
Padrão dos Descobrimentos

ABOUT



The imposing Monument to the Discoveries stamps its mark on the riverside at Belém. It was designed in 1940 to commemorate the "Exposition of the Portuguese World", promoted by the Salazar government to celebrate the eighth and third centenaries of the founding and restoration of the Portuguese nation (1140 and 1640 respectively). However, it was only built in 1960 for commemorations marking 500 years since the death of Prince Henry the Navigator. Designed by architect Cottinelli Telmo, it features the work of sculptor Leopoldo de Almeida.

52 metres in height, the monument symbolises a caravel, headed by the figure of Prince Henry the Navigator followed by a cortege of 32 leading figures from the Era of the Discoveries including, for example, king Afonso V (1432-81), the driving force behind the first discoveries, Vasco da Gama (1460-1524) who discovered the maritime route to India, Pedro Álvares Cabral (1467-1520), who discovered Brazil and Fernando Magellan, who completed the circumnavigation of the globe in 1522, among others.

The façade facing down to the ground takes on the form of a cross decorated by the Sword of the Order of Aviz, the main financial sponsor of the voyages.

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