

instance in their fidelity to the model of the *doctorat d'état*. However, the Association came to realize, quite gradually and in particular because of the veritable explosion of critical methods in the 1960s and 1970s, that, unless it wished to cut itself off from live research as it was understood in other advanced countries, unless it wished to see its members grow old with a maybe too exclusively historicist notion of French studies without really ensuring that a new generation could take up the baton and without being sufficiently open to renewal in the discipline, it would be well advised to welcome into its midst colleagues from even more diverse areas and to pay greater attention to 'approaches' that it was not traditionally inclined to.

For this reason initiatives were begun on several fronts: more notice was taken of research outside the 'western' arena (thus it is that, for a few years now, a day or half-day at each conference has been devoted to the situation of French studies across broadly defined or in far flung geographical regions); methods of communicating knowledge have been changed (for instance by the introduction of round tables); an annual prize was set up five years ago to be awarded to a young researcher from a different country every year; an Internet site has of course been created; younger colleagues have been invited to join the council; at conferences, researchers who are not yet intimidating 'authorities' have more often been given the floor; topics that are sometimes more relevant to the contemporary world have been included in the programme for meetings; fundraising methods have been, if not discovered, at least examined; cooperation is being attempted with 'twinned' organizations and with the FILLM.

The chief function of the AIEF and its main achievement, however, remain those of organizing the annual conference and producing, uninterruptedly for 52 years, the annual volume of *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Études Françaises* (CAIEF), which has a print run of 1000 copies. This is very much more than a 'shop window'. Without wishing to appear self-satisfied the Association believes this is its contribution to the progress of knowledge. The *Cahiers* series has an important place in many libraries, and constant reference to it is made throughout the world in the most diverse subject areas across all the periods our discipline is concerned with. The most prestigious names appear in these volumes, which the Association makes it a point of honour to publish in a remarkably short time (nearly always within 10 months of conferences). When the moment comes for the AIEF to draw up an even fuller account of its editorial activities than the one that appears in the Tables of its *Cahiers* and when it undertakes to produce, as for example the Société d'Histoire Littéraire de la France did for its centenary, or the Société d'Étude du XVIIe Siècle for its 50th anniversary, a synthesis of what it has contributed, it is a safe bet that it will be able to pride itself on having provided a complete, precise panorama of the discipline's development.

[www.aief.eu.org](http://www.aief.eu.org)

## International Association of Lusitanists (AIL)

*Associação Internacional de Lusitanistas*

*Cristina Robalo Cordeiro*

Although I may need to introduce our Association, a member of the FILLM since 1997, it is probably unnecessary to introduce the Portuguese language at the end of a year in which our

culture has been much discussed, because of the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Brazil, the proclamation of Timor's independence, and the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to José Saramago in 1999.

Nevertheless, I shall begin by recalling that Portuguese is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world with more than 240 million speakers. Camões is our Dante or Cervantes, but, in the 20th century and on both sides of the Atlantic, Pessoa and Jorge Amado have helped immensely to make our heritage known and valued. And is it necessary to mention the name of the author of bestsellers, currently the most popular worldwide, in order to prove how alive and fertile the Portuguese language is? It is the official language of Portugal and Brazil, but is also spoken in Asia (on Timor) and Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe).

The International Association of Lusitanists is based at the University of Coimbra, one of the oldest European universities. In accordance with the terms of its statutes, its fundamental objective is 'to develop the study of the language, literature and culture of the Portuguese-speaking countries, to organize conferences, to publish their proceedings, to collaborate with national and international bodies'. It has more than 500 members in around 30 countries (Spain, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, UK, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, Argentina, Brazil, Portugal, Canada, USA, Guinea, India, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Korea, Senegal) and has seen a spectacular flowering in the last few years, as was demonstrated by our most recent conference in Rio de Janeiro in August 1999.

To pick up on the aims set out by our current president, Professor Carlos Reis, I would say that our present policy represents a threefold intention to grow, to consolidate and to diversify: working both 'on a local and on a multi-continental level', we wish to recruit new members in the university world and also among those who disseminate culture, all those who love our language and literatures and are influential in any area of knowledge, information and even the economy.

Setting up working groups in the various countries where AIL is represented is, we think, a vital condition for success. We also wish to increase the number of cooperative agreements with other associations with a view to creating an international confederation of bodies involved and interested in the study of the language, literature and culture of the Portuguese-speaking countries. The Camões Institute is a crucial element in the system that is in the process of being organized. I must also emphasize the important role the PALOP community (Pays africains de langue officielle portugaise – African countries whose official language is Portuguese) will play in this effort.

In addition to the specialist meetings arranged on a regular basis, our Association offers its members an information bulletin and a journal (*Veredas*) with Professor Sebastião as editor-in-chief. Naturally we have a website, where all the relevant information about AIL, its statutes, members, activities, projects, is made available. Our Association would like to be of assistance too: it has helped and will continue to help build up bibliographical stocks destined, for example, for the Agostinho Neto Library in Luanda. Similarly we have agreed to extend our efforts to provide cultural assistance as far as Timor.

Our next conference will be held in North America, at Brown University (Providence) and will be organized by Professor Onésimo de Almeida, who has been teaching Portuguese culture there for more than 20 years. Without any doubt this will represent a new stage in the development and reach of our Association.

*www.uc.pt/ail*