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.

Voyages, the new, the individual, love and prophecy open up yet other, unexpected horizons. One of the main problems that emerges is the rela-
tionship between reason and belief. Contrary to a stereotyped idea about Portuguese culture, there was in fact a strong rational streak in the Portuguese Renaissance period. This is already apparent in Fernão Lopes and his mentor King Duarte, it is part of the central debate in the work of Sá de Miranda, it underlies the rhetoric of Camões, and it even appears in Vieira, through the ambiguities concerning the proof of prophecy. As for belief—in things prophesied, in redemption through love, or in the splendor of discovery attested by cartography—this completely upsets any placid acceptance of what was considered a norm. We found in this kind of belief a “hallucinatory” core that differentiates it from the traditional kind, to the point where hallucination was arguably the support of belief rather than the contrary. From the point of view of the experiential subject, hallucination is an objectification of perception.

Reason and hallucination are articulated in the more or less constant theme of foundation, which assumes diverse and surprising forms. Founding, re-founding and the notion of foundation as it relates to evidence—and these topics may be philosophically articulated—suggest an inquiry into intelligibility, a classical problem in the philosophy of knowledge and in political philosophy. And so it is highly significant that foundation emerges as a determining motif in the works of virtually every author studied in this book—in Bernardim Ribeiro with respect to love’s realization; in Sá de Miranda apropos the status of the I; in a more conspicuous way with respect to nationality, in Fernão Lopes and Camões; and in Fernão Álvares do Oriente and Gaspar Frutuoso as a redefinition of that same nationality when confronted by uncertainty. And Vieira’s Fifth Empire signifies above all a re-foundation of humanity: his writings clearly show that the idealized empire is less about Portugal than about the future of humanity. And already in Fernão Lopes, the process of acquisition and loss of royal charisma is far more important than its circumstantial, human depository. Evidence is at once foundational and unsustainable, whether in love or in prophecy, whether in the definition of nationhood or in the definition of the self.

All these issues come together and are interwoven in The Lusiads, a work whose epic perspective incorporates elements from almost every literary genre then cultivated—pastoral poetry, chronicles, the romance of chivalry, travel narratives—thus reflecting the main cultural trends of the Portuguese Renaissance. For that reason we decided to make it the starting point, res in medias, of our voyage. Fernão Lopes (c.1384-c.1459) and António Vieira (1608-1697) are its chronological boundaries, however. In
both of these writers, rupture marks a beginning. When the former conceives history as prophecy and the latter understands prophecy as history, they establish the beginning and the end of a cycle in which retrospection and prophecy seem to balance each other inversely, as in a chiasmus.

Finally, the reader is bound to notice that, along with the many convergences in our readings and understandings, there are also differences that we make no attempt to reconcile. Those differences are also important, illustrating as they do the complexity of the texts we have examined.

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