

The Academic Position of European Ethnology in Portugal

IN PORTUGAL, study, in a broad sense, of the social traditions of the Portuguese people — covering Ergology, Technology, Social Structures, Art, Religion, Music, Dance, Oral Literature, etc. — is generally called to-day "Portuguese Ethnography", "Regional Ethnology", or "Cultural Anthropology".

From the 16th century on, a growing interest has been evident in the gathering of popular traditions, although a majority of such traditions has been used for literary purposes or with moralising and educational aims.

When William John Thoms recommended in 1848, under the pen-name of Ambrose Merton, the use of the word "folk-lore" to indicate all the subjects being then treated in England under the heading of *antiquitates vulgares*, or *popular antiquities*, that word found almost general acceptance among European students of oral traditions. In Portugal, the word was accepted in 1875 by Adolfo Coelho in an article entitled "Traditional elements in Literature". From then onwards, "folclore" has been used in Portugal to mean "oral literature".

At a time when interest in the study of the social heritage of the Portuguese people stretched well beyond mere "oral literature", it was necessary to adopt a word which would embrace every aspect of the social heritage of our people. Such a choice fell on "Ethnography" which, until then, served only to stress the study of the so-called primitive peoples. Adolfo Coelho, in 1890, was already using the word in its modern meaning, when referring to the Portuguese people.

In spite of the fact that there had been a very active group of ethnologists who were interested in the study of the social heritage of the Portuguese people, such as Adolfo Coelho, José Leite de Vasconcelos, Theofilo Braga, Consiglieri Pedroso, Rocha Peixoto, the Abbot of Baçal, and others, there was no university in the subject. This was generally studied by professors of other chairs, mainly those of Portuguese linguistics.

Until 1957 the only chairs of Ethnology in our Faculties of Letters, both at the Universities of Coimbra and Lisbon, were included in the Department of Geographical Sciences. Besides being only half-yearly chairs, these aimed mainly at studying somatic characteristics and the distribution of human races.

However, in 1952, with the appointment of Prof. Jorge Dias to the University of Coimbra, a truly ethnological trend was started in respect of this subject.

With the reform of the Faculties of Letters in 1957, Ethnology began to be taught in two full-year courses, namely "General Ethnology" and "Regional Ethnology", though both were still included in the department of Geography.

"General Ethnology" aims at theoretical and comparative aspects of Ethnology, while "Regional Ethnology" analyses a certain cultural area which may or may not be European. Dr. Jorge Dias has been the professor of the chairs of Ethnology at the University of Lisbon since 1956. He lectured both on areas belonging to European Portugal and on African regions, depending on which of the two was the more convenient at the time, in so far as teaching requirements were concerned. But on the whole it can be said that concentration on European Portugal areas only was the exception rather than the rule.

At Coimbra, from 1956 onwards, lecturer Fernando Pacheco de Amorim directed his teaching towards African problems to the almost total exclusion of all others.

Ethnology has never existed in Portugal as an independent chair, it having always been integrated in the Department of Geography. This has prevented the formation of ethnologists, as undergraduates can only obtain their degree in Geography. However, since 1957, there has been a Doctorate of Ethnology for all those who wish to devote themselves to teaching at universities.

At the "Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina" (Higher Institute of Social Sciences and Overseas Policy), Lisbon University (Rua da Junqueira, 86, Lisbon), there were created in 1956 the chairs of "Cultural Anthropology" and "Native Institutions". This last chair was later replaced by that of "Regional Institutions".

Both the above chairs lend themselves not only to forming ethnologists but to preparing them to be researchers in any cultural area as well. Prof. Jorge Dias has been lecturing

from these chairs since 1956, in his capacity of a full professor. In spite of his inclination for and interest in European Ethnology, he has guided the above courses towards research overseas, mainly because of the Institute's traditions; yet there is nothing to stop the studies taking on a European trend, specially after the reform of the Institute in 1961 which gave it the character of a Faculty of Social Sciences. It is even intended, in the current school year, to start a seminar limited to regional ethnology specially devoted to "Portuguese Ethnography" under the guidance of Prof. Jorge Dias.

Ethnology courses are well attended. About 500 students are enrolled in the course in General Ethnology at the Faculty of Letters. Apart from it being a compulsory course for "geographers", it is also an optional for every student at the Faculty. The course in Regional Ethnology is attended by about 50 students, there being options only for a limited number of the Faculty's Departments; but for "geographers" it is a compulsory course. So, although there are two courses in Ethnology, no degree is given for it, but one is given for Geography.

In the school year of 1966/1967, at the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Política Ultramarina, 223 students attended "Cultural Anthropology" while 85 attended "Regional Institutions". These chairs are compulsory for those taking the Complementary Course, but there is no special preparation in ethnological sciences. Yet this is the one college at university level in Portugal allowing for a better ethnological grounding. Both these courses have been taught by Prof. Jorge Dias, as a full professor. His assistant, Dr. João Pereira Neto, is mainly African-oriented.

Apart from the above mentioned Faculties there are two centres for ethnological research and an ethnological museum, where research also takes place.

The first named is the "Centro de Estudos de Etnologia Peninsular" (Centre for Studies in Peninsular Ethnology), with Prof. Jorge Dias as President and Dr. Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira as Secretary. This Centre was created at Oporto in 1945, as an off-shoot of the "Instituto de Alta Cultura" (Institute for High Culture), but it was only in 1947 that it started doing research in the field of Portuguese Ethnography. It was transferred to Lisbon in 1963.

The second named is the "Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Cultural" (Centre for Studies in Cultural Anthropology), situated at 54, Rua Jau, Lisbon. Created in 1962, its Director is Prof. Jorge Dias and its Deputy Director is Dr. Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira.

An Ethnological Museum is also in the process of being organised, such museum to contain collections from various parts of the World, among which the following from Metropolitan Portugal should be pointed out: agricultural implements, yokes, clothing, ceramics, masks, and a great variety of objects used only by the people in the various provinces.

This Museum which aspires to be the "Museum of Portuguese Man" is for the moment a simple museum for study, not open to the Public, and is annexed to the Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Cultural.

From the above it may be seen that in spite of progress made since 1956, with the creation of various chairs allowing for the ethnological training of numerous students, teaching is either general and theoretical or it is aimed at such cultural areas as are known as the Portuguese Overseas Provinces. Only sporadically have there been courses on Portuguese Ethnography, in the Regional Ethnology chairs.

Until to-day, research in Portuguese Ethnography, at a high level, by an official organ. has only been achieved by the above Centro de Estudos de Etnologia Peninsular, which as has been mentioned is an off-shoot of the Instituto de Alta Cultura. From 1947 on and until to-day and in spite of a limited number of collaborators, this Centre has done an extremely important job. It has gathered field material, whose index cards, for materials proper and photographs, run to thousands and whose publications have long surpassed two hundred.

Prof. Jorge Dias is its Director; Dr. Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, its Secretary; Messrs. Fernando Galhano, Benjamin Pereira, and Mme. Margot Dias, its researchers.

In Oporto, it has a department of Naval Ethnology, under the direction of M. Octávio Filgueiras.

Prof. Jorge Dias, Lisbon