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MAPPING MEDITERRANEAN PORTUGAL: PASTORAL AND COUNTER-PASTORAL¹

This article focuses on the different images of Mediterranean Portugal developed by three important Portuguese social scientists of the 20th century: the geographer Orlando Ribeiro, the ethnologist Jorge Dias and the social anthropologist José Cutileiro. The article argues that these different images stem from different ideological attitudes towards the countryside, ranging from pastoral to counter-pastoral, and are also related to different ways of addressing the links between the countryside and national identity.

Keywords: Portugal, the Mediterranean, history of anthropology, pastoral, national identity

Social sciences, pastoral and counter-pastoral

Geography, anthropology and even some rural sociology — as far as they are concerned with the study of the rural populations of the West — can be considered a modern form of a more ancient genre: pastoral. They are produced by city dwellers with a strong attraction towards the countryside. Very often, they depict the countryside as an Arcadia, that is, a place of delightful landscapes and noble virtues. And even when they do not, they still adhere to the rules of the genre, producing what Raymond Williams called counter-pastorals (Williams 1993 [1973]:13-34). There, the city dweller's engagement with the countryside is challenged by its sudden revelation as a place where life is more complex and difficult than was suggested by the beauty of the scenery.

In this paper I will try to address some Portuguese geographical and anthropological discourses on the Mediterranean as discourses deeply

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rooted in the realm of pastoral and counter-pastoral. I will also try to clarify the links between these Arcadian and counter-Arcadian discourses and more comprehensive ideological statements about national identity. In fact, as in the cases of other modern forms of pastoral that have emerged in the West from the eighteenth century onwards — such as painting or literature — Arcadian and counter-Arcadian statements embedded in the social sciences have been closely linked to processes of iconization of national identity, in which the countryside stands as a metaphor for the nation itself.

Ribeiro, Dias and Cutileiro

When we look at a map, Mediterranean Portugal looks like a somehow weird concept. Despite its long maritime coast — of about seven hundred kilometres — the Portuguese territory is not bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, but by the Atlantic Ocean. Exact geographical location, though, is not everything, and in southern Portugal — especially in the provinces of *Algarve* and *Alentejo*, but also in *Estremadura* and *Ribatejo* — some geographical, cultural and social features have strong similarities with the traditional stereotyped image of the Mediterranean: a mild climate characterised by bland winters and bright hot summers; a landscape dominated by the combination of uneven and rocky mountains, vast planes and a placid sea; a rural economy traditionally based on wheat, olive-trees, vineyards, sheep and goat herds; patterns of rural architecture based on white cubic houses, etc.

Taking advantage of these and other similarities, three relevant figures in twentieth century Portuguese culture — Orlando Ribeiro, Jorge Dias and José Cutileiro — thought that it would be promising to develop a systematic analysis of Southern Portugal using the Mediterranean as their guiding concept.

Let me introduce them briefly. Orlando Ribeiro (1911-1997) was a geographer and can be considered the Portuguese Vidal de la Blache. Jorge Dias (1907-1973) was an ethnologist and can be seen as a kind of tardy Portuguese Franz Boas. As for Cutileiro, he was a social anthropologist and can be described as the Portuguese Julian Pitt-Rivers.

Irony aside, Orlando Ribeiro was the most important Portuguese geographer of the twentieth century. He had a history academic background — derived from his graduate studies in history and geography — and was strongly influenced by the French school of human geography. Having read Vidal de la Blache's *Principes de géographie humaine* when he was eighteen (Ribeiro 1970:17), he later decided to get into close contact with the French geographers. In the 1940s, after his Ph.D., he went to Paris for a three-year stay, where he attended, among others, the lectures of Demangeon and De Martonne. Being a prolific author, he wrote one of the absolute classics of twentieth century

Portuguese culture *Portugal, o Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico* ("Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic") (Ribeiro 1963[1945]). Jorge Dias was one of the leading twentieth century Portuguese anthropologists. Influenced by the German ethnological tradition, with which he had come into contact while doing his Ph.D. in Munich, he was also attracted to the north American school of "Culture and Personality". He was the leading figure of a team, which included Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, Benjamim Pereira, Fernando Galhano and Margot Dias, whose research agenda was centred on three main areas: the study of rural Portuguese communities (cf. Dias 1948a; 1953); the study of material culture and traditional agricultural technologies — e.g. ploughs, granaries, irrigation systems (cf. for example, Dias 1948b and Dias, Oliveira & Galhano 1994 [1963]; Dias & Galhano 1953); global studies of Portuguese folk culture (cf. in particular, Dias 1990a [1953]; 1990b [1955] and 1990c[1960]).² One of his most important contributions to twentieth century Portuguese culture was a rather small essay published in 1953, where Dias developed an analysis of the Portuguese "national character". Called *Os Elementos Fundamentais da Cultura Portuguesa* ("The Fundamental Elements of Portuguese Culture") (1990a [1953]), this essay is one of the most widely quoted anthropological essays ever written in Portugal and is a constant reference in contemporary debates on Portuguese national identity (see Leal 1999a). Finally, José Cutileiro is one of the most well-known Portuguese anthropologists in the anglophone anthropological world, since his monograph on *Vila Velha*, a small rural parish in the *Alentejo* — — *A Portuguese Rural Society* (1971a)³ — was originally published in English, being considered one of the classical Mediterraneanist monographs of the 1970s. Being the first Portuguese social anthropologist with a British academic background, Cutileiro, however, had a short-lived engagement with Mediterraneanist social anthropology. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Portuguese 1974 Revolution he has started a successful diplomatic career, that eventually led him to an appointment, as secretary-general of the WEU (Western European Union), enabling him to play an important role, as peace mediator, in the events that followed the break-up of former Yugoslavia.

² An English translation of some of Dias's most important writings was published, after Dias's death in 1973, by the journal *Ethnologia Europaea* (see Dias 1974).

³ Cutileiro's book was translated into Portuguese in 1977 under the title *Ricos e Pobres no Alentejo. Uma Sociedade Rural Portuguesa* ("Rich and Poor in the Alentejo. A Portuguese Rural Society") (Cutileiro 1977). All the quotations of Cutileiro's book in this paper refer to the English edition.

Geography, ethnology and social anthropology: disciplinary approaches to Mediterranean Portugal

Although sharing a strong commitment to the Mediterranean as a key concept for the analysis of southern Portugal, these authors developed different perspectives on Mediterranean Portugal.

These differences were related, first of all, to the modes of description and analysis of Mediterranean Portugal and should be seen as a result of the diverse disciplinary and theoretical background and concerns of each of these authors.

For Orlando Ribeiro, the concept of the Mediterranean, as one would expect, was firmly rooted in the teachings of French human geography. It was related not only to assumptions concerning the climate, soils and flora, but also to assumptions on a specific environment as a man-made environment. The dialectics between natural conditions and landscape, on the one hand, and ways of life and civilisation, on the other, were therefore central to his analysis, which paid close attention to items such as the agricultural uses of the land, the technologies employed, patterns of land ownership, types of rural settlement or forms of housing.

Using Mediterranean as a geographical analytical tool, Ribeiro employed it not only as a category for the description and analysis of southern Portugal, but as a more general category for an overall description and analysis of the country. Indeed, the main thesis of *Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic*, was that Portugal was, in geographical terms, a Mediterranean country. By that he meant that Portugal's "fundamental geographical elements (...) rested on strong Mediterranean foundations" (Ribeiro 1963:44). However, because Portugal was located on the edge of the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean imprint on Portuguese climate and landscape was mixed with other geographical influences. The most important one was the wet and rainy influence of the Atlantic ocean. At the same time, one could also discern in the geographical make-up of Portugal a strong continental pattern, stemming from the arid and dry plateaux of central Iberia.

These diverse geographical influences did not overrule the Mediterranean characteristics of the country. But they were responsible for its geographical diversity. According to Ribeiro, it was in Southern Portugal that the Mediterranean influence was stronger. So one could speak of it as a specific geographical area, termed by Ribeiro Mediterranean Portugal or Mediterranean South, where some of the central elements of Mediterranean climate and landscape mentioned at the beginning of this paper could be found. In northwest Portugal, the Mediterranean background was combined with important Atlantic geographical influences, which contributed to the formation of a distinct geographical area, that Ribeiro termed Atlantic Portugal. The climate was colder and rainy, the landscape greener, maize replaced wheat as the main

cereal, cows replaced sheep and goats, vineyards produced *vinho verde* (literally "green wine"), a light white wine which Ribeiro viewed as a combination of Mediterranean wine and northern beer, and some important mountains added a northern European touch to the landscape. Finally, in northeast Portugal, roughly corresponding to the province of *Trás-os-Montes* (literally "behind the Mountains", one of the main provinces in northeast Portugal), the Mediterranean background of Portuguese climate and landscape was mixed with strong continental geographical patterns, thus forming a third specific region which was named, after *Trás-os-Montes*, *Transmontano* Portugal. There, besides the similarities of the landscape with the Castilian plateaux to the East, the climate was more adverse, with long, severe winters alternating with hot and suffocating summers, the land was more arid, and rye production and cattle raising — especially goat raising — were the dominant features of the rural economy.

Besides the differences regarding climate and rural economy, these regions, according to Ribeiro, also had different patterns of land ownership, rural settlement and folk architecture. In the south, especially in the *Alentejo*, latifundia prevailed, while in the north, land ownership was based on small and scattered plots of land. Compact rural settlements were dominant both in Mediterranean Portugal and in northeast Portugal, while in northwest Portugal the houses were disseminated through the countryside. Finally, while southern patterns of rural housing conformed to the usual Mediterranean model of the white cubic house with a chimney, in the north, folk architecture centred around granite houses with sloping roofs and no chimney.

Jorge Dias's ethnological approach was strongly influenced by Ribeiro's model. Like Orlando Ribeiro, he also considered Mediterranean Portugal, Atlantic Portugal and *Transmontano* Portugal the fundamental units for the analysis of the country's internal diversity. However, being an ethnologist, Dias turned Ribeiro's model from a purely geographical model into an ethnological one. Ribeiro's geographical regions were thus changed into "cultural areas", viewed as spatial units of analysis that could explain the distribution and diffusion of a large array of cultural traits.

Among the cultural traits that could be mapped and analysed according to this "cultural area" approach, material culture and agricultural technologies played a crucial role. The research of Dias and his collaborators on these topics was conducted all over the country, using "extensive survey" as the key methodology. The aim was to identify the main types of each technology according to a sophisticated ethnotechnological approach and map their distribution in the different areas of the country.⁴ It was precisely in the process of developing such an approach that Dias and his collaborators first turned to Ribeiro's model.

⁴ On the importance of ethnological cartography in the works of Dias and his collaborators, see Brito 1989.

Ribeiro's geographic regions were transformed into cultural areas characterised by different types of traditional agricultural technologies and material culture.⁵

Ribeiro's model was also employed by Jorge Dias as a more general analytical tool for the description and analysis of the overall ethnological diversity of the country. Besides being associated with different agricultural technologies and other items of material culture, Mediterranean Portugal, Atlantic Portugal and *Transmontano* Portugal were also linked to different patterns of family and kinship, distinct types of communities and social relationships and diverse trends of religious beliefs and practices (Dias 1990c). In southern Portugal, for instance, the nuclear family prevailed and no lasting ties of kinship existed outside it, while in the north the extended family was the dominant model and kinship ties were very powerful. The sense of community in the north was also very strong, especially in *Transmontano* Portugal, where economic and social relationships had an important communitarian leaning, while in Mediterranean Portugal individualism and extreme social stratification prevailed. Religion was stronger in the north, especially in Atlantic Portugal, while in the south, there was a more secular approach to life.

Although geographical factors remained an important aspect of Dias's ethnological uses of Ribeiro's model, he placed a greater emphasis on the relationship between these cultural areas and their distinct ethnic backgrounds. This type of approach to Portugal's internal diversity was already present in Ribeiro, who highly praised the Roman and the Arab roots of Mediterranean Portugal. However, it was Dias who fully developed the subject, based on the diffusionist theories with which he had come into contact during his stay in Germany. According to Dias, Mediterranean Portugal was, as Ribeiro had already suggested, the Portuguese cultural area more strongly shaped by the cultural influences of Romans and Arabs. Atlantic Portugal was a region whose cultural make up was largely due to the Suebi and other German tribes which had invaded the Iberian Peninsula after the fall of the Roman Empire. Finally, in *Transmontano* Portugal one could find a strong and ancient Lusitanian background, running back to pre-historical times.

It is against this background that one can find in the work of Dias and his collaborators an innovative approach to Mediterranean Portugal. Characterised by specific Mediterranean geographical features, Mediterranean Portugal was also one of the main cultural areas of

⁵ Initially tested in Dias's seminal work on ploughs (1948b), the model was subsequently used by Dias and his collaborators in their research on granaries (Dias, Oliveira & Galhano 1963). Later it was extensively generalised to a large array of agricultural technologies and material culture. In his book on ploughs, after identifying three main types of this agricultural implement in Portugal, Dias stressed that the geographical distribution of these types corresponded to the threefold division of the country proposed by Ribeiro. The fact that granaries could only be found in northwest Portugal was also analysed using Ribeiro's model.

Portugal, with a particular ethnic background, and a number of cultural traits that could not be found elsewhere.

Some of the themes developed by Dias regarding Mediterranean Portugal could be found in Cutileiro's approach to the topic. But there were also important differences between them. Instead of having studied ethnology in Germany in the 1930s, Cutileiro had been trained as a social anthropologist in Oxford during the late 1960s. Accordingly, his Mediterranean Portugal was somehow different from that of Jorge Dias.

First of all, it was studied not from the point of view of extensive survey — as was the case with Dias — but from a perspective based on intensive fieldwork conducted on a small parish of the *Alentejo*, one of the most important provinces of Mediterranean Portugal.

Secondly, where Dias and his colleagues had favoured an eclectic approach ranging from agricultural technologies and other items of material culture to social stratification, family and other socio-cultural institutions, Cutileiro focused exclusively on the latter. Indeed, according to the academic conventions of Mediterranean social anthropology, Cutileiro organised his monograph on *Vila Velha* in five parts, respectively called "Land Tenure and Social Stratification", "Family, Kinship and Neighbourhood", "Political Structure", "Patronage" and "Religion".

Finally, Cutileiro's Mediterranean Portugal was strongly influenced by some of the most important "gate keeping" concepts (Appadurai 1986; Fardon 1990) of Mediterranean social anthropology. As we have just seen, "Patronage" was the title of one of the major parts of his book, and in the chapter on "Family, Kinship and Neighbourhood", the concepts of "honour and shame" were widely used.⁶

Evaluations of Mediterranean Portugal

The differences between these three authors stemmed from diverse disciplinary modes of using Mediterranean as a key analytical concept for the description and interpretation of southern Portugal. But they were also related to diverse ways of evaluating Mediterranean Portugal. Indeed, the various analysis of Mediterranean Portugal we have discussed above should not be seen as neutral depictions of "something" that was out there for the analyst to characterise in a scientific way. Implicit in them were a number of judgements and opinions which were also very disparate.

Orlando Ribeiro, for instance, not only provided a geographical analysis of the general Mediterranean background of Portuguese landscape and ways of life or a more specific characterisation of southern

⁶ Besides these references in *A Portuguese Rural Society*, honour and shame were more widely addressed by Cutileiro in his introduction to the Portuguese edition of *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Cutileiro 1971b).

Portugal as the particular area within Portugal where this background was stronger. He was also very enthusiastic about both.

For him the Mediterranean was, first of all, the cradle of civilisation. As he wrote in his general introduction to *Portugal, The Mediterranean and the Atlantic*,

among (the Mediterranean) islands and some of its continental edges, one could count some of the regions that first woke up to civilisation, which, during many centuries, gravitated around the Mediterranean. It was through the interaction with people from the Mediterranean that the remainder of Europe was enriched by ideas and beliefs which were afterwards disseminated world-wide (1963:3).

Besides being considered one of the major civilising forces of Europe, the Mediterranean was also seen as a place where some of the most enchanting panoramas in the world could be found. Its landscape was "diverse and vigorous" (ibid.:4), without the monotony of northern Europe. Its atmosphere was "pure and bright, serene and luminous, reflecting itself in blue, limpid and tepid waters" (ibid.:6). The Mediterranean winters were "sweet and luminous" (ibid.:7), and its flora, "ancient and rich" (ibid.:9), filled the air with strange and vivid fragrances.

Being part of the Mediterranean world should thus be considered a blessing for Portugal. It was because of its Mediterranean background that Portugal was reached by the civilising forces springing from the Mediterranean, first during the Roman Empire, and, afterwards, through the Arabs. It was also because Portugal was part of this wider Mediterranean world that its landscape was so engaging and fulfilling. This was especially true of southern Portugal, where, as we have seen, the Mediterranean background was stronger. There, especially in *Arrábida* and in *Algarve*, Ribeiro found some of the most luminous fragments of the Portuguese Mediterranean landscape. His description of *Arrábida* — — nowadays a natural park — is particularly well known. Having focused on *Arrábida* for his doctoral thesis, Ribeiro defined it as "the most precious survival of the primitive Mediterranean *maquis*" (Ribeiro 1963:56) and developed a strong admiration for it: according to him "nothing in Portugal can compare to this wood of fragrant shades" (ibid.:57). Equally enthusiastic was his description of the olive-tree, which he viewed as the Mediterranean tree *par excellence*:⁷

With its contorted trunk sometimes gnawed by caries, with its small and silver leaves shining in the twilight, under the protective shadow of its symbolic branches, the olive-tree expresses, as in biblical times, rustic peace of mind and the sacred fecundity of earth (ibid.:77-78).

Ribeiro's enthusiasm for the Mediterranean was also a long lasting one. In 1968, he wrote a sequel to *Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic*,

⁷ Wine, the donkey, archaic agricultural technologies or white cubic houses were other Mediterranean items praised by Ribeiro.

called *The Mediterranean. Environment and Tradition* (Ribeiro 1987[1968]), in which he expanded his views on Mediterranean Portugal to the whole of the Mediterranean area. Some of his major writings after 1945 focused also on Portuguese Mediterraneanist topics: his essays on southern Portuguese folk architecture (Ribeiro 1961), for instance, reflect this enduring engagement with Mediterranean Portugal.

Dias and his collaborators were not so enthusiastic about Mediterranean Portugal. Of course, one can find in their monographs favourable descriptions of its landscape and culture. However, on the whole, the most laudatory passages in their books focused on northwest and northeast Portugal.

Espigueiros Portugueses ("Portuguese Granaries") (Dias, Oliveira & Galhano 1994 [1963]) and *Rio de Onor* (Dias 1953) provide a good example of Dias's fascination with the North. The first book centred on the study of the granary, viewed both as a technology and as a rural building; it was highly praised as a symbol of Atlantic Portugal, its landscape, its rural economy and its social customs.⁸ The stone granary, in particular, was described by Dias and his collaborators with an enthusiasm similar to the one Ribeiro evidenced in his depiction of the Mediterranean olive-tree: it was "one of the most remarkable buildings of [Portuguese] folk architecture" (1994 [1963]:57); "its appearance was simultaneously barbarian and refined, suggesting powerful buildings from remote eras" (ibid.); "its presence added a gracious note to the rural landscape (...) constituting one of the most remarkable sights of our Northern villages" (ibid.:145). As for *Rio de Onor*, one of the monographs written by Dias on Portuguese village communities, it can be viewed as an ethnographic elegy of a remote village of *Transmontano* Portugal, with its strong communitarian tendencies, its powerful sense of community and its Dionysian collective character. At the end of the monograph, after pointing out some threats to the village's future, Dias could not help evoking it as a magical place of rural joy and happiness:

the shrill sounds of bagpipes and the enervating roll of the drums resound in the valley slopes [of the village], dominating everything with their strange magic and expressing the rough *joie de vivre* of this ancient, harmonious and good people (1953:572).

Compared to these and other laudatory references to northern Portugal, Mediterranean Portugal stood as a kind of second best, notwithstanding some favourable comments on the resourceful talent of its irrigation systems (Oliveira & Galhano 1953) or on the neat cleanness and refinement of its folk architecture (Dias 1990b:176). Sometimes, one can even sense a certain disapproval of some cultural traits prevalent in Mediterranean Portugal. For instance, in one of his essays on the analysis

⁸ On *Portuguese Granaries*, see Leal 1994. See also the very enthusiastic references to north-eastern Portuguese yokes (Oliveira, Galhano & Pereira 1973).

of the cultural diversity of Portugal, Dias made several negative comments about the social stratification dominant in the *Alentejo*. According to him, the recent development of capitalist tendencies in the *Alentejo* had led to the replacement of "the old ties of respect and mutual trust" between large landowners and rural labourers "by egoistic attitudes, which, sometimes, can lead to conflict" (Dias 1990c:187).

Finally, Mediterranean Portugal was a somehow underrepresented area, in comparison to Atlantic Portugal or *Transmontano* Portugal, within the imposing bibliography of Jorge Dias and his team. The study of Portuguese village communities was, as we have seen, one of the areas of research favoured by Jorge Dias. However, these studies focused exclusively on mountain communities of northern Portugal such as *Vilarinho da Furna* (1948a) and *Rio de Onor* (1953) and there is no indication whatsoever that Dias or any of his collaborators ever planned to carry out such a study in southern Portugal.⁹ The monographs on material culture and agricultural technologies were somehow more balanced. Since their goal was to describe and map different types of agricultural technology for the whole country, Mediterranean Portugal was obviously an important part of the argument. But, besides these monographs, Dias and his collaborators also published a number of smaller essays, exploring some details of their data. It is curious to find out that most of these essays tended to concentrate on ethnographic material coming from northern Portugal.

That does not mean that Dias and his collaborators held any prejudice against Mediterranean Portugal or that they were less appreciative regarding this cultural area. However, as opposed to Orlando Ribeiro, they developed a stronger attraction towards the northern part of the country, that is, the less Mediterranean areas of Portugal. Dias's *Arrábida* was located in the north, where severe granite mountains replaced the vigorous, but somehow decorative, calcareous hills of Mediterranean Portugal.

Cutileiro's image of Mediterranean Portugal, as seen from the perspective of *Vila Velha*, was very different from the ones we have addressed until now. First of all, despite some occasional laudatory references, the landscape as such was almost completely absent from his concerns, being replaced by a strong and inquisitive focus on people, their economic and social relations, the balance of power between them, and so on. Secondly, Cutileiro's research, although based on intensive fieldwork conducted on a small rural parish of *Alentejo*, was particularly attentive to the national social and political background. At the time, Portugal was ruled by a right-wing dictatorship led by Salazar, which was closely

⁹ Indeed, this set of monographs on Portuguese rural communities was to be completed by a third monograph on *Castro Laboreiro*, which was, again, a rural parish located in the mountains of northern Portugal.

associated with the political and economical interests of the large landowners of the *Alentejo*.

The result was a highly critical image of Mediterranean Portugal. Writing about the rural economy and patterns of land ownership in *Vila Velha*, Cutileiro concentrated on the failures and shortcomings of this rural economy based on the extensive production of wheat and extreme social inequality. Speaking about social stratification, he portrayed in a fierce tone the large landowners' life-style and the way they used informal and formal connections to political power to strengthen their position.¹⁰ Conversely, his depiction of the socio-economic conditions of *Vila Velha*'s rural labourers could be read as a manifesto against the social and political order then prevalent in the *Alentejo*. These labourers had no secure conditions of employment, earned very low wages and were hit by seasonal unemployment, being sometimes forced to beg:

They went about in large groups, often composed of men, women, and children. Although they sometimes appealed to the donor's love of God, they more often invoked their own hunger. These large groups of able-bodied people, begging their way from farm to farm and through towns and villages, provided an objective, vociferous, and violent reminder of the unfairness of the society in which they lived. The fact that at these times the landowners' usual reaction was fear of social upheaval clearly indicated this (1971a:73).

Even his references to honour and shame should be viewed as a disenchanting comment regarding a place where the rich and the poor had different conditions to conform to the moral imperatives concerning sexual life and personal dignity.

To sum up, contrary to the images proposed, albeit in different ways, by both Ribeiro and Dias, Cutileiro's Mediterranean Portugal, as seen from *Vila Velha*, did not look like a place where one would like to live.

Pastoral and counter-pastoral

As I have suggested in the beginning of this paper, these different evaluations of Mediterranean Portugal can be seen, first of all, as the

¹⁰ Cutileiro's references to the latifundists' aristocratic pretensions were particularly caustic: "[The latifundists] try to include themselves in the aristocracy by tracing their descent from some noble forebear. For this purpose genealogical trees are commissioned from an amateur heraldic expert in Evora who always manages to graft the latifundist families on some respectably old branch of an aristocratic tree — in one case that of a Moorish king of the twelfth century. One man changed the spelling of his name to give it a more aristocratic touch. Signet-rings with coats of arms are worn with doubtful propriety. 'Genealogy', a latifundist once said, 'is a marvellous science. You only need to lie once'" (1971a:47). The latifundists' aversion to manual labour was also mercilessly depicted by Cutileiro, who mentioned the case of a grandson of a large landowner "who had his school satchel carried to school by a servant" (ibid.).

outcome of a set of ideological attitudes concerning the countryside, its moral meaning and the politics of its representation.

Orlando Ribeiro's enthusiastic evaluation of Mediterranean Portugal, rooted in his youthful wanderings throughout the rural hinterland of Lisbon (see Ribeiro 1970:17 and 1987:17), was linked to a pastoral and Arcadian view of the countryside, firmly based on the main rules of the genre. As in Greek and Roman pastoral, the Mediterranean was basically a landscape, that is, a place where nature and its wonders could be fully appreciated from a *connoisseur's* point of view. Evocative descriptions of the landscape, ranging from *vues d'ensemble* to minute descriptions of some of its details — like the olive-tree or the *Arrábida* woods — were the main tools that Ribeiro employed in his pastoral venture. His use of the visual code was thus particularly strong. However, what strikes the most in Ribeiro's narrative of the wonders of Mediterranean, is the role played by textures and scents. Mediterranean landscape was not only something that could be seen, but was also something that should be touched and smelled. Ribeiro's Mediterranean Portugal was not a landscape seen from afar, but rather enjoyed through the pleasures of lonely wondering in rural paths, fields and woods.

As in Greek and Roman pastoral, too, progress was considered the main threat to these pleasures. One of the main aspects of Ribeiro's depiction of the Mediterranean was linked to its archaism. According to Ribeiro, the contemporary Mediterranean was not very different from the Mediterranean of the first Greek pastoralists. Not only the soil and the products that grew on it were the same, but the technologies employed were also very similar to the ones that were used in ancient times. Ribeiro of course stressed some of the negative sides of this technological backwardness. But, on the whole, his point of view on the topic was infused with longing for the old customs threatened by progress. Although backward, the agricultural technologies employed in the Mediterranean were well fitted to the land and its requirements. And progress in agriculture was seen as a kind of "strickle that levelled everything and everyone" and did not necessarily improve the labour and living conditions of those who worked the land (Ribeiro 1963:94).

Man was not absent from the Mediterranean landscape depicted by Orlando Ribeiro. Indeed, as a human geographer, Ribeiro was speaking of something that could be considered, using Tuan's terminology, a "middle-landscape" (Tuan 1974:109), neither nature in its naked wilderness nor a fully man-made landscape, but something in between. One could even say that what Ribeiro's pastoral was celebrating was precisely a particularly happy encounter between man and nature. But if man as a general concept was present, men, particular men (and women) were not often shown in Ribeiro's picture of the Mediterranean. We can see and admire the traces man left on the landscape, but we seldom can listen to the voices, the fears and the hopes of actual men (and women) and even their physical presence as such was hard to find in Ribeiro's writings.

Conflict was also absent from Ribeiro's concerns, but not the conflict of man with nature. On the contrary, Ribeiro insisted again and again on the harsh side of Mediterranean nature, and on the heroic efforts that the Mediterranean man had to deploy in order to overcome sometimes extremely adverse natural conditions. But, at the same time, the conflicts between men — for scarce resources and land or for wealth and prestige — were missing in his characterisation of the Mediterranean. Patterns of land ownership, for instance, were described as a result of particular natural and historical conditions, but seldom as the specific product of conflictive social forces.

In his book *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams has stressed the importance of processes of erasure and stylisation of men and social conflict in pastoral discourses. Their actual representation would disturb the view of the countryside as a "locus amenus". It is these processes of erasure and stylisation that seem to be at work in Ribeiro's Mediterranean pastoral. Like many other pastoralists before and after him, Ribeiro should thus be seen as "the self conscious observer: the man who is not only looking at land but who is conscious that he is doing so, as an experience in itself, and who has prepared social models and analogies from elsewhere to support and justify the experience" (Williams 1993:121).

The pastoral tone of Ribeiro's statements on Mediterranean Portugal was sometimes reinforced by direct references to the first Greek and Roman pastoralists. In the first chapter of his book, for instance, Ribeiro stated that "'the works and the days' of the contemporary Mediterranean peasant would not surprise the poet who first sang them" (1963:12). Later, describing the wind-mills on top of the southern hills of Portugal, Ribeiro remarked that this "could be either an image of Algarve or Arrábida, or an image of Athica or Peloponese" (ibid.:92). One page ahead a similar observation was made about some typical rural works of Mediterranean Portugal, such as the wheat harvest or grape-gathering. According to Ribeiro, these images were very close to the ones depicted by "the agricultural treatises or the pastoral poets of Antiquity" (ibid.:93).

Ribeiro's *Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic* should be thus considered as a modern enactment of the classical Virgilian pastoral. In his book one can find, hiding under the language of human geography, some of the great themes of ancient Greek-Roman pastoral. The success of the book, often attributed to its innovative scientific approach, was, I think, also linked to the pastoral tone that pervaded it. In times of great transformation, pastoral is often seen as an idealisation of the countryside as it used to be. In this respect, it is curious to note that Ribeiro's success — signalled by a second edition, in 1963, of *Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic* — coincided with the beginning of the end of the Mediterranean Portugal he so masterfully described.

Jorge Dias was a pastoralist too. The son of a bourgeois family of Porto, in his youth he rebelled against the values and practices of his social milieu of origin.¹¹ One of the aspects of such a rebellion was the physical and psychological rejection of the urban environment of Porto. Most of Dias's youth was indeed dedicated to travel in the countryside, especially in northern Portugal, "searching for a life different from the one that was lived in the urban centres" (Pereira 1996). The remote origins of Dias's team can be found in such journeys, since two of his later collaborators — Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira and Fernando Galhano — were then his travel companions. At a certain point, they even considered the prospect of moving definitively to the countryside, planning the constitution of a community in *Serra do Montemuro*, a mountain located in the *Alto Minho* (northern Portugal), "where they would work the land and live from it" (Pereira 1996).

Dias's attraction towards ethnology can be seen as an outcome of this early engagement with the countryside as a radical alternative to the urban way of life. In Munich, he discovered that, through ethnology, his countryside travels could be turned into a way of life. In a letter written to Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, "he urged him to finish his graduation studies, so that after his return, they could turn their wanderings in the countryside into a profession" (Pereira 1996). In Munich, too, Dias developed a strong attraction towards northern Europe in general, and towards Germany, in particular. This attraction was directed not only to German ethnological ideas, particularly diffusionism, but had also a pastoral dimension. One of his letters reported "long walks that he and his German friends had, completely naked, in the woods near Munich" (Pereira 1996). And one of the first essays written by Jorge Dias after his stay in Germany was marked by a strong fascination towards what he termed "the Nordic sense of nature" (Dias 1942; for a comment on that essay see Leal 1999a).

Being himself a man from northern Portugal — a place where, according to Ribeiro, the landscape already had a north European flavour — Dias's attraction towards the landscapes of his youth was thus reinforced by his German experience. And if the professional practice of ethnology required a more complete and balanced knowledge of the whole of the Portuguese countryside, Dias always kept a special leaning towards the north. There, the landscape seemed to correspond better both to his former experiences as a young rebellious wanderer and to his new German pastoral teachings.

It is against this background that Dias's moderate enthusiasm towards Mediterranean Portugal must first be considered. Indeed, pastoral is not an indiscriminate passion for the countryside. Some landscapes can be invested with meaning by the observer, according to his (or her) own personal experiences and tastes as well as to culturally accepted patterns of

¹¹ Some of the data concerning Dias's biography result from an interview with Benjamin Pereira, one of Dias's still surviving collaborators, that I did in 1996.

the enjoyment of nature, while others are less evocative. As Tuan has stressed, topophilia defined as "all of the human being's affective ties with material environment (...) differ greatly in intensity, subtlety and mode of expression" (1974:93). In the case of Dias, it seems that the more intense forms of his ethnology considered as a form of topophilia were directed towards the North. For him, Northern Portugal was not only "home, the locus of memories" (ibid.), but also the place where nature better conformed to certain "social conventions" (ibid.) regarding man's involvement with nature, with which he had come into contact during his stay in Germany.

But Dias's engagement with the countryside was not a mere commitment to its natural beauties. Choosing ethnology as a career, Dias was somehow enlivening the landscape with its actual inhabitants, with their agricultural technologies, and with the economic and social organisation required for the reproduction of the peasant way of life.

His attraction towards the countryside was also a fascination with the peasant way of life, in which allegedly communitarian and egalitarian forms of social and economic organisation were particularly important. According to Dias, these forms of social and economic organisation could only be found in northern Portugal. There, especially in the remote villages of *Vilarinho da Furna* and *Rio de Onor* — on which Dias wrote two important monographs (Dias 1948a; 1953) — men not only lived in harmony with nature, they lived in harmony among themselves. The general characterisation of Atlantic and *Transmontano* Portugal that Dias developed in one of his essays on the ethnological diversity of Portugal (1990c) was also marked by this attraction towards powerful and harmonious social relationships. The strong sense of community prevailing in northern Portugal, the predominance of the extended family in *Transmontano* Portugal and of the patriarchal family in Atlantic Portugal, the traditions of co-operative labour in agriculture in both areas stood there as important elements of a moral portrait of a countryside not yet corrupted by modern individualistic tendencies (ibid.:191-206). To sum up, Dias's longing for the countryside was not only a longing for a powerful and reinvigorating contact with nature, but also a longing for community and harmonious social relations.

Dias's moderate enthusiasm towards Mediterranean Portugal should be analysed against this background. The social landscape of Mediterranean Portugal, with its strong individualistic tendencies, its powerful social stratification and its latent social conflict, could not have awakened in Jorge Dias the same feelings of empathy he had towards northern Portugal. Social Arcadia, too, was located north.

The different evaluations of Mediterranean Portugal by Orlando Ribeiro and Jorge Dias can thus be seen as a disagreement, among authors sharing similar forms of pastoral discourse, on where exactly to locate Arcadia.

The case of José Cutileiro is a very different one. As we have seen, Cutileiro did not show a strong attraction towards the landscape of Mediterranean Portugal, despite some occasional positive references. The landscape depicted in his monograph *A Portuguese Rural Society* was a social one which portrayed actual men and women, conflicting interests and world views, extreme wealth and extreme misery, capitalist leisure and labourers' appalling living conditions, social inequality and political oppression.

The contrast between Cutileiro's depiction of Mediterranean Portugal and the one proposed by Orlando Ribeiro could not be clearer. By erasing or stylising actual men and conflicts from his portrait of Mediterranean Portugal, Ribeiro, for instance, was able to produce a very bucolic description of harvesting in the *Alentejo*:

In Springtime, when the wheat fields that mature shine in the sun and show precious nuances of red, violet and yellow, Alentejo is invested with a peculiar beauty. After the harvest, a crude light falls on the yellow stubble. At mid-day, the heat is suffocating. In the *monte*, people have a siesta: the whitewashed walls reverberate the light and hurt one's vision. The cattle, immobile, suffer. The strumming of the cicada is the only noise that can be heard (Ribeiro 1963:168).

Reintroducing men and conflicts into the picture, Cutileiro produced a different version of harvest time and agricultural work in general:

Until the early 1960s work was *de sol a sol* ('from sunrise to sunset') and, since [the labourers'] place of work was often some miles away from their homes this meant that they left home before dawn and returned after dusk. These conditions were already an improvement: until the early 1940s work had been *de ar a ar* ('from the first light of dawn into the last light of dusk') with frequent extensions well into the night during peak periods. During the sowing and harvest seasons a man could sleep as little as four hours a night. It was an extremely hard life: wages were lower, state social measures were non-existent (...); but there was no alternative (1971a:66).

Thus, with Cutileiro's *A Portuguese Rural Society*, one moves from a pastoral to a counter-pastoral discourse on Mediterranean Portugal,¹² from a "tradition of pastoral poetry" (William 1993:13) transformed by the discourse of human geography, to an "intention of realism" (ibid.), backed by the conventions of British social anthropology. Jorge Dias, in a way, had sensed that this "realistic" image was there waiting for him: perhaps that is why he avoided elaborating a monograph located in Mediterranean Portugal. If Arcadia was not to be found in the *Alentejo*, one should look

¹² Cutileiro's point of view was very similar to the one defended by Crabbe, the English poet quoted by Raymond Williams in his book *The Country and the City*: "No longer truth, tough shown in verse, disdain,/ But own the Village Life a life of pain" (Crabbe, quoted in Williams 1993:13).

somewhere else. Cutileiro, in contrast, chose to directly confront the problem, turning the *Alentejo* into a Counter-Arcadia.

Landscape and national identity

As has been suggested at the beginning of this paper, the divergent evaluations of Mediterranean Portugal we have been analysing were also related to diverse uses of the countryside as a metaphor for national identity.

Indeed, the pastoral and counter-pastoral discourses produced in the West, at least since the eighteenth century, have been closely linked to discourses on national identity. As Löfgren has pointed out, "a national landscape" — together with "a common language, a common past and destiny, (...) a national folk culture, a national character or mentality (...)" and so on — is one of the criteria for a modern, fully-fledged nation (Löfgren 1989:9).

In the Portuguese discourses we have been addressing, this relationship between pastoral (and counter-pastoral) discourses on Mediterranean Portugal and national identity was associated, first of all, to processes of historicisation of the landscape. Tuan has stressed the importance of memory and history in topophilia. According to him, the most permanent affective ties to the material environment are "those one has toward a place because it is home, the locus of memories (...). The appreciation of landscape is more personal and long lasting when it is mixed with the memory of human incidents" (1974:93). Although Tuan is referring to personal memory and individual history, some pages later, he stresses the importance of collective memory in the appreciation of landscape. Quoting Strelhow's monograph on the Arunta of Australia, he shows how collective "awareness of the past is an important element in the love of the place" (ibid.:99) and, how for the Arunta, "the whole countryside is his living, age-old family tree" (ibid.:100).

Ribeiro's and Dias's different evaluations of Mediterranean Portugal should be analysed in this light. For both of them the countryside was an historical fact, a "lieu de mémoire" (Nora 1992:20). In terms of Ribeiro's human geography, landscape was not simply a given set of natural conditions but the result of human forces interacting with nature throughout history. In Dias's diffusionist approach, history was even more important: the various cultural areas of Portugal were regarded by him as different "ethnogenetic provinces" of Portugal, each one with its particular ethnic formation.

The different evaluations of Mediterranean Portugal made by these two authors were thus connected to diverse modes of assessment of the landscape as a sort of contemporary cartography of the ethnogenealogical history (Smith 1991) of Portugal. Ribeiro's enthusiasm for Mediterranean Portugal was closely linked to his enthusiasm for the Roman and Arab

contributions to the formation of Portuguese culture. Indeed, as we have seen, for Ribeiro, the Mediterranean was not only one of the most enjoyable landscapes in the world, it was also the cradle of Western civilisation. His attraction towards Mediterranean Portugal was thus associated with an ethnogenealogical representation of national identity, which stressed the contributions of Romans and Arabs to the early development of Portuguese culture. Although later superseded by the northern influence, which was decisive in the political formation of Portugal and in some of its later developments as an independent nation (cf. Ribeiro 1963:152-157), these Roman and Arab roots of Portuguese culture were anyhow responsible for the country's Mediterranean cultural affiliation. That is why one of the most challenging parts of his *Portugal, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic* was centred on a description of *Conímbriga*, an ancient Roman town in central Portugal that was discovered and excavated by Portuguese archaeologists at the beginning of the twentieth century:

Coming from the North to the South, one can find the first full Mediterranean image of Portugal in the archaeological remains of Conímbriga and its physical surroundings. (...) This Roman town, similar to any other town in any other part of the Empire, is built in a landscape that could either be Portuguese, Italian or Greek. In a rocky slope, a town made of light stone; at its feet, the fields which feed its inhabitants, with cereal and olive trees planted in a reddish soil; in the horizon, dry and meagre calcareous hills; and (...) surrounding the church of the old parish, half a dozen of black cypresses set against a blue, bright and serene sky (ibid.:167).

Dias's moderate enthusiasm for Mediterranean Portugal was associated with his also moderate enthusiasm regarding Portuguese Roman and Arab roots. Once again, he did not disdain these roots. However, in his ethnogenealogical narrative of the nation, the Lusitanians and the Suebi, respectively associated with *Transmontano* Portugal and Atlantic Portugal, stood as the major ethnic heroes. Following the archaeologists Martins Sarmiento and Mendes Correia and the ethnologist Leite de Vasconcelos, some of Dias's early writings were indeed strongly committed to research on ethnological objects that could be considered as survivals from the Lusitanians, viewed as Portugal's most ancient ethnic ancestors (cf. Leal 1999b). Accordingly, instead of *Conímbriga*, his favourite archaeological sites were the *castros* of northern Portugal, allegedly linked to this Lusitanian pre-historical past of the nation. Simultaneously, Dias was strongly attracted to the Suebi. His fascination with north-eastern Portuguese granaries was not only a fascination with a rural building which existed only in the favourite landscapes of his youth. He was also attracted to the granary as one of the most important alleged remains of the Suebi, a Germanic tribe somehow responsible for the northern look of Portuguese folk culture he so appreciated.

In José Cutileiro's monograph, as one would expect, it is possible to find out a very different way of approaching the relationship between the countryside and Portuguese national identity. A social anthropologist strongly influenced by British functionalism, Cutileiro not only ignored the ethnogenealogical tendencies of his predecessors, but strongly concentrated on the present. However, his present was not only the ethnographic present of the anthropologist, but also the political present of the Portuguese citizen. In fact, as much as an anthropological microcosm of the Mediterranean, *Vila Velha* also stood for Cutileiro as a social and political microcosm of Salazar's Portugal.

His depiction of the failures and shortcomings of a rural economy based on the extensive production of wheat was a political statement on the rural policies adopted by Salazar's government, which were strongly supported by the latifundists. His negative comments on the extreme social stratification predominant in the *Alentejo* were a critical report on the unfair distribution of wealth prevailing in the country. His depiction of the living and working conditions of the rural labourers should be read as a bitter account of the social oppression and the political repression of the poor.

The main argument of the book was in itself a political statement on Portugal's Salazar, as well as an anthropological thesis on a Mediterranean rural parish. In fact, *A Portuguese Rural Society* was an inquiry into the reasons why the extremely harsh social and political conditions prevailing in the *Alentejo* had not yet led to a political upheaval. Patron/client relationships were the socio-anthropological part of the answer. But, simultaneously, Cutileiro offered a political explanation for that paradox, based on the critique of the corporative nature of Salazar's *regime*:

Over the last forty years (...) the characteristics of the administrative and corporate systems and the characteristics of political life in a wider sense (...) seem to me to be mainly responsible for the absence of organised and sustained attempts by labourers to subvert the present order of social stratification or, alternatively, to mitigate in any substantial way its most blatantly inequitable features. The outward acceptance of the social order thus finds an explanation in the nature of the political system. Nothing can be organised locally to call into question the present order and very little can be done from outside (1971a:292-293).

The political content of Cutileiro's monograph was so strong that *A Portuguese Rural Society* was not translated into Portuguese until the 1974 Revolution. Before that, the book was considered too dangerous to be published, because its publishers would have faced the risk of its seizure by political police.

One could thus say that Cutileiro's counter-pastoral perception of Mediterranean Portugal was closely linked to a politically loaded discourse on Portuguese national identity. For Cutileiro, there was not much to enjoy in the Portuguese Mediterranean countryside, because there was not much to be cherished about the identity of a country which, rather than living under the protective shadow of bountiful ethnic ancestors, was actually living under a tough dictatorship.

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POIMANJA MEDITERANSKOG PORTUGALA: PASTORALNI I NEPASTORALNI DISKURZ

SAŽETAK

Autor predstavlja poimanja mediteranskog Portugala u radovima trojice portugalskih znanstvenika 20. stoljeća, geografa Orlanda Riberoa, etnologa Jorgea Diasa i socijalnog antropologa Joséa Cutileiroa. U prvom dijelu članka predstavljeni su različiti načini interpretacija kojima su ova trojica znanstvenika odredila južni Portugal kao amblemsko mediteransko područje Portugala. Posebice su naglašena različita vrednovanja mediteranskog Portugala u njihovim radovima: Riberoovo oduševljenje, Diasov uravnoteženi pristup i Cutileirova silovita kritika društvenih, gospodarskih i političkih uvjeta života u pokrajini *Alentejo*, jednoj od najvažnijih pokrajina južnoga Portugala. Autor smatra da su takva različita vrednovanja mediteranskog Portugala prvenstveno povezana s različitim ideološkim stavovima autora prema seoskim pokrajinama i seoskom životu. U nekim radovima seoska je okolica predstavljena kao mjesto ljupkih krajolika i uzvišenih vrhova, dok se u drugima poseban naglasak stavlja na ljude koji nastanjuju seoske predjele i poteškoće života na koje nailaze.

Autor želi pokazati kako su ta različita poimanja i vrednovanja mediteranskoga Portugala povezana s različitim značenjskim uporabama sela i seoskoga kao metafora nacionalnoga identiteta. U radovima Riberoa i Diasa autor zamjećuje utjecaj procesa historizacije sela unutar kojega će selo i seosko postati referentno mjesto diskurza o davnim etničkim korijenima nacije. U Cutileirovu radu autor uočava da je njegovo poimanje mediteranskoga Portugala kritički izričaj o portugalskoj političkoj, društvenoj i gospodarskoj situaciji prije revolucije 1974. godine.

Ključne riječi: Portugal, Mediteran, povijest antropologije, pastorala, nacionalni identitet