



The Traveling Eye: Retrospection, Vision, and Prophecy in the Portuguese Renaissance (Adamastor Series)

Fernando Gil, Helder Macedo

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The idea for *The Traveling Eye* came as a new departure in an old dialogue between the two authors, one a literary scholar, the other a philosopher. Our focus was initially centered on a philosophical hypothesis concerning evidence, with specific reference to the prophetic writings of Father António Vieira, but it occurred to us that this perspective could be applied to literary works, particularly those of the Portuguese Renaissance. The studies that one of us had dedicated to the initiatory aspects of *The Lusiads* and to the codification of esoteric meanings in the work of Bernardim Ribeiro suggested a possible convergence of our two lines of research. But there are other issues raised by the Portuguese Renaissance: voyages, the new, the encounter with difference and how to understand it. The most obvious and direct expression of these issues is found in the chronicles of voyage and empire, whose importance is duly noted in the study by Luís de Sousa Rebelo included in Chapter III of this book. The literary treatment of this material seems to us no less revealing. Seeing (“seeing clearly seen” as Camões says in *The Lusiads*) poses the problem of simultaneously seeing “what is there” and of how what is there could be seen. This questioning from the outside by the “traveling eye” went hand in hand with new ways of relating to oneself and to others. Three key Renaissance authors, Luís de Camões (1525?-1580), Francisco de Sá de Miranda (1481?-1558?) and Bernardim Ribeiro (b.1480s?), address the human subject’s relationship as a perplexing issue. Their works transform the feeling of love into a multifaceted investigation that questions the identity of the individual. A recurring theme in this book is the metamorphoses of the self brought about by love.

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