

Evaluation Panel: ARTS AND HUMANITIES - History and Archaeology

R&D Unit: Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa (CEHR-UCP)

Coordinator: Paulo Fernando de Oliveira Fontes

Integrated PhD Researchers: 31

Overall Quality Grade: WEAK

Evaluation Criteria Ratings

- (A) Quality, merit, relevance and internationalization of the R&D activities of the Integrated Researchers in the R&D Unit Application: 2
- (B) Merit of the team of Integrated Researchers: 2
- (C) Appropriateness of objectives, strategy, plan of activities and organization: 2

Justification, Comments and Recommendations

The Centre of Religious History is a relatively small R&D Unit, with 44 integrated researchers (31 of them with a PhD) and 43 collaborators. It positions itself as a leader in the field of religious history studies, and aspires to collaborate on the national as well as international level. Its special emphasis is of course with the social and cultural relevance of religion in Portugal and the Lusophone countries. It has managed to establish research collaboration not only in Portugal and the Lusophone world and, to some degree, outside this sphere. They claim as their contributions new historiographical approaches to a number of phenomena, such as religious orders, the role of gender, religious diversification, leaderships, and religious universes, and modernity and religion. The Centre claims to contribute to the understanding of religious identities. It has participated in a number of international activities, and it has had 16 supervised postgraduates (of which 4 have finished and 12 are still ongoing). It also hosts a number of activities that serve the scholarly community, such as the peer-reviewed international publication *Lusitania Sacra*. CEHR is directly responsible for the editing of *Lusitania Sacra*, a peer-reviewed journal specializing in religious history, with international circulation and referenced in several databases, namely Scopus; the print and digital edition of two editorial collections: *Estudos de História Religiosa* and *História Religiosa: Fontes e Subsídios*; the on-line edition of the collection *Instrumentos de Descrição Documental*; the maintenance of the Portal de História Religiosa which includes a Platform of Archives (PAPIR) both in open access. These publications are important in the arena of religious studies.

The focus of the Centre is clearly in the Portuguese speaking world the number of articles written in other languages is small (of the 10 listed publications 2 were in English). The five activities in section 4.2 of the application are contributions to the study of the role of religion in various forms. The funding sources are mostly national with FCT giving the lion's share. There are some international sources (62 Keuros) and some EU money (50 Keuros) but no private sources from outside Portugal.

The Panel maintains that the Centre degree of internationalization is, despite the activities, rather weak. The Unit is relatively small, composed of one single research group with about 40 integrated researchers, and it presents weak research results during the assessed period. The Unit works on three main lines of research, viz., power, movements and institutions; forms of religious life, identities and affiliations; and memory, mediations and materialities of religion. The main selected contribution is the development of new historiographic approaches along five lines: religious orders in society; gender and forms of religious life; religious diversification: theologies and sociabilities; leaderships and religious universes; and modernity and religion. But results in terms of internationalization, contributions for knowledge advancement, advanced training (only participation in an interuniversity PhD Programme in History), and knowledge transfer, are rather weak. Only the edition of a well-recognized journal (*Lusitania Sacra*, indexed in Scopus database) is remarkable. Even so, the publications selected in section 4.3 of the application are relatively poor in terms of international recognition: only one of the ten items appeared in an internationally prestigious company (Routledge), and this one hardly has to do with the main thematic lines of the Unit; remaining items appeared in domestic media and in Portuguese. The Panel thinks that the contributions of the Unit in their areas of research are important ones, although it was not clear to the Panel what the new historiographical approaches amount to, with the possible exception of digital humanities which is mentioned e.g. in connection of the strategic plan to promote dissemination of research results.

In so far as the training of MAs and PhDs is concerned, the Panel noted that both numbers have been on the rise. However, the post-graduate training is very unsystematic, and the selection of graduate students seemed rather haphazard, based on the widely varying interests of the potential candidates. The Research Unit is connected to the

Catholic University but since there is no Department of History in the university there seemed to be little support towards the basic training of the PhD candidates.

As to the plan for the period between 2013 and 2017, CEHR proposes to develop three lines in an analytical perspective: a) Power, movements and institutions; b) Forms of religious life, identities and affiliations; c) Memory, mediations and materialities of religion, with seven co-related Working Groups. All the research groups will make an effort to open research to the international arena, but the most successful initiative was made for the RG religious orders, collaborating as it does with local authorities and civil society institutions. They initiated a network aiming to serve the community and to create a set of synergies that launched the group into the participation in Creative Europe Project's (2014-2017). From this point of view, the main asset of the Unit seems to be the edition of *Lusitania Sacra*. Also interesting is the launching of the Portal de História Religiosa and the digital archives activity.

The Panel finds the Research Unit rather weak in its degree of internalization, and likewise the merits of the Integrated Researchers are relatively weak. Therefore it does not recommend funding for the Unit.