

Ethnographer without a Chair, Playwright of 'Portuguese Folklore': The Life and Work of Francisco Lage

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Francisco Martins Lage (1888-1957) was part of a group of recognized Portuguese intellectuals who were ethnographers without a chair during the first half of the 20th century. Detached from the University – cultural anthropology and ethnology would take longer to be part of academic curricula in Portugal) –, this generation studied the Portuguese people and built a “demotic culture”. This was as an extension of the “ethnographic sensibility” [1] of Portuguese anthropology and ethnography, composed in the 1st Republic (1910-1926) and the early years of dictatorship, from 1926 to 1933. [2]. It was centred on folk art (in its 'decorative essence' and aesthetic exaltation), as a vehicle for the construction of the identity of the Portuguese nation. This set of ideas, based on an approach to the field of folk art, is evident in an ideological vision of the rural world, as a paradigm of folk traditions and the culture of the Portuguese people. This marked the discourse/programme of the Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional (SPN, National Bureau of Propaganda) [3], () a state organism of the *Estado Novo* regime (1933-1974), the dictatorial regime led by António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970).

This authoritarian and conservative political system [4] arose after the period of the 1st Republic (1910-1926). A growing discontent due to deep political instability and economic and social problems led to the insurrection of a group of conservative military. On 28 May 1926,

they led a coup d'état-revolution from the city of Braga that put an end to the existing republican regime. The revolution first installed a transitional government of military dictatorship, and eventually culminated in the promulgation of the 1933 Constitution, which remained in force in Portugal until 1974. The Second Republic of the Estado Novo (New State) was thus born, leading to the establishment of a dictatorship whose ideological roots and archetype were articulated on the basis of a nationalist, conservative, antidemocratic and corporatist matrix. It was organized around a censorship service and a political police force as warrants of political and social control of the country.

The Estado Novo was concerned with shaping the ideology of the Portuguese society on several levels: social, economic, legal and cultural, with the Bureau of National Propaganda being created in 1933. As the highest organ of propaganda and cultural promotion of the regime (with a special focus on folk art and culture), the SPN was directed during its first sixteen years by António Ferro (1895-1956), a figure of the first modernism, writer and journalist who subsequently sustained the *Política do Espírito* [5] (mind policy) as the leitmotiv of his own action. By emphasizing the import of folk culture – and ethnography –, the SPN favoured an idyllic vision of the rural world, especially of folk art, understood by the regime's ethnographers as one of the best illustrations of the Portuguese people's "soul" and cultural traditions.

It is in the political and ideological framework promoted by the dictatorship and the SPN that we can situate Francisco Lage and his relationship with and view of ethnography and the rural world. In 1935, he joined the staff of the SPN – later renamed as Secretariado Nacional de Informação, Cultura Popular e Turismo (SNI, National Bureau of Information, Popular Culture and Tourism). However, it is important to note that during his time in the SPN/SNI, there was no single orientation, but a differential in the analysis and appropriation of folk art, not only understood from an aesthetic perspective, but also by sometimes conflicting criteria of authenticity. These two tendencies were embraced by two major actors: António Ferro and Francisco Lage. As we shall see, this issue was to run parallel to some achievements in the ethnographic field, as promoted by the Secretariado. Considering the Ferro/Lage tension, at times they were in harmony, at others in disharmony, in summarizing their thinking in relation with the SPN folklorist policies.

We cannot disregard the fact that Francisco Lage was deeply connected to wider cultural references beyond folklore and ethnography, as evidenced by a profuse and multidisciplinary bibliography placing him in the humanistic contextual framework of his time. His erudite way of thinking had repercussions on his work and was consolidated by a growing nationalist attitude, which he put at the service of the events and initiatives in which he became involved. Moreover, Lage's leading role in valuing the so-called "folk resources" as essential elements in conjunction with the Portuguese idiosyncrasies proclaimed by the regime was not necessarily acknowledged. In one way or the other, his action was guided by these dictates, using rurality and the identity of "the people" as seducing agents. Notwithstanding his obsessive search for authenticity, eventually it cannot be separated

from the propagandistic display of items of traditional culture, subjugating them to a certain level of stylization that made the combination of folk art and modern art possible.

Following the profound transformations of Portuguese society in the aftermath of the “Carnation Revolution” of 1974, Lage’s work has sometimes been the object of negative reassessments if not oblivion, which reinforces the need to make the *true* dimension of his work better known. His trajectory may be understood as a repository of anthropological actions that are fundamental in the subsequent history of the discipline. Considering that – Portuguese ethnography is permanently under construction, – it is important to recover and understand the memory of ethnographers, sometimes consigned to anonymity, who worked with and for the Estado Novo regime.

Playwright of Folk Culture: Ideas and Work

Along with his interest in and familiarity with folk culture, Francisco Lage was a man of erudition, eclectic thinking and multifaceted knowledge. He demonstrated his dynamism and action throughout his professional life, both as an actor and playwright and as an ethnographer, in his collaboration with initiatives in the field of Portuguese folklore, and as coordinator and organizer of the Museu de Arte Popular (MAP, Museum of Folk Art) in Lisbon.

Lage was born in the Minho region, in the north of Portugal, more precisely in Braga, on 19th December 1888, the city where he spent his childhood and adolescence. These were decisive years in his education, and he already showed a genuine appetite for letters, completing his studies at the Liceu Nacional de Braga (Braga Public Highschool) in 1911. Son of a business man (a *capitalista*, as it was called at the time) and a maid, his social origins gave him access to an educated social stratum, which allowed him to enjoy various readings and to develop a humanist sensibility and erudite curiosity. These certainly were determining factors in the formation of his taste for dramatic art and ethnography, among other fields.

In the context of Lage’s intellectual formation as a bibliophile, it is easy to understand from his vast library at the time of his death (1957) that he was a man whose knowledge was literally (re)constructed by himself, making him a self-taught man. This bibliographic collection, gathered over more than thirty years, allows us to assess which readings served as a model for inspiration and a source of information, and, at the same time, given the small literary production that he left behind, to understand how the works fitted into the actions that Lage carried out professionally. Different interpretative approaches to this collection (e.g., authors, concepts, areas of knowledge) reveal Lage’s interest in a panoply of themes ranging from history, literature, anthropology, ethnography, philosophy and architecture to fashion, food and gastronomy, which essentially constructed his ideology and thinking, with a focus on Portuguese identity. Works by which Lage was inspired allowed him to appropriate the ideas of authors he was familiar with. This allowed him to practise theorizing and to theorize by practising, which helps us to understand a man of action whose

readings were reflected in his work and performance. [6]

The universe of Francisco Lage's life from his youth until the end of the 1920s was also marked by his passion for and participation in theatre. In 1911 Lage left for Lisbon in order to study theatre at the Conservatório Nacional (National Conservatory), namely at the then called Escola de Arte de Representar (School of the Art of Acting). These years of learning proved very fruitful for his development as a dramatic artist and playwright. [7] Soon after completing the course, which lasted one year, Lage started his career as an actor and playwright, which lasted until 1926. In 1922, when he already occupied an important position in the Portuguese theatrical panorama, he joined the recently created Rey Colaço-Robles Monteiro company, [8] for which he wrote/translated various plays in which he himself would act. In the outcome of some performances, as "resident artist" (that is, a full member of the company), Lage would act in leading roles, incarnating historical figures (namely Iokanaan, in the play *Salomé*) [9] and was the target of praise in reviews in the press of the time.

In his desire for affirmation as a playwright, roughly between 1920 and 1926, Lage wrote other plays in collaboration with João Correia de Oliveira (1881-1960): [10] *A Verdade*, a psychological drama that tackles the question of adultery, and *Os Lobos*, about rural traditions, recreating the customs, beliefs and even the gestures of a rural region. According to regionalist tendencies in theatre-staging, both content and symbolism allowed for an exaltation of the rural world. In the case of Lage, this was framed within the ethnographic sensibility he had been developing in the articles on ethnographic themes he wrote in the highly regarded magazine *Terra Portuguesa*,. [11]

Despite his success on the Lisbon theatre scene, at the end of the 1920s, the playwright returned to Braga. His career in his hometown was marked by two relatively brief cycles, both as a "chronicler", participating in the Braga and Oporto press, and as an industrialist and politician (1927-1931). These relatively turbulent and intense periods in Lage's life reflected his thought and, most of all, his critical and humourist spirit as a writer willing to "revolutionize" the northern periodicals, [12] through chronicles and essays displaying a notable variety of themes. As director of a commercial and industrial society called *Indústrias Regionais*, and the Braga factory *Tecelagem de Sedas e Veludos* Lage will not only be remembered for his study and preservation of old patterns and techniques, but also for promoting innovation, quality, and the profitability of a weaving industry under reconstruction.

Lage was a municipal councilman in the service of the Câmara Municipal de Braga (City Council of Braga). This period was marked by the undertaking of multiple local initiatives, including the defence of the environment and heritage, and the organization of a great ethnographic parade, *Parada Agrícola do Minho* (Agricultural Parade of Minho), which was part of the city festivities, the *São João de Braga*, in June that year. The *Parada Agrícola do Minho*, the embellishment and modernization of the city of Braga (1928-1929) and his voluntary retirement from office determined a turning point in his life path. He moved back

to the capital and subsequently reintegrated himself into Lisbon society in the 1930s..

After leaving Braga, Lage began his professional career in service of the Bureau of National Propaganda, in which his unconditional dedication to ethnography dominated. In the newly-formed SPN, he held the position of archivist from the outset (in 1935). At a later stage (1936-1937) he was a member of the jury of the *Prémios Literários* (literary awards), a cultural initiative of the SPN, which rewarded authors and works of interest to the regime. He cooperated on this for 23 years. Also in 1935, Francisco Lage was part of the *Comissão Nacional de Etnografia*. Created by the SPN, this organization had the aim of providing ethnographic knowledge necessary for a great exhibition of Folklore and Ethnography held in Lisbon. Formed by ethnographers and academic researchers from various regions, the association also proposed organizing further exhibitions, creating regional competitions, and forming sub-committees that would deal with themes connected to folk music, architecture and gastronomy. However, its action was ephemeral, and without great practical results.

In the field of popular culture during the course of the 1930s and 1940s and until 1952, Lage's involvement in theatrical productions was linked to the Teatro do Povo (the People's Theatre) created by the SPN in 1936. Until its extinction in 1952, this was a travelling theatre which acted as an instrument of nationalist ideology; a pedagogical as well as an entertaining theatre, it presented actors and plays to specific audiences, namely rural populations in the farthest corners of Portugal. [13]

In this context, Lage was in charge of the organization and performances of the *Teatro do Povo*, a mission which extended to that of playwright. Within his repertoire of plays and theatrical exhibitions, some were winners of the *Concurso de peças para o Teatro do Povo* (a contest of plays) promoted by the SPN, such as (1st Prize): *Ressurreição*, 1938; *Pão que o diabo amassou*, 1939, under the pseudonym of Franciscus, in collaboration with Ribeirinho (1911-1984); and *Maio Moço* (under the pseudonym of Sagitário), 1942. Still in the 1950s – and until his death –, Lage did not stop writing scripts in the genres of historical, regionalist and psychological drama, e.g., in 1952: *Chapelinho de penas*; 1953: *Arremedilho de Guimarães*, and a translation of *King Lear* in partnership with António Lopes Ribeiro (1908-1995). In 1957, *Noite dos Reis* was taken to the stage by the Teatro Nacional Popular, (a designation that in 1944 replaced that of Teatro do Povo, although it partially maintained the same purposes), now under the umbrella of the renamed SPN, the Secretariado Nacional e Informação Cultural Popular e Turismo (SNI).

The Emergence of the “Ethnographic Pulse” and its Role in The Affirmation of a “Genuinely National” Folk Art

Lage's first encounters with ethnography as the description or collection of “folk traditions” took place through his writings at the end of the 1910s in the most prestigious Portuguese ethnographic journal of the time, *Terra Portuguesa: Revista Ilustrada de Arqueologia Artística e Etnografia* (1916-1927). His article “cobertas estampadas” describes the blanket-making

process, the printed decorative motifs, and the materials and utensils used in the stages of their creation. This approach to ethnography by favouring folk art would guide much of his activity as an ethnographer. In fact, Lage's interest in ethnography, and the knowledge he developed about the Portuguese people, its material culture and folk art led him to join the services of the SPN's division dedicated to ethnography and folk culture (Secção de etnografia e cultura popular) in 1936, a task he embraced with energy and dedication for 22 years (1935-1957).

In the 1930s, the SPN would carry out a systematic policy of dissemination of Portuguese folk art as a process of construction of national identity and affirmation of the nation, sustained by a set of initiatives of a folkloric nature, both inside and outside the country. In this context, an interpretation of Lage's theory and praxis by exploring a hermeneutic and qualitative analysis allows us to understand his relationship with and opposition to certain goals of the folklorist policy, namely his defense of authenticity against the prevailing aestheticization of folk traditions and culture within the SPN/SNI. On this basis, his activity and involvement in various folkloric initiatives, namely as mentor and organizer of ethnographic projects promoted by the SPN/SNI (including the selection and acquisition of folk art objects) would sometimes be compromised by opposing understandings manifested by the SPN on the one hand and by Lage on the other (i.e., aestheticization versus authenticity).

If we can see tensions throughout various initiatives in the ethnographic field, they are particularly salient in the project outlined by Lage for a Museu do Povo Português (Museum of Portuguese People). Although planned by Lage, the project was dominated by the desire of Antonio Ferro (director of SPN) to dedicate it to decorative folk art. Lage called for a group of ethnographers, including Sebastião Pessanha (1982-1975) and Guilherme Felgueiras (1890-1990), to collaborate in this upcoming institution, but Ferro refused, replacing them with painter-decorators.

Although they were at odds, some examples of flexibility between the two are visible in certain initiatives such as national and international exhibitions of folk art, where the objects of folk art exhibited were selected according to their decorative, aesthetic value. In this respect, Lage's clear understanding of the purposes of a folk art exhibition – as opposed to his concept of the museum, which implied a broader range of ethnographic and museographic knowledge – sometimes made him accept the selection and display of objects whose aesthetic effect prevailed: they were appealing “images” for a public which was sensitive to a visual and iconographic nationalist culture. This was in line with the folklorist policy followed by his director.

The Time of Folklorist Achievements

During the 1930s and 1940s, the SPN organized several exhibitions of folk art abroad, as part of a programme to “present Portugal to the world”. The first took place in Geneva (1935), with

the collection and selection of folk art under the responsibility of Lage. The modernist arrangement of the room by a team of painter-decorators, together with the display of the artefacts from a purely aesthetic perspective, set the beginnings of a model which would guide future exhibitions.

In 1937, as the internationalization policy pursued, the Portuguese participation in the Paris International Exposition [14] reflected this approach par excellence. Lage was once again responsible for the organization and displays in the handicraft room (Fig. 1). He was also in charge of the planning of folk festivals (*arraial minhoto*) at the Portuguese Pavilion, focussing on remnants of a certain “folk culture” from the northern province of Minho. In the organization and purposes that defined the selection of the display, Lage did not hesitate to bring together pieces that stood out for their authenticity and others for their attractive, “picturesque nature” (for example, the gold filigree) following the SPN’s doctrine in printed form. The dichotomy between authenticity and the aestheticization of folk art was always there. At the Paris International Exposition, Portugal was awarded the *grand-prix* for the Portuguese handicraft room, and Lage was awarded a *diplôme d’honneur* for his work in creating the regional mannequins exhibited.



Fig. 1

Folk Art Exhibition, SPN studio, 1936.

Collection AFC PT/FAQ/AFC/66/001166.

The path of international exhibitions continued with the 1939 New York World Fair and its extension in San Francisco. The Portuguese presence in the American capital fulfilled one of the SPN’s major stakes, in the person of António Ferro. At this fair, the touristic promotion of the country was an integrated and inevitable counterpart of folk art. The actual artefacts, only a few, were eventually chosen by the painter-decorators which indicates that Lage’s influence was challenged.

Similar events took place in Madrid in 1943 and in Seville and Valencia the following year. In Spain, folk art was presented in three exhibitions, with the organization of the rooms defined by the painter-decorators in a clear aesthetic framework of objects of material culture selected by Francisco Lage.

In Portugal in the 1930s, the success achieved by folk art at the international exhibitions

legitimized it before the Lisbon elites and a broader urban population. In 1936, an exhibition of folk art – an enlarged version of the collection presented in 1935 – was organized on the small premises of the SPN in Lisbon (see Fig. 2). The ethnographer Luís Chaves (1896-1977), assisted by Manuel Cardoso Marta (1882-1958) [15] and Lage as folk art specialist, took part in its realization, planning and catalogue.



Fig. 2

Folk Art Exhibition, Portuguese Pavilion, Paris
International Exhibition, 1937.

FT 003100679. Mário Novais Studio Collection /FCG-
Art Library and Archives.

The following year, in 1938, the competition *A Aldeia mais Portuguesa de Portugal* (the most Portuguese village in Portugal) took place (see Fig. 3). It was as if folk art exhibitions were extended nationwide. The contest was intended to reveal the virtues of the Portuguese people, the country's ethnographic riches and national and regional customs, in the most remote places and villages of the country. With the aim of conveying the values of a national folkloric and ethnographic revival, Lage had a full participation in it, organizing and regulating the whole competition. He was responsible for selecting the candidate villages for the award, based on the proposals made by provincial councils, as well as coordinating the national jury's visits to the competing villages and collecting pieces of their material culture. This competition reinforced Lage's constant search for the authenticity of traditions, an attitude that was evident in the elimination of villages that did not comply with the regulations. According to Lage's rules, authentic ethnographic phenomena contrasted with the conscious *mise en scène* of some apparently living traditions by village's residents singing, dancing and busy in their agricultural tasks before the members of the jury.



Fig. 3

Contest of the most Portuguese village in Portugal,
1938, "Adufos and flute, Malpica".

Photographic archive of the Matosinhos Town Hall.

The greatest celebration and most important initiative of the SPN – and the regime – in the field of rural ethnography was, without doubt, its participation in the grandiose *Exposição do Mundo Português* (Exhibition of the Portuguese World). [16] SPN participated in it through the creation of the *Centro Regional* (regional centre) divided into two parts: the *Secção da Vida Popular* (Popular Life Section) and *Aldeias Portuguesas* (Portuguese Villages). As the celebration of the Fatherland (*Pátria*) among the Portuguese was at stake, the creation of the *Centro Regional* pursued this goal in two different ways. The *Secção da Vida Popular* materialized a programme of “monumentalization” of folk culture, while in the enclosure housing *Aldeias Portuguesas* there was a physical statement about the country (continental and insular), in its recreation of the life and people of various regions of Portugal. In *Aldeias Portuguesas* (see Fig. 4), a nucleus of regional houses was created, where villagers “staged” various scenes of rural life, in particular their craftwork. In the pavilions of *Secção da Vida Popular* (see Fig. 5), different displays of material culture were exhibited; artefacts used in various activities (i.e., fishing, shepherding and tillage), both from inland and coastal regions; objects of folk religiosity and superstition; representations of transport models and traditional architecture; handicraft utensils and products from weaving and pottery. In these pavilions the public was also given the opportunity to observe the work of artisans who, in an ethnographic approach, worked on or produced various pieces according to their trade.



Fig. 4

Section of Portuguese villages of the “Centro Regional”, Exhibition “O Mundo Português”, 1940.

Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Arquivo Fotográfico do SNI, PT-TT-SNI-DO-06-01M-57276.

In charge of the *Centro Regional* project, Lage first drew up a plan for the organization of ethnography and folklore services, which was abandoned by the SPN for budgetary reasons. The definitive modules (*Aldeias Portuguesas* and *Secção da Vida Popular*) were accredited to ethnographers Luís Chaves and Cardoso Martha for the design and organization, and Lage for the selection of the objects on exhibition. To participate in the celebration of the *Duplo Centenário* (1140-1940 and 1640-1940; see note 18) the SPN published *Vida e Arte do Povo Português* (1940, *Life and Art of Portuguese People*), a compilation of folkloric essays on themes such as folk art, costume and transport. This was organized by Francisco Lage, who brought together contributors such as ethnographers Vergílio Correia (1888-1944), António Rocha Madahil (1893-1969), Sebastião Pessanha and the decorator-artist Paulo Ferreira (1911-1999), who provided the graphic illustration of ethnographic themes.



Fig. 5

Transport, weaving and pottery pavilion, weaving room, popular life section of the “Centro Regional”, Exhibition “O Mundo Português”, 1940.

Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Arquivo fotográfico do SNI, PT-TT-SNI-DO-06-01M-01953.

Also in this year of historical commemorations, following António Ferro’s *lição do bom gosto nacional* (lessons in good national taste) and taking inspiration from the *Ballets Russes*, the SPN created *Verde Gaio*, a classical ballet group dedicated to stylized performances taking inspiration from Portuguese “folklore”. *Verde Gaio* brought together writers, set designers, musicians, dancers and costume designers. Its debut performance took place at the *Exposição do Mundo Português* (1940), followed by other performances abroad and in Portugal.

The ballets were intended to have genuinely Portuguese scripts. Based on legends and other folk traditions, Lage wrote the script for one of the ballets, *O Homem de Cravo na Boca* (1941), with music by Armando José Fernandes (1906-1983) and costumes by Paulo Ferreira (1911-1999). His undertaking of the ethnographic activities of the SPN in the early 40s continued with the organization of small evocative exhibitions of ethnographic objects from Monsanto, quilts from Castelo Branco, and regional costumes from Viana do Castelo (see Fig. 6), marked by a strong determination to combine the decorative and aesthetic of exhibits with authenticity.



Fig. 6

Exhibition of the regional costume of Viana do Castelo (weaving, embroidery and bobbin lace), SPN headquarters, 1945.

Collection AFC, PT/FAQ/AFC/06/002/0260/01061.

In parallel with several planned but unrealized initiatives [17], Lage's activities continued in 1947 with the organization of folk dance groups contests (see Fig. 7). In this context, the "Lagean" vision about authentic folklore led to amendments to costumes, dances and songs. Lage also promoted national surveys to record the existence of philharmonic bands to preserve and record regional traditions which were of importance in the communities' social structure.



Fig. 7

Contest of folkloric dance groups of Beira Baixa, Castelo Branco, 1947.

PI19, Municipal Library of Castelo Branco.

A New Impetus: The Creation of the Museu do Povo Português

Between exhibitions and shows of folk art, the desire of the SPN and its director, António Ferro, was to create a museum that would bring together Portugal's ethnographic heritage. Francisco Lage was asked to draw up a plan/programme for the future Museu do Povo Português (Museum of the Portuguese People) to be housed in the pavilions of *Secção da Vida Popular* of the *Exposição do Mundo Português*. This ambitious project for the new museum in the historical district of Belém reinforced Lage's desire to pay tribute to the Portuguese

people, to national folklore and ethnography, displaying contents from each province through different themes present in the permanent exhibition rooms. This was to be based on geography (the environment), physical anthropology, socio-cultural aspects and ethnographic particulars (e.g. food, clothing, work). The ethnographer conceived the Museum as a place for the study of the Portuguese people, an institution that would portray a traditional, little-known society, and would deal with speech, craft techniques, customs and beliefs, among other dimensions of folk culture associated, essentially, with rurality. Lage conceived the museum as a kind of memorial to prevent the disappearance of a threatened heritage, in particular the material culture. However, for budgetary reasons or perhaps due to divergences of opinion around the programme, this project never came to fruition. In fact, Lage's plan included folk art as only a parcel of a broader programme, which was contrary to António Ferro's ideas, and what had taken place in previous SPN exhibitions.

Museu de Arte Popular: The Final Stand

In response Lage offered alterations to his initial plan but insisted that some criteria for his initial programme be kept. He also called on the collaboration of renowned figures, namely ethnographer Sebastião Pessanha and anthropologist A. Mendes Correia (1888-1960). However, his ambition for the museum, implying an approximation between geography, physical and cultural anthropology and ethnography, was hindered by the fact that the project was to remain definitely under the control of the director of the SPN, António Ferro, who preferred museum focused on folk art. With stylized wall decoration of the exhibition rooms entrusted to a team of painter-decorators – especially the artist Tomás de Melo, also known as Tom (1906-1990) – this choice fulfilled the Bureau's desire for the aesthetic and decorative to the detriment of ethnography.

Lage was entrusted with displaying the museum collections, taking on the task of acquiring the objects to be exhibited. Although many items represented complex artefacts of folk culture, they were selected for their aesthetic singularities and presented as works of art. Lage made his best, however, to select objects for their characteristics of authenticity and genuineness.

Inaugurated in 1948, the *Museu de Arte Popular* (see Fig. 8) was not the coveted ethnography museum programmed by Lage, but rather a museum of folk art/visual decoration, which rested on an educational, political and propagandistic choice by the regime. Nevertheless, in the following years, Lage would try to enhance the museum by carrying out expansion works, with new spaces for temporary exhibitions and also investing in restoration services and developing a policy of new acquisitions. He even proposed – together with the ethnographer Sebastião Pessanha – the creation of an ethnographic study centre associated with the museum, the *Centro de Estudos Etnográficos* expressing a concern with endowing the museum and the Bureau's actions with a more scientific and cultural stamp. However, this was not successful, either due to changes in SNI policy (devoting greater attention to tourism) or due to budgetary issues.



Fig. 8

Hall of the Beiras, Museum of Folk Art, 1953.
Archives of the Museu de Arte Popular (MAP).

From 1949 onwards, and despite António Ferro's departure, Lage continued to provide his services and transmit his peculiar knowledge about folk culture within the SNI. Thus, despite the changes in the Bureau's policies, he continued his work in the field of ethnography until 1957, the year he died.

More than sixty years after his death, Francisco Lage remains an unknown figure, both within the history of Portuguese anthropology in the 1930s and within the history of the Estado Novo, and its actions of nationalist propaganda. However, Lage's collaboration in international and national exhibitions, including the *Aldeia mais portuguesa de Portugal*, was decisive, and his activities multifaceted, as editor of several books dedicated to Portuguese ethnography, also as playwright of the Teatro do Povo, and the *Verde Gaio* ballets, as a gastronome – associated with the menus offered in *Pousadas Portuguesas* (regional historical hotels) –, and finally in setting the Museu de Arte Popular.

In this sense, Francisco Lage clearly emerges as a figure of anthropological interest, as an orchestrator in various movements, although often occupying a peripheral place. Despite his ambivalent connections to the Estado Novo regime and its nationalist propaganda, it is important to recognize his deserved place in disciplinary history as a bibliophile, intellectual, ethnographer and animator of Portuguese folk culture. Committed to his “theory in practice”, Francisco Lage would probably place his knowledge and humanistic approach at the service of any regime.

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[1] LEAL, João. 2002. “Metamorfoses da arte popular: Joaquim de Vasconcelos, Vergílio Correia e Ernesto Sousa”. *Etnográfica*, VI (2), 272.

[2] In fact, there was a community of ethnographers without a chair from the 1st Republic who collaborated with the Estado Novo regime in its folklorist policy and action, of which Luís Chaves (1889-1975) is the most relevant example.

[3] The SPN promoted this ethnographic ideal of Folk Art based on the will of political power, conferring on it a label of propaganda art placed at the service of the “national resurgence”. Besides, it is also in the cultural field that the Folk Art “adopted” by SPN appeared as warrant of a specific, Portuguese cultural identity.

[4] PINTO, António Costa. 1992. *O salazarismo o fascismo europeu. Problemas de interpretação nas ciências sociais*. Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 14.

[5] The concept of “politique de l’Esprit” was first advocated by Paul Valéry (1875-1945). In a substantially different manner, it was used by António Ferra as a line of political action and discourse, to justify the necessary investment in the education of the Portuguese people through a cultural agenda and propagandistic script affecting various cultural and artistic sectors.

[6] In this set of readings, among others, in the field of history, literature, ethnography and anthropology, are works such as: HERCULANO, Alexandre, *História de Portugal desde o começo da monarchia até ao fim do reinado de Affonso III*, VASCONCELOS, José Leite de, *Etnografia portuguesa*. Introdução Fontes de Investigação Etnográfica. Vol. I, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, GALTER, Juan Subias, *El arte popular en España*. De Campolide a Melrose: *Relação de uma viagem de estudo. Filologia, etnografia, arqueologia*, PIRES DE LIMA, Augusto

César, *Estudos etnográficos filológicos e históricos*, BASTO, Cláudio, *O traje à vianesa*. Vila Nova de Gaia: Estudos Nacionais, 1930; CHRISTIANSEN, Friedrich, *Das spanische volk, sein warhres Gesicht*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1937 (with a dedication from the author to Francisco Lage). CHAVES, Pedro. *Rifoneiro português*. Coleção Folclore e Pedagogia. Porto: Domingos Ferreira Lda, 1945. DIAS, Jaime Lopes, *Cantigas populares da Beira Baixa lidas e ouvidas por um médico*. Lisbon. Imp. Lucas C^a, 1944 CASCUDO, Luís da Câmara, *O Folk-Lore nos Autos Camoneanos*. S. l.. Lage also had works in his library that were included in the list of books banned by the regime.

[7] During his stay at the Conservatory, as well as making his debut as editor of an official publication of the School, the theatre magazine *Theatrália – revista de Arte*, (1913), Francisco Lage took to the stage for the first time at the *Teatro Nacional*, as part of the cast in the play *Alcoólico*, by Bento Mântua (1878-1932), and was the only student/amateur actor to receive any praise in reviews in the theatre press.

[8] The Rey Colaço-Robles Monteiro company, created by the actors Amélia Rey Colaço (1898-1990) and Felisberto Robles Monteiro (1888-1958), made its debut at the Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos in 1921, and moved to the Teatro Politeama in early May 1922, where it continued until 1926. Thus began a long life that would end in 1974, passing through various establishments dedicated to the dramatic art, such as the Teatro Nacional Almeida Garrett, the Avenida and the Cineteatro Capitólio. Its recognition and prestige in the Portuguese theatre of the 20th century was due not only to the artistic qualities of its owners, and careful theatrical sets (for which they did not hesitate to call upon famous artists), but was also thanks to the chosen repertoire, in which predominated the plays by new Portuguese authors (*A Companhia Rey Colaço Robles Monteiro (1921-1974)*, *Correspondência*, edited by Vítor Pavão dos Santos, 1989, pp. 4-5).

[9] The one-act play *Salomé*, written by Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), was presented at the *Politeama* on 19 April 1926. Leitão de Barros and Raul Lino directed it, with Francisco Lage in the role of IOKANAAN (the prophet), a performance that earned him the highest praise. *De Teatro*, ano IV, 8th series, No. 43, 2nd part, No. 1 – Actualidades – Resenha de teatro, p. 7.

[10] João Correia de Oliveira (1881-1960) was a writer, playwright and poet. He collaborated with the magazine *Águia* (1910-1926, Oporto), dedicated to literature, art, science and philosophy, and was literary director of the modernist magazine *Contemporânea* (1922-1926, Lisbon).

[11] In 1917, Francisco Lage collaborated in the magazine *Terra portuguesa*, an illustrated magazine of artistic archaeology and ethnography, directed by Sebastião Pessanha, ed., published between 1916 and 1927.

[12] For a year (1928-1929), Francisco Lage wrote the daily chronicle for the newspaper *Correio do Minho* entitled *Bons Dias*, on several themes, such as adultery, lying or dancing. He also wrote chronicles for *Jornal de Notícias* on the daily life of the common citizen, the reading public, who is confronted on a daily basis with issues that are part of the minor events.

[13] SANTOS, Graça, *Le spectacle dénaturé: Le théâtre portugais sous le règne de Salazar (1933-1968)*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2002.

[14] Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne.

[15] Manuel Cardoso Marta was a teacher, writer, and part of the Comissão Nacional de Etnografia in 1935. He collaborated directly as an employee in the Exposição do Mundo Português – Secção de Enografia. He contributed an article to the volume *Vida e Arte do Povo Português*.

[16] The *Exposição do Mundo Português*, an exhibition of history, a living document, was considered one of the greatest political and cultural initiatives of the Estado Novo. It took place in 1940, as part of the commemoration of the double centenary, eight centuries of the commemorative date of the Foundation of Portugal (1140) (National Independence) and three hundred of the restoration of independence (from Spain). This national commemoration of the double centenary (1140-1640-1940), also known as the *centenários* took place in an extensive area that was completely reconverted in order to house numerous thematic pavilions and leisure spaces in Lisbon (Belém), by the Tagus river. The exhibition was divided into sections on history, ethnography and the colonial world, the latter showing the greatness of the colonial empire, justifying imperialist aspirations. This grandiose achievement included the collaboration of the main modernist artists and architects, who thus imposed a modernist stamp on various architectural and artistic works. In the midst of a troubled period in world history, when Europe was experiencing the horrors of war, Portugal, a country with a neutral position, showed the world its distinctive success, fulfilling the government's propaganda goals: maintaining a country in an apparent climate of peace, progress and prosperity.

[17] Such as the second edition of the book *Vida e Arte do Povo Português*, pottery exhibitions, housing in Beira Baixa and the 2nd edition of the competition *A Aldeia Mais Portuguesa de Portugal*.