

LUSOTOPIE

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Editorial

e-Lusotopie but Lusotopie forever!



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EDITORIAL

e-Lusotopie but still *Lusotopie*!

The issue of *Lusotopie* you are now reading is the last to be published by Brill Academic Publisher (Leiden).

Between 2005, our first year with Brill, and the end of 2009, we have brought out five volumes with nine great issues (a double issue was published in 2005) with this Dutch publishing house. It is also very likely that this ninth edition with Brill, the seventeenth since Volume I came out in 1994 with L'Harmattan (Paris) and then ten volumes (eleven issues) with Karthala from 1995 to 2004¹, will be the last to be published "on paper". A threefold change is underway: a change of medium (electronic replacing paper), a change of publisher (discussions underway with two North American publishers) and a change of chief editor planned for 2010-2011 (M. Cahen having long since announced his decision to stand down from this responsibility which he has held for too long).

Is this a leap forward, given that 2010 is supposed to be the year of electronic publishing worldwide? We hope so.

But there is no reason to hide it is first and foremost an adventure that did not meet with the success we hoped for. A look back will tell us that *Lusotopie* has always been backed by the Bordeaux Institut d'études politiques and had its offices at the IEP's Centre d'études d'Afrique noire. But this does not mean that it was an institutional journal like the *Cahiers d'études africaines* or the *Cahiers du Brésil contemporain*, which are academic journals of the École des hautes études en sciences sociales. *Lusotopie* has always been the journal of a modest researchers' association and was born outside of the main institutional framework of Luso-Afro-Brazilian research. It is worth remembering that it has never been a research journal focusing on the "Lusophone cultural area". Lusophony is anything but a cultural area: in the words of Eduardo Lourenço, it is a specific area of intersection with other identities, and very often its spaces are not, or are barely, Portuguese-speaking. The language is an identity marker, no more than that. *Lusotopie* was a journal specialized in interdisciplinary political analysis covering a historically relevant area, aiming to allow comparative studies within this area and, above all, with the rest of the world. The goal was to publish articles focused on political analysis (irrespective of the disciplines of the authors) as a generalist contribution to the production of knowledge. By definition, *Lusotopie* could therefore not correspond exactly to a research centre or a university department. It was above all a network journal. And therein lay its originality, but also its weakness.

The difficulties encountered with the two publishers (Karthala and Brill) have resulted in an unsatisfactory number of subscribers and an unsatisfactory circulation in bookshops. Additionally, since 2005, libraries have been reducing the

¹ On *Lusotopie*'s switch from Karthala to Brill, see M CAHEN, "Lusotopie 1994-2004: vive la suite!", *Lusotopie* (Paris, Karthala), X: 7-14; M. CAHEN, "Lusotopie joins Brill. A new step forward for the journal after twelve years", *Lusotopie* (Leyde, Brill), XII (1-2): xi-xiii.

number of their subscriptions to “paper” journals and transferring them to purely electronic media. This decline would seem to be inexorable, even though a few publishers are still bringing out new paper journals.

So today, what are the options for continuing the adventure? The starting point is an absolute imperative: substantially increase the readership of *Lusotopie* and find the best-suited medium to achieve this. We think that continuing *Lusotopie* in electronic form, backed by a major academic publisher, would be the best solution. As Brill did not wish to publish *Lusotopie* in electronic form, we have been in discussion with two North American academic publishers. Anne Pitcher (Michigan University) and Marissa Moorman (Indiana University) are in charge of these discussions. The objective is to be included rapidly in databases such as the Americans Muse and JStor and the Brazilian Scielo, which means, especially for the first two, the ability to demonstrate a sufficient level of renown beforehand. This is why, at least for the initial years, *Lusotopie* will be accessible to all and totally free of charge.

The general orientation will not change and the journal will still be trilingual and firmly independent². The artwork will have to remain high-quality, with an attractive front cover. There will naturally be a new generation of editors with a largely modified team and a different way of doing things. The “Europeans” and “Africans”, in majority at the beginning, will not disappear from the editorial staff, but the number of “Americans” (North and South) should increase.

For the “old guard” – the founding members – there is no doubt that the switch to fully electronic form is difficult to deal with, as we are strongly attached to good old paper. Fully electronic? Not quite. While it is true that the system of books on demand works well for books and not so well for journals, we do want to look into this possibility so that those who prefer paper can obtain *Lusotopie* in this form.

Naturally, we will be letting everyone know when Volume XVII, the first volume in this new form, will be coming out (probably late 2010). The best solution is to consult the www.lusotopie.sciencespobordeaux.fr website regularly. There are a large number of features currently being prepared or finalized: “Guinea-Bissau, a Permanent State of crisis?”, “Christian Atlantic”, “Bourdieu in Lusophony”, “Luso-oil”, “Slavery memory stakes”, “Judaism in Lusophony”, etc.

As for Brill, it has decided to promote the nine issues it published: they will be available free of charge in unabridged form on Ingenta from January 2010; private customers and libraries can buy the paper volumes at the very attractive global price of just €100 (see order form, p. xi)!

We are counting on your loyalty.

The Editorial board

following the extraordinary general meeting
held in Paris on 29 November 2009
<info.lusotopie@sciencespobordeaux.fr>

² The title *Lusotopie* remains the property of the Researchers’ Association of the journal *Lusotopie*, an association formed under French law.