

Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies
Instituto de Estudos Islâmicos Al-Muhaidib

Report of Activities

(November 2013 – October 2014)

Lisbon, October 2014

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1. First steps to the Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies

1.1. Background – Portugal and Islam

When looking at Portugal and at its historical role, we understand this country's privileged relationship with Islam, which is an integral part of its cultural identity with the presence of the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, in particular in Portugal, for almost seven centuries, since the arrival of General Tariq ibn Ziyad in 711 A.D in Portugal.

Also, the position of Portugal is most relevant in the Portuguese Speaking Countries in Africa (CPLP), especially Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, where a significant percentage of its population is Muslim.

Today, the Portuguese Islamic community is well integrated and socially recognised.

Concerning politics of cultural and religious debate, Portugal has developed initiatives that have become references throughout Europe.

Both the Islamic community and the Universidade Lusófona, and its department of Religious Studies, have played an important role in creating this framework of excellence in an Europe, where radicalism is stronger than ever since the end of World War II.

1.2. Proposal of the Al-Muhaidib Family

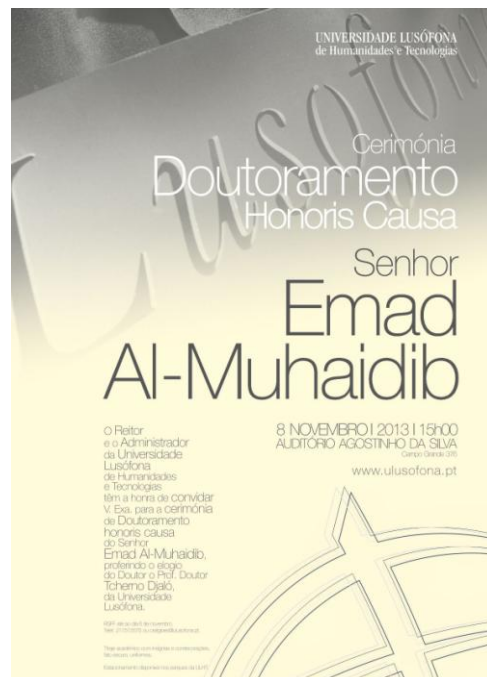
Within this framework it is most relevant to have studies at higher education level, that deepen the knowledge of Islam, and, without any prejudice, make it a part of its curriculum of academic knowledge. Not only for its students but also for the enlightenment of the general public, who may benefit from increasing their knowledge of history, the role that Islam and the Muslims played in Portugal until the XV century and also for the contribution given by the Muslims for the period of Renaissance which followed their departure in 1492.

One should also not forget the media worldwide and, in particular, in Portugal which lacks true knowledge of Islam and of Muslims and therefore we frequently see distorted news about Islam and Muslims.

Following contacts by Dr Abdool Magid Vakil, the Al-Muhaidib Family has shown interest of creating an area of Islamic Studies at Universidade Lusófona.

In recognition of what the Al-Muhaidib Family has done worldwide for people in need and, in particular, for Islamic knowledge, namely for what has been done in Portugal, in last November, the Academic Board decided to assign a PhD «Honoris Causa» to Mr. Emad Al-Muhaidib.

This honorary award as required by law was duly recognised by the Foreign Affairs Ministry.






In this day of recognition, a volume containing all the speeches was published:



1.3. Establishment of the Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies

Guided by the words of Emad Al-Muhaidib in his speech, the university founded the Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies. The two work fields are:

- Launching of programs for post-graduate studies;
- Create projects to provide correct information about Islam, its History, Language and Culture.



UNIVERSIDADE LUSÓFONA
de Humanidades e Tecnologias
Humani nihil alienum

DESPACHO CONJUNTO N.º 35/2013



ASSUNTO: CRIAÇÃO DO INSTITUTO DE ESTUDOS ISLÂMICOS “AL-MUHAIIDIB”

Tendo em conta que a área de Ciência das Religiões (1.º e 2.º Ciclo, Linha de Investigação e publicações) apresenta, especialmente no que respeita ao mundo islâmico, grande dinamismo, destacando-se o Clube de Filosofia Al-Mu‘Tamid, - em parceria com a Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa-, e os recentes protocolos internacionais, quer com a Global Movement of Moderates Foundation, da Malásia, quer com a Família Al-Muhaidib, da Arábia Saudita, enquadradas pela Iniciativa da Aliança de Civilizações;

Decide-se:

- 1.º Criar o **Instituto de Estudos Islâmicos “Al-Muhaidib”**, com os seguintes objetivos:
 - a) Desenvolver programas de pós-graduação no âmbito dos Estudos Islâmicos, incluindo mestrados e doutoramentos;
 - b) Criar projetos de divulgação relacionados com a herança histórica do Islão em Portugal, na Península Ibérica e nos Países Lusófonos;
- 2.º Para o seu orçamento o **Instituto de Estudos Islâmicos “Al-Muhaidib”** beneficiará de dotações da entidade instituidora da Universidade Lusófona, de receitas próprias resultantes da “prestação de serviços” e de doações de Fundações, personalidades e outras entidades interessadas.
- 3.º Nomear o Senhor Professor **Paulo Mendes Pinto** para Diretor do Instituto ora criado.
- 4.º O Senhor Professor Paulo Mendes Pinto tem 15 dias desde a presente data para apresentar à Reitoria e à Administração um plano de atividades, um projeto de Regulamento e uma previsão orçamental para o ano de 2014.
- 5.º O presente Despacho Conjunto entra imediatamente em vigor.

Lisboa, 29 de outubro de 2013.

<p>O Reitor</p>  <p>Prof. Doutor Mário C. Moutinho</p>	<p>O Administrador</p>  <p>Prof. Doutor Manuel de Almeida Damásio</p>
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2. Report of Activities

(November 2013 – October 2014)

Established on 29th October 2013, the work developed at the Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies has followed the two guide lines shown before.

One of them centred around the programs for post-graduate studies, and the other more connected with information for the public in general. If one is concerned with the specialization studies – academy - the other has its focus on wider knowledge about Islam for the population in general.

Pursuing these objectives, we present the activities in «Teaching» and «Research» with two components: a) the academics, and b) population in general.

It is thought that only with the proper articulation between teaching and research we can create a strong speech on peace and dialogue.

2.1. Teaching and courses

2.1.1. Master's degree

In the Master's Degree in Religious Studies, this year, we offer to the students three subjects supported by the research of the Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies:

a) Socio-anthropology of Contemporary Islam

Prof. Filomena Barros

b) Portuguese Inquisition

Prof. Paulo Drumond Braga

c) The Prophet and the Koran

Prof. Carimo Mohamed

All the three subjects were well received by the students, and in the next year we will increase it with some other offers.

2.1.2. Course in the Municipality of Oeiras: «Islam: Origins and challenges of present days»

Oeiras, a municipality in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, has the highest density of citizens with higher education in Portugal.

The Councilor (for culture and social affairs) asked the Institute Al-Muhaidib to organize a course on "Islam. Origins and challenges of present days".



The Program was:

March 22 | Prof. Paulo Mendes Pinto

Problem of a Modern / western look about Islam: tradition, hierarchies, secularism, law and society.

March 29 | Prof. Paulo Mendes Pinto

The birth of Islam: between fight against polytheisms and proximity to Judaism and Christianity.

April 5 | Prof. Filomena Barros

The spread of Islam from the beginning of the Hijrah to the conquest of the peninsula.

April 5 | Master Daniel Nunes

Islam the way to Africa and India.

May 3 | Sheikh David Munir

Islam as a religious and social identity. The woman in religion, culture, politics and family.

May 17 | Dr. Abdool Magid Vakil

Islam and Lusophone world: what future?

May 24 | Sheik Rachid Ismael

The challenges of integration of Muslims in Europe.

May 31 | Prof. Carimo Mohomed

The issues of the "Arab Spring".



Paulo Mendes Pinto



Sheikh David Munir being introduced by Prof. Marlene Rodrigues, Councilor for Culture



Moulana Rachid Ismael, Director of the Islamic College of Palmela



Abdool Vakil, President of the Islamic Community of Lisbon

2.1.3. Course about «Islamic literature in the Al-Andaluz»

Professor: Pilar Garrido Clemente (Professor of the Islamic and Arabic Department Studies at the University of Murcia)

Specific Information about the Course:

-Key points:

Islamic spirituality, Arab world, Islamology, Sufism, Eastern and Western Islam, Literature of Al-Andalus.

-Main Objectives:

Analysing the different ways in which main Muslim authors related to spirituality-linked tendencies have presented their religious experience in theory and practice through the History of Eastern, Andalusian and Maghrebi Islam.

Studying the main features which confirm the identity of the different tendencies and the resources that their main authors used to support their discourse.

Learning to distinguish the main tendencies and their repercussion in the political and social history of the Arab and Islamic world, with reference to Islam from East to West.

Knowing the different literary styles in which Islam's spiritual figures expressed themselves.

Researching the cultural relations and exchanges established throughout history between Muslim, Christian and Jewish spiritual leaders and also their mutual influences.

-Contents:

Subject 1: General introduction to mystical tendencies in Islam: doctrines, practices, schools and authors.

Subject 2: Andalusian literature: tendencies, styles and respective compilations.

Subject 3: Development of Arab art and literature from the 10th century and its influence to the present days.

2.2. The Al-Mu'tamid Philosophy Club

Prior to the creation of the Al-Muhaidib Institute for Islamic Studies, the Al-Mu'tamid Philosophy Club was an important part of the activities between the Universidade Lusófona and the Islamic Community of Lisbon.

These debates were an important way to show how the Muslim community is open to the surrounding society. In all the discussions there were more than sixty participants, people of various faiths.

We emphasize the participation of some VIP, especially former Ministers, Mayors, and the former President Jorge Sampaio.

17/ 06/ 2014

Racism and Xenophobia: what Europe is (de) constructing



Rosário Farmhouse (High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue)
Bernardino Soares (Mayor of Loures)
Feliciano Barreiras (former Secretary of State)

27/ 05/ 2014

Circumcision and Genital Mutilation



Joshua Ruah (MD, from the Jewish community)
Mussa Omar (MD, from the Muslim community)
Sheikh David Munir (Iman of Lisbon Central Mosque)
Diana Lopes and Ana Ferreira (lawyers)

15/ 04/ 2014

The 25th April Revolution and Religious Freedom



José Vera Jardim (former Minister)
Fernando Soares Loja (Presidente of the Religious Freedom Commission)
Joaquim Franco (journalist)

11/ 03/ 2014

Influences and legacies of Arabic and Islam in Portuguese Language and Culture



Adalberto Alves (linguist)
Filomena Barros (historian)
Susana Serra (archaeologist)

25/ 02/ 2014

Banking and Ethics: Islamic vision and new formulations Western



Abdool Magid Vakil
Imran Mahomed
Nuno Couceiro
João Gil Pedreira

21/ 01/ 2014

Freemasonry Today?



José António Ribeiro Mendes
José Eduardo Meira da Cunha

26/ 11/ 2013

The collapse of the welfare state in Europe



Zita Seabra (former MP)
Joaquim Franco (journalist)
João de Almeida Santos (academic)

2.3. Research

2.3.1. Pedagogical project with the Portuguese Association of History Teachers

In last February, we signed an agreement with the Portuguese professional association of history teachers.

With this partnership we have started an important work field: the production of pedagogical materials to use in schools.

Like in a great part of the western world, the history of Islam and the Islamic culture are not yet well understood by our students. With this project we will give to the teachers good instruments to do a quality work in the class room.



The signature of the agreement in the Lisbon Central Mosque

With the focus in the "History Curricula", the project with this association intends to establish the principal faults of the official curriculum. We are doing the same analysis in the approved teaching manuals.

We are writing the final document to send to the Ministry of Education, to get the approval for the new guidelines to be followed by all Portuguese teachers.

There are two products from this project:

- A document with the guidelines to the teachers (a pedagogical kit, materials to help teachers in the class room);
- A monograph document with a synthesis of Islamic History to help the teachers;
- A web site with the all documents;

The first presentation of the products of this project scheduled to take place in 2014.

2.3.2. Data base of Islamic Heritage - “Islamic Heritage Database”

We have, since January, two researchers working full time in a main project which is a database of Islamic heritage in Portugal.

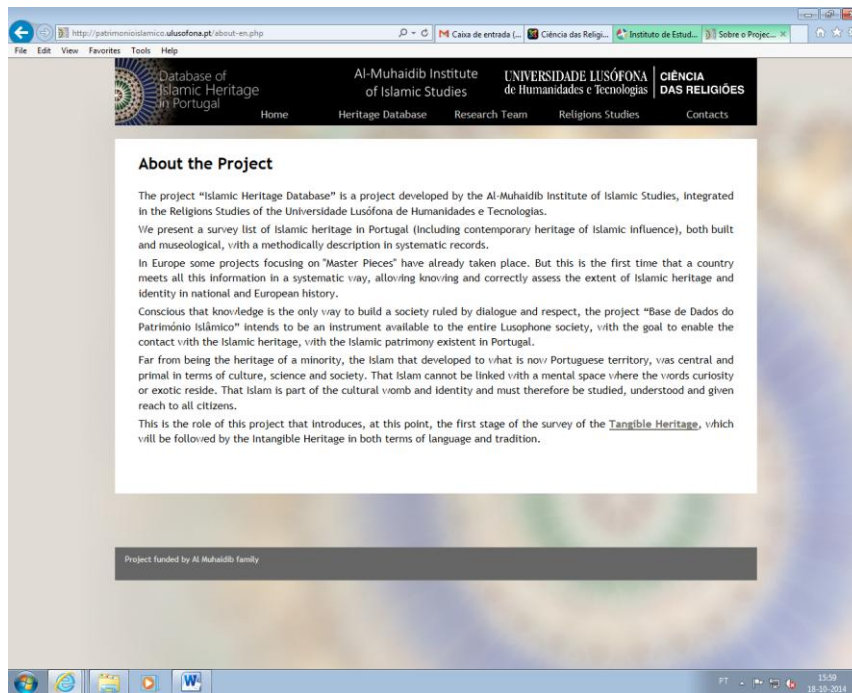
In the project “Islamic Heritage Database” we present a list of Islamic heritage in Portugal (Including contemporary heritage of Islamic influence), already built and existing in museums, with its methodical description, in systematic records.

In Europe some projects focusing on "Master Pieces" have already taken place. But this is the first time that a country meets all this information in a systematic way, allowing knowledge and access in a correct manner of the extent of Islamic heritage and identity in national and European history.

Conscious that knowledge is the only way to build a society ruled by dialogue and mutual respect, the project “Islamic Heritage Database” intends to be an instrument available to the entire Lusophone society, with the goal to enable the contact with the Islamic heritage existent in Portugal.

Far from being the heritage of a minority, the Islam that was developed in what is today Portugal, was central and primal in terms of culture, science and society. That Islam cannot only be linked to a mental space related to words “curiosity” or “exotic”. That Islam is part of the cultural womb and identity and must therefore be studied, understood and given reach to all citizens.

This is the role of this project that introduces, at this point, the first stage of the survey of the Tangible Heritage, which will be followed by the Intangible Heritage in both terms of language and tradition.



Home page

In this moment we have finished the first step of the research, and we have more than 900 completed sheets in the data base.

The Website is in the link below:

<http://patrimonioislamico.ulusofona.pt/index.php>

NOTE:

With the other project presented in pages 14 and 15, the presentation of the “Islamic Heritage Database” will take place in 2014.

For both projects, we have the desire to accomplish this dual presentation in the Castle of St Jorge, in Lisbon. For that, we have already contacted the castle’s management and obtained the necessary authorization.

2.3.3. Lisbon's Castel documentation



The monument:

Lisbon is one of the most visited cities in the world. With thousands of tourists each day, the ancient castle is the most visited monument in the city.

The castle is a construction that comes, essentially, from the Islamic period, offering to the public an important museum with the Islamic materials. The fortification, built by the Islamic authorities in the mid-11th century, was the last defensive stronghold for the elite who resided in the citadel, namely the governor whose palace was nearby, and the elite city administrators whose homes are visible today in the Archaeological Site.

After Dom Afonso Henriques conquered Lisbon on October 25th, 1147, to become the first king of Portugal, the Castle began its golden age as home for the royalty. The old Moorish period buildings were modified and enlarged to receive the King, his court and the bishop, as well as the Royal Archives in one of the castle towers. Once the Portuguese kings had transformed the Castle into a royal palace in the 13th century, it was chosen to receive many notable Portuguese and foreign figures, as well as hold festivities as well as coronations during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries.

The translation:

The Lisbon Municipality has asked us to translate all the materials offered in the castle to Arabic language, doing an important help to the recognition of the importance of Islamic culture in the European identity.

The translation is already finished.

2.3.4. The role of the religious leaders in Mozambique and Guinea

We have started a reflection group to debate the place of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the two Portuguese speaking countries with great communities of Muslims and Christians (Mozambique and Guinea).

It is our desire to understand how the religious leaders work for peace, and their role in the development.

A senior researcher is doing systematic interviews with those religious leaders.

Lisbon, October 2014.

Paulo Mendes Pinto