

The mirror of the Portuguese Past

Voz off -

Young 1 –

Young 2 –

Young 3 –

Young 4-

Guide –

Music and wardrobe -

Voz off - In the Museum of Ancient Art, four portuguese students were contemplating some objects, emerging their historical past.

Young 1: What a national pride! The Portuguese discoveries contributed, without a doubt, to the European Renaissance, in the end of the fifteenth century.

Guide: Let's remember the conquest of Bartolomeu Dias that, on board of a caravela, overcame the Cabo da Boa Esperança, in 1488. Just like Pedro Álvares Cabral that, in 1500, found Brazil and we can't forget about portuguese captain, Vasco da Gama, that, in 1498, discovered the maritime way to India, among many other things that left their mark in the world.

Young 3: Of course! Also, Pedro de Mascarenhas that was a part of some expeditions, commanded by Vasco da Gama, that, around 1512, travelled along the borders of the African coast and, in front of Madagascar, found the Mascarenhas Islands, including the Reunion Island.

Guide: Very good! That is the truth!

Young 4: Because of that, we can say that Portugal has been a multicultural country ever since the Discoveries, because our sailors established contact with many other cultures.

Guide: Exactly! Other than that, the Discoveries allowed, as well, commercial exchanges between different civilizations and, like this, cultural costumes arrived at Portugal and we, on the other hand, left our mark on other places.

Young 2: Brave portuguese people showed their will power throughout the world and one thing is for sure, I can't imagine how the world of today would be if the portuguese didn't have that audacity.

Guide: But not all is good... There's no doubt that the glory of our people is deeply connected to the sea, but the suffering is too. In fact, our glorious writers, Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa, as you may know, didn't forget to point out the pain of the Portuguese people felt during the time of the maritime findings.

Young 3: Yes, I remember that poem: "Oh salted sea, how much of your salt are tears of Portugal".

Guide: I'm surprised with your knowledge! The caravela and the nau were the ships, of excellency, of the portuguese discoveries. They brought to Portugal spices and silks from India and treasures from Brazil and they took, to the other side of the world, missionaries, soldiers and colonizing families.

Young 1: Well, here it is an another very important question. On board of these caravelas, that travelled the seas in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the medley of races became a reality.

Young 4: In Brazil, for instance, the Portuguese colonizers even coupled with native women...

Guide: ... and, in the african continent, in Angola and Mozambique, old portuguese colonies, the interaction between different cultures also happened, even though, for several centuries, marked by the supremacy of the portuguese, who imposed their language and traditions on the local populations...

Young 3: ... yes, using them for the farming and domestic work and also for the gold mines exploitation.

Young 1: This dynamic lead the portuguese language to be the fifth most spoken language in the world, present in Europe, America, Africa and Asia.

Young 2: We can't doubt that the Portuguese Discoveries made possible an adventure overseas in order to discover a new world.

Guide: Portugal aimed and launched the maritime expansion, over five hundred years ago. The great portuguese navigators had unthinkable journeys and found a virgin and unknown world on board of the magnificent caravelas.

Young 4: Men, such as Gil Eanes, Bartolomeu Dias, Pedro Álvares Cabral and Vasco da Gama, starred big maritime discoveries and contributed to the development of navigation science, based on observation and experimentation.

Young 1: We created the caravela, we explored the unknown seas, we made great discoveries and we built an identity based on miscegenation and cultural diversity.

Young people together: And, now, all together, we are the youth of Europe, the oldest continent of the world – Austria, Spain, Reunion Island, Norway and, of course, Portugal.

Dina Sarabando