

## **Portuguese Ornamental Stones – Identity and Cultural Heritage around the World**

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Portugal has established itself as an independent state on October, 5th 1143 being confined to the south-eastern tip of Europe, with sealed land access to the rest of the continent by the others Iberian Peninsula kingdoms, enemies at the time who did not accept Portuguese autonomy. From the fourteenth century, the history of Portugal reports a period of epic discoveries. New commercial maritime routes have been established. Those routes sailing around Africa, passing through India, drove Portuguese people to Macao and Timor. To the East other routes reach the South American continent. Besides commercial interest, and because the church also financed these trips, they had the mission to evangelize the native peoples that were found. In every formed captaincies, over 29 actual countries, numerous churches, hospitals and fortifications were built. Combining a long tradition and mastery of monumental stone building and stonemasonry, which dates back to the Roman Period, Portuguese were able to combine the need to provide ships stability, using already worked stone as ballast. When arrived to these remote locations, quickly and with few local resources, could erect towering and admirable structures that still prevail today. Most of these regions were colonized and gave rise to independent countries in the 70's of the 20th Century, in some of them Portuguese is the official language and these constitutes the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). This work shows that in addition to the language, traditions, customs, and architecture, there's also a very rich Portuguese Natural Stones monumental heritage building record, which constitutes a very strong link that binds this so special community.

### References

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