014, printed (ISSN 0104-5970) and electronic (ISSN 1678-4758).



▲ “Cezimbra (desenho do natural por Cazellas)”.

## SOME LITERARY IMAGES

### Sesimbra

Sesimbra appears in *The Lusíadas*, the epic poem of Luís de Camões, in a very short phrase, about the conquests of King Afonso Henriques, around 1165 – “Also conquered was Palmela / And Sesimbra, rich in fish”. It seems little, but for the people of Sesimbra, it represents a lot: it confirms their participation in the epic poem, essential to the Portuguese identity; it is the inscription of their ancestors in the process of the founding Portugal; it is also the recognition of its nature and fishing richness. The adjective used by Camões to outline the fishing nature of Sesimbra – “*piscosa*”, in fact, a new word created by the poet – touches deep in this town, so that nowadays it can be used as an equivalent of the town name, Sesimbra or “*the piscosa*” means the same.

Equally much appreciated by the people of Sesimbra is the text written by Raul Brandão, included in his book of 1923, *Os Pescadores* (The Fishermen). Referring to the local fishermen, he wrote: “*This man is of communist instinct. If one becomes ill, the others gain his bread and he receives his whole wage. If he dies, the widow and the children are supported by his comrades, giving them the wage he had in life. They give the hospital and the asylum a portion of the capture. Everyone has the right to go to sea – everyone has the right to life. Anyone who shows up can go fishing, as long as he is a man of the sea*”. What Raul Brandão witnessed was a social atavism, the survival of a social assistance system maintained for centuries by the local Maritime Corporation, which remained even after the introduction of the contemporary Social Security system. To this day, some fishing boats offer part of their income to the Misericórdia and the Sesimbra Sports Group.

The more extensive literary text that takes Sesimbra as protagonist is the novel *Trapo Azul*, by Romeu Correia, in which the initial chapters – more of a fifth of the book – are located in Sesimbra. It is almost an autobiographical book, written from the point of view of the writer's wife, Almerinda Correia, a native of Sesimbra. Here, the fishermen community is regarded with great pessimism, because it is a profession “*of bad toil and worse gain*”. Death in the sea, sometimes in sight of the shore, is one of the dramas Romeu Correia describes. However, from the point of view of the protagonist, the worst perspectives, for the young women of Sesimbra, derive from the fact that: “*To marry a fisherman is to tie a rope around their neck, to live eternally “under water”. Very few of them have the chance to flee from such a fate ... To marry someone working in Commerce, in Public Services or in affluent homes – is a struck of luck*”.

João A. Aldeia

## OBJECTS AND PLACES WITH MEMORY

### The tree bark canoe

The tree bark canoe, called *nintherere* in the *emakwa* local language, is an artifact that conveys knowledge, secular historical and cultural values of communities. It is a typical traditional vessel and it is used by fishing communities. It is probably one of the most primitive artifacts of that kind, it is still in use in fishing in maritime and inland waters in some parts of Mozambique, and it is moved by a rod, oar and sail.

Long before the fifteenth century this type of vessel had already existed, according to oral sources (Sabino Omar, Angoche, 2013 e anónimo, Cancioneiro de Pesca, 2013), and it is currently on the verge of extinction. The last canoes were located in the Mossuril District, Nampula Province. It has small dimensions: 2.7 meters of length, 0,9 meters of width and 0,35 meters of height. According to oral sources, the use of this type of canoe was common practice in the districts of Moma and Angoche before the colonial period. Preserving it is an important contribution of the Fisheries Museum to heritage education.

The construction of the tree bark canoe starts with the extraction of the bark, the main raw material for the construction of this vessel. The tree from which the bark is extracted is called, in *emakwa*, *othaco*. The traditional techniques for its manufacture are: drilling, sewing and lashing the bark, made in an artistic and perfect way, after the heating process to make it malleable, by immersion, this lasts one day. Generally, the manufacturer of canoes is also a fisherman. In fact, his living is based on fishing and not from the construction of boats, therefore, this is not considered an economic activity, because many members of the community know how to build them.



▲ Tree bark canoes, Mozambique.

Larsen Vales and Cássimo Marojo  
Fisheries Museum, Mozambique



▲ Caiçara. Brazil.

## OBJECTS AND PLACES WITH MEMORY

### The Caiçara

One of the main economic activities in the county of Marechal Déodoro, State of Alagoas, is the artisanal fishing in the Mundaú / Manguba's Lagoon Complex – Northeast Brazil. One of the fishing gear is the *caiçara*: a fixed fishing apparatus, made of white mangrove wood (*Laguncularia racemosa*), consisting of about 25 to 30 sticks (*mourões*) that are buried in the bottom, which are arranged in a rectangle, for the fishermen to put in the middle some branches of mangrove with leaves, which work as a shelter. The fish are collected 30 days later with a *redote* (small gillnet that fishermen operate in this type of fishing and also in the withdrawal of the fish). Floats and pieces of lead are placed, one in each mesh of the net, which has a total of 25 fathoms of length and height of 3 to 4 fathoms.

Gilmar Furtado  
Instituto Federal de Alagoas/IFAL

## THE WHALE UNDER A MAGNIFYING GLASS

Whales, the largest animals in the planet, can 'figuratively' be shrunken to reasonable sizes to be studied by researchers in the humanities. Under the methodological viewpoint of history and environmental history, of literature and art studies, or even philosophy, we can dissect the whale in the light of our very own curiosity. Over time, in western or westernized societies, the whale was seen and used as a valuable economic commodity – blubber and oil, meat, bones and teeth, ambergris and baleen – all could and were utilized and traded. But the animal was so much more than simply the target of whaling; it was also a symbol of the open sea paradox, of human fears and possibilities mirrored both in the sea surface and in the abyssal deep ocean. The large sea monster, a result of countless encounters with different ocean megafauna specimens, was most of the times represented as a plain whale.

At CHAM, with the collaboration of many researchers and students, as well as colleagues from different institutions, we research the whale in a temporal perspective and with a plural and cross-cultural approach. Years-long of research are resulting in Masters and PhD dissertations, the publication of papers and the establishment of international partnerships and networks. Within the research line on 'Environmental History and the Sea' we expect to keep on addressing the history of whaling and of human / whale relationships as the core of our research.

All information available at: [www.cham.fch.unl.pt](http://www.cham.fch.unl.pt)

**Cristina Brito**  
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## NEWS AND PROJECTS

### THE FISHERMEN AND FISHERWOMEN COLONIES IN PERNAMBUCO

"Memories, Women and Power in the Presidency of the Fishermen/ Fisherwomen Colonies in Pernambuco Gender Transversality" consisted of a research proposal that rescued the access trajectory of women to spaces of power and decision in the Presidency of the Fishermen and Fisherwoman Colonies in Pernambuco in the last decade of the twentieth century. In the state of Pernambuco, located in northeastern Brazil, the first fisherwoman was elected president of her fishing colony in 1989. She was the only female leader of this category until 2007. From this date, the leadership framework in the Fishermen and Fisherwomen's Colony has been modified: six female presidents have been elected with the support of the social movement called "Articulation of the Fisherwomen of Pernambuco". From these six, two were candidates for councillor positions and one was elected to the position in the last municipal elections in 2016, in São José da Coroa Grande. The research is based on feminist epistemology and in the literature involving gender, fishing, and the environment. The methodological proposal of situated knowledge contributed to the elaboration of radio-phonetic soap-operas idealized from the conception of exchanges of knowledge that involve the devolution of research data to the community in the form of booklets, meetings, lectures, and courses. The research made it possible to rescue cases of overcoming and made visible the changes in the relations of power and work of the Fishermen and Fisherwoman Colonies. A web page with photos and texts was made available at the Development and Society Research Group - GPDES0, validated by the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq in conjunction with the Federal Rural University of Pernambuco - UFRPE, created in 2002 and which can be accessed at: <http://gpdeso.com>

Maria do Rosário de Fátima Andrade Leitão,  
Universidade Rural Federal de Pernambuco.



▲ Fishermen and Fisherwoman Colonies, Brazil.

### PLASTICUS MARITIMUS, AN INVASIVE SPECIES

In 2015, Ana Pêgo created the name *Plasticus maritimus* for a highly resistant species (a plastic bottle, for example, takes 450 years to degradate) that is spreading across the oceans at a speed of thousand tons in every sixty minutes. From that day on she assembled exhibitions with plastics collected from beaches, or-

ganized workshops for children, participated in seminars to raise awareness for the harmful effects of this species on the marine ecosystems balance. In 2018 she published an illustrated book written by various hands, *Plasticus maritimus*, an invasive species: Ana Pêgo and Isabel Minhós Martins translated ideas and feelings into words; Bernardo P. Carvalho represented them in illustrations. Created as an information manual and a guide (a "field guide"), it shows how a tour to the beach is an opportunity for an ethical and scientific exercise: the collection and "classification" of individuals of this species. The book points to the importance of saving the oceans and gives suggestions of habits to be implemented in our everyday life. Published by Planeta Tangerina in 2018.

### THE MOZAMBIKAN FISHERIES MUSEUM

The Mozambican Fisheries Museum is organizing an inventory of cultural goods inherent to the relationship between humans and the aquatic environment in ten districts in Cabo Delgado Province, with the assistance and scientific coordination of the ARPAC – Institute of Sociocultural Research, public entity of a scientific-cultural nature created by the decree n. 26/93 of 16 November, of the Council of Ministers, with the objective of studying, archiving, conserving and disseminating Mozambican cultural heritage. This work, which will be carried out in two phases of thirty days each, technicians will apply the UNESCO Convention of 2003 on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, as the main methodological instrument for this study and inventory.



▲ Fisheries Museum, Mozambique.

### DUNES. SEA, SAND PEOPLE

"Sea, Sand and People. An Environmental History of Coastal Dunes" project, funded by the European Research Council (ERC), aims to study dunes as hybrid landscapes or natural and cultural heritage, as the result of the long-term interaction between dunes and the populations living by the sea. The useless and dangerous dunes from the past are now protected and valuable worldwide. How did this happen? And why? An interdisciplinary team, working at the Center of History of the University of Lisbon and coordinated by Joana Gaspar de Freitas, is preparing an innovative global history about dunes that can contribute to a better adaptation to environmental challenges in coastal areas.

Joana Gaspar de Freitas  
DUNES Project PI / CHUL / IELT NOVA FCSH