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The History of Portuguese Anthropology

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS:

David Mills (Department of Anthropology, University of Manchester, U.K.) is doing research on "The political history of postwar British Social Anthropology, drawing on his work cataloguing, indexing, conservation and general preparation of the archives of the Association of Social Anthropologists.

Brenda G. Plummer (Departments of History and Afro-American Studies, University of Washington) is pursuing research on "African Studies in American perspective: A history of separate development."

Susan Sperling (San Francisco, CA) is at work on a biography of Ashley Montagu, who died at the age of 94 on November 26 (see obituary, New York Times 11/29/99)

BIBLIOGRAPHICA ARCANA

I. The History of Portuguese Anthropology

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The development of Portuguese anthropology (1870-1960)

Two distinct research orientations are generally accepted in the history of the Western anthropological tradition. One of them, corresponding to the German concept of "volkerkunde" (the study of [other] peoples) prevailed in some "central" European countries, such as Great Britain and France, and in the United States. Here, anthropology developed as a discipline focused on the study of non-western societies and cultures. The other, corresponding to the German concept of "volkskunde" (the study of [one's own] people), was adopted in the "peripheral" countries of Europe. According to "volkskunde," anthropology should be concerned with the study of local folk traditions. The choice between "volkerkunde" and "volkskunde" has been frequently explained as a choice related to the political and ideological circumstances of nineteenth century Europe. "Volkerkunde" developed in countries that ruled over a colonial empire, while "volkskunde" developed in countries that had a "classical national problem," i.e. countries in which a process of national autonomy and/or independence had started. Following

Stocking, one could, therefore, trace a clear separation between “anthropologies of empire-building,” prevailing especially in France and England, and “anthropologies of nation-building,” prevailing in the majority of the remaining European countries (Stocking 1982).

This distinction is somewhat paradoxical when applied to Portugal. In fact, despite the existence of an empire and the absence of a national problem in the classical sense, Portuguese anthropology emerged and developed, from 1870 until 1960, as a “nation-building anthropology,” that is, as an anthropology that not only favored the study of local folk traditions, but also conducted that study as part of a search for Portuguese national identity. Four different periods can be distinguished in the historical development of Portuguese anthropology: the 1870s and 1880s; the turn of the century; the 1910s and 1920s; and, finally, the period ranging from 1930 to 1960.

The major Portuguese anthropologists of the 1870s and 1880s, the period that corresponds to the emergence of anthropology as a discipline in Portugal, were Teófilo Braga, Adolfo Coelho, Consiglieri Pedroso and Leite de Vasconcelos, who were also leading figures in Portuguese culture. The main research areas were folk literature and traditions, studied mainly from the point of view of Max Müller’s comparative mythology.

At the turn of the century the most important Portuguese anthropologists were Adolfo Coelho, the only ethnographer of the 1870s still active then, and Rocha Peixoto. Portuguese anthropology became a more plural field and issues such as traditional material culture, folk art, the social and economic organization of rural communities, were integrated in the research agenda. Evolutionism replaced comparative mythology as the major theoretical influence in Portuguese anthropology.

In the 1910s and 1920s, Portuguese ethnography was mainly focused on the study of folk art, a composite group of objects, running from traditional pottery to folk architecture or traditional clothing. Vergílio Correia, Luís Chaves and Pires de Lima were some of the most prominent representatives of this kind of approach, which possessed a strong “folkloristic” bias.

From 1930 to 1960, the most important Portuguese anthropologist was Jorge Dias, who formed a team including Veiga de Oliveira, Benjamim Pereira, Fernando Galhano and Margot Dias, whose research agenda centered on three main topics: a) the study of mountain rural communities of Northern Portugal; b) the study of material culture and traditional agricultural technologies (e.g. ploughs, granaries, wind- and water- mills); c) overall studies of Portuguese folk culture. Influenced by German diffusionism and the North American school of “Culture and Personality,” Dias was also crucial in the institutional development of Portuguese anthropology. He pioneered the teaching of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology at the Universities of Coimbra and Lisboa and was the founder, in 1965, of the National Museum of Ethnology, the most important Portuguese ethnographic museum.

Besides Dias’ research, this period was also marked by the development of an ethnographic discourse closely associated with *Estado Novo*, the dictatorial regime led by Salazar, which favored a strongly ideological vision of rural Portugal, especially of folk art, which was viewed by the ethnographers of the regime as the core instance of Portuguese folk culture. The development of this kind of ethnography led to the rise, during the late 1950s and 1960s, of an alternative view of Portuguese folk culture, proposed by intellectuals who were active in the left wing opposition to the *Estado Novo*. Michel Giacometti, Lopes Graça and Ernesto de Sousa were some of the key figures of this alternative ethnography of Portugal.

The historiography of Portuguese anthropology: recent researches

The orientation of Portuguese anthropology towards the nationalistic study of folk culture began to change in the 1960s. On the one hand, Dias' research on the Makonde of Northern Mozambique extended the interests of Portuguese anthropology towards the study of non-western cultures. On the other hand, the research of anthropologists such as Joyce Riegelhaupt, Colette Callier-Boisvert and José Cutileiro suggested that a new approach to Portuguese folk culture, devoid of nationalistic concerns, was possible.

However, it was mainly after the 1974 revolution that a new anthropology emerged in Portugal, committed to a vision of the discipline aligned with the major international trends. Initially centered on the study of Portuguese rural communities and based on the Anglo-American Mediterraneanist paradigm, the new generations of post-1974 Portuguese anthropologists eventually moved to a wider range of contexts and themes of research. Ethnicity and national identity, sex and gender, medical anthropology, urban and industrial anthropology have been some of the topics favored in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, and fieldwork has been carried out in such different places as India, Brazil, Macao, Malacca, Morocco or the former Portuguese colonies in Africa.

These transformations also favored the development, in the late 1980s and the 1990s, of an historical approach to the past of the discipline. Having embraced a new vision of anthropology, the post-1974 Portuguese anthropologists felt that they had enough distance to assess the historical development of their discipline. The simultaneous emergence, within Anglo-American anthropology, of history of anthropology as an autonomous area of research, was also of great importance in the development of this field in Portugal.

Of course it was not the first time that historical issues concerning the development of Portuguese anthropology had been addressed. Already in the 1930s, Vasconcelos (1933) had written the first paper on the topic. Later on Dias (1952) developed his own vision of the subject. Written from a presentist point of view, their contributions provided the first systematic genealogical narratives of the discipline in Portugal, as well as the first inventories of its major ancestors. A number of more focused papers, addressing the work of particular anthropologists were also produced (e.g. Ribeiro 1942, Oliveira 1966, Gonçalves 1967). However, it was in the 1980s and 1990s that a more systematic and historicist approach to the history of Portuguese anthropology developed.

Among the studies produced in the last two decades, one can find, first of all, overall approaches to the history of Portuguese anthropology like the ones proposed in the past by Vasconcelos and Dias (Branco 1986, Pina Cabral 1991, 1992, Sanchez Gómez 1997, Leal 1999). Both the genealogies proposed for the discipline and the ways in which its historical development is addressed are, as one could expect, very different from the ones proposed by those two anthropologists. Branco (1986), for instance, focuses on the links between the fragile institutionalization of anthropology in Portugal and the difficulties that its scientific reproduction had to meet. Pina Cabral (1991, 1992) is mostly concerned with the interaction between Portuguese anthropologists and international anthropology. This issue is also addressed by Leal (1999c), who explores some aspects of the nation building nature of Portuguese anthropology. Finally, Sanchez Gómez (1997) contrasts the development of Portuguese anthropology with the history of Spanish anthropology.

Another area of interest in the recent development of Portuguese anthropology has been the study of particular anthropologists. The majority of these studies have been published as prefaces to the re-edition of their works. Particular attention has been paid until now to nineteenth century Portuguese anthropologists like Téoifilo Braga (Ferré 1982, Branco 1985, Leal 1987), Consiglieri Pedroso (Leal 1981, 1988), Adolfo Coelho (Leal 1993a, 1993b), Oliveira Martins (Lupi 1984a, Guerreiro 1986) and A. Tomás Pires (Falcão & Ferreira 1986, Lages 1992). Two of the most emblematic Portuguese anthropologists, Vasconcelos and Dias, have also received some attention (on Vasconcelos see Branco 1994, 1995, Leal 1996; on Dias see Lupi 1984b, Brito 1989, Pereira 1986, 1989a, 1989b, 1999). Pereira's articles on Dias, focused on his research among the Makonde, are of particular importance, since they address more general issues concerning the complex relationship between Portuguese anthropology and the colonial realm. Following Margarido's seminal essay (Margarido 1975), this topic has also been addressed by Moutinho (1980, 1982) Donato Gallo (Gallo 1988; for a critique of Gallo's approach see Pereira 1989d). More recently, Porto has addressed issues related to the Dundo Museum in colonial Angola (Porto 1999a, 1999b, 1999c).

Finally, there has been an upsurge of studies addressing specific themes and issues in the history of Portuguese anthropology. Among them one can find: articles on the historical development of ethnographic museums (Pereira, Benjamim 1989, Pereira, Rui 1989c, Branco & Oliveira 1993b, Branco 1995; cf. also the essays by Porto quoted above) or University departments (*Cem Anos...* 1985); the interaction between "central" anthropology in Lisboa and Porto, the two major Portuguese intellectual centers, and local ethnographers working in provincial towns (Martins 1989, Medeiros 1992, Brito & Leal 1997, Leal 1997, Prista 1997, Martins 1997, Sousa 1997); aspects of the folkloristic ethnography typical of the Portuguese *Estado Novo* (Brito 1982, Alves 1997, Branco 1999a, 1999b); or the research of some key figures in the development of an alternative ethnography during *Estado Novo*, such as Ernesto de Sousa (Brito 1995) or Michel Giacometti (Branco & Oliveira 1993a). Ethnomusicology (Castelo Branco & Morgado 1988) and the historical development of a tradition of ethnographic cinema (Leal et al. 1993) have also received some attention. Medeiros has explored the relationship between anthropology and literary and visual discourses in the representation of the folk culture of Northeastern Portugal (Medeiros 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999) and Leal has worked on the relationship between the history of Portuguese anthropology and the construction of national identity (Branco & Leal 1995, Leal 1995, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). Both authors have developed an approach to the history of Portuguese anthropology which emphasizes its links to other disciplinary discourses, such as archaeology, history or literature, which shared with anthropology a strong commitment towards the folk, the rural world and the ethnic roots of Portuguese folk culture.

Although the vast majority of studies available on the history of Portuguese anthropology have been produced by anthropologists committed to the study of the past of their discipline, there is a growing interest on the topic among historians. Melo's M.A. thesis on the folkloristic ethnography favored by the Portuguese *Estado Novo* (Melo 1997) and Santos Silva's book on 19th century Portuguese anthropologists (Silva 1997) provide good examples of this trend (cf. also Ramada Curto 1995).

A final note: although the majority of the references quoted are available only in Portuguese, some of them are written in English or French. That is the case with Castelo Branco & Toscano

(1988), Leal (1999a, 1999b, 1999c), Margarido (1975), Pina Cabral (1992) and Porto (1999b, 1999c).

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II. Recent Dissertations

(Ph.D. except where otherwise indicated)

Cason, Jacqueline (University of Arkansas, 1997), "Loren Eiseley's Evolutionary Narratives."

Dain, Bruce (Princeton Univ., 1996), "A Hideous Monster of the Mind: American Race Theory, 1787-1859."

Day, John V. (Queen's University of Belfast, 1999), "The Proto-Indo-European Homeland and Biological Anthropology" (N.B. esp. "History of Research," pp. xiii-xxi).

Evans, Bradley (University of Chicago, 1998), "The Ethnographic Imagination in American Literature: A Genealogy of Cultures, 1865-1930."

Geiger, Jeffrey (University of California at Los Angeles, 1997), "America's White Shadows: Modernist Ethnography and the South Pacific."

Goodbody, Bridget (Columbia University, 1996), "George Catlin's Indian Gallery: Art, Science, and Power in the 19th Century."

Jones, Daniel H. (Indiana University, 1997), "The Panorama from Point Sublime: John Wesley Powell's 'Religion of Science' and the Intellectual Origins of his Arid Land Reforms."

Jones-Kern, Kevin (Bowling Green State University, 1997), "T. Wingate Todd and the Development of Modern American Physical Anthropology, 1900-1940"

Joyce, Barry A. (University of California at Riverside, 1995), "As the Wolf from the Dog: American Overseas Exploration and the Compartmentalization of Humankind, 1838-1930"

Kramer, Paul (Princeton University, 1998), "The Pragmatic Empire: U.S. Anthropology and Colonial Politics, 1898-1916."

Lavender, Catherine (University of Colorado at Boulder, 1997), "Storytellers: Feminist Ethnography and the American Southwest, 1900-1940."

Oliver, Robert (Vanderbilt University, 1996), "Sex, Anger, and Confusion: The Use of Freudian Theory by American Historians and Anthropologists."