



*Ethnos*, Lisbon, 1935 - 1979

On 5 July 1935, the Board of the *Instituto de Arqueologia, História e Etnografia* [Institute of Archaeology, History and Ethnography] (IAHE) convened to approve the statutes of its scientific journal, the establishment of which had been planned since 1933 under decree no. 22.338 (dated 13 March), which created the Institute. At the suggestion of one of its leading figures, Manuel Heleno Júnior, the journal was named *Ethnos*, a Greek word meaning "culture" or "race," aligning with the IAHE's scientific objectives. Manuel Heleno, director of the Dr. Leite de Vasconcelos *Museu Etnológico* [Ethnological Museum], claimed credit for the name in the *Varia* section of the inaugural 1935 issue. He also highlighted the delayed launch of the journal—three years after the institute's founding—due to financial constraints, as it relied entirely on contributions from institute members. Heleno noted that the Portuguese journal secured the name *Ethnos* ahead of a similarly titled publication in Stockholm.

Thus began a journal linked to two of the most significant Portuguese scientific institutions of the 20th century: the *Faculdade de Letras* [Faculty of Arts and Humanities] of the University of Lisbon (established in 1911) and the *Museu Etnológico* (founded in 1893 and later renamed the *Museu Etnológico do Dr. Leite de Vasconcelos* [Dr. Leite de Vasconcelos Ethnological Museum], now the *Museu Nacional de Arqueologia* [National Archaeological Museum]). Since 1913, the museum had been part of the faculty and served as a cornerstone of the intellectual and civic contributions of José Leite de Vasconcelos, a seminal figure in Portuguese ethnography and archaeology, as well as his successor, Manuel Heleno Júnior. Ethnography and archaeology underwent significant developments within this context of institutional interchangeability, without which the genesis of *Ethnos* loses much of its contemporary significance.

The establishment of the IAHE and the simultaneous publication of *Ethnos* are therefore closely tied to the internal evolution of the discipline of archaeology and its political position within the Salazarist framework, a position inextricably linked to the role of the second director of the *Museu Etnológico*. Focusing on this second aspect, it is worth noting that, while Leite de Vasconcelos remained famously detached from the political controversies of his time and navigated regime changes smoothly throughout the first quarter of the 20th century, Manuel Heleno took a markedly different stance. In the *Varia* section of the 1935 issue, Heleno explicitly denounced "attempts at the spoliation of national glories carried out by certain foreign scholars," accusing them of seeking to distort the "evidence [of] Portugal's role in the discovery of the Earth, the creation of new nations, and, ultimately, [of] Portugal's



contribution to the History of Civilisation." In this vein, the Institute's insignia and seal were created during a session on 18 October 1940 and featured prominently on the front and back covers of subsequent issues. The emblem, as described in the journal's second issue, consists of "[a] silver disc with twelve blue corners, each bearing five silver bezants, arranged in the pattern of the round sign of King Afonso Henriques. (...) Surrounding this emblem are two laurel branches in their natural colour, crossed at the tip and tied with gold." This symbolic connection to Afonso Henriques imbued the journal with a genetic, patriotic, nationalist, and providentialist connotation, aligning its ideology with that of the *Estado Novo* [New State]. Despite the political sympathies of its chief organiser, the integrity of the texts and the scientific validation of the articles appear to have been consistently maintained, as evidenced by the technical data sheets included in all eight issues.

With regard to the first point, the "need to bring together the friends of the *Museu Etnológico*, so unjustly attacked" by the *Associação dos Arqueólogos do Carmo* [Association of Carmo Archaeologists], led by Mendes Correia, was another justification presented by the future director of the *Faculdade de Letras* of Lisbon. According to Carlos Valentim (Heleno [Júnior], Manuel Domingues, *Dicionário dos Historiadores Portugueses* [Dictionary of Portuguese Historians]), this association represented, on one hand, the establishment of a school of archaeological thought opposing the idea of negroid and Australoid affinities with the people of the Muge councils. This stood in contrast to Mendes Correia's position, which emphasised the influence of African elements in the formation of Portuguese nationality. On the other hand, it reflected the personal ambitions of Manuel Heleno, who, being closely aligned with Leite de Vasconcelos, succeeded him as director of the *Museu Etnológico*. Heleno assumed wide-ranging authority to authorise and conduct archaeological surveys and research expeditions. This concentration of power may have limited archaeological initiatives from sectors of the discipline that diverged from Heleno's vision. Nevertheless, Heleno consistently invoked "the defence of the nation's archaeological heritage," a concept he elaborated on in an article published in the 1965 edition of *Ethnos*. The IAHE and the journal *Ethnos*, both established at the height of these controversies, served as the scientific platforms for the *Museu Etnológico* group led by Heleno and guided by the scholarly teachings of Leite de Vasconcelos.

In terms of internal organisation, *Ethnos* adhered to Decree no. 22.338 (issued under Gustavo Cordeiro Ramos, Minister of Public Instruction), which structured its board of directors to mirror the decision-making framework of the *Instituto de História, Arqueologia e Etnografia*. The administrative hierarchy included roles such as president, vice presidents, first secretary and curator of collections, second secretary, member responsible for publications, treasurer, and two additional members. The inaugural issue of *Ethnos* opened with José Leite de Vasconcelos (João Paulo Silvestre, Vasconcelos [Pereira de Melo], José Leite de, *Dicionário dos Historiadores Portugueses*) as president. Vice-presidents included Manuel Heleno Júnior and João Silva Marques (compiler of *Descobrimentos Portugueses* [Portuguese Discoveries]), with Orlando Ribeiro (a prominent figure in Portuguese geography) serving as second secretary. José Augusto Frazão de Vasconcelos (a historian of notable standing during the *Estado Novo*) was named the member responsible for publications. This leadership structure placed some of the most influential figures in Portuguese academia from the first three-quarters of the 20th century at the helm. Orlando Ribeiro maintained his position until 1942, stepping down thereafter, possibly due to a dispute over the legacy of José Leite



de Vasconcelos, with whom both Ribeiro and Manuel Heleno considered themselves devoted disciples (Carlos Manuel Valentim, *Idem*). Meanwhile, Frazão de Vasconcelos held his post until 1965, later serving as a general member in the 1966 and 1969 editions, before his death in 1969. In 1942, following the death of Leite de Vasconcelos, the presidency remained vacant until Manuel Heleno assumed the role in 1948, retaining it until his death in 1970. Subsequently, in 1979, Justino Mendes de Almeida—a historian, archaeologist, vice president of the *Academia Portuguesa da História* [Portuguese Academy of History], and former president of the *Junta de Investigações do Ultramar* [Overseas Research Board]—was appointed as director.

The journal was consistently published in Lisbon, typically printed at a press located on Rua das Gáveas in Bairro Alto. Initially, it relied on contributions from IAHE members, but later editions were heavily sponsored by the *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian* [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation] (the 1965 edition includes a photograph of Calouste Gulbenkian) and the Secretary of State for Culture (1979). There are no available records of the journal's circulation, but considering the specialised topics it addressed and the IAHE's well-documented financial difficulties throughout its existence, it is unlikely to have been widely distributed. Similarly, no references to the publication's price have been found.

The journal primarily focused on archaeological, historical, and ethnographic themes, adhering to the principles of the Methodical School of historiography, which often included facsimile reproductions of individual documents. Clearly intended for an erudite audience specialising in these fields, it was not designed as a commercial or advertising publication in any sense. This scientific periodical aims to update readers on the results of archaeological expeditions in Portugal (including contributions from foreign authors), present ethnographic field research, explore historiographical *topoi* primarily centred on the period of Portuguese Expansion, and, to a lesser extent, debate philological nuances.

Its publication schedule was highly irregular, with only eight issues released between 1935 (*terminus a quo*) and 1979 (*terminus ad quem*). Notably, no explicit mention of its intended periodicity appears in any of the issues or the statutes of the institute to which it belonged. Its publication seems to have depended entirely on the sustained efforts of Manuel Heleno and, on two occasions, on academic tributes following the deaths of significant figures: Leite de Vasconcelos (commemorated in the 1942 edition, with continued mentions in the subsequent 1948 issue) and Manuel Heleno himself (honoured in 1970, the year of his death). From 1965 onwards, efforts were made to regularise its publication, resulting in four issues being released over five years (1965, 1966, 1969, and 1970). This may reflect Heleno's realisation of the journal's subordinate status as a tribute to his mentor, Leite de Vasconcelos, as well as his changing professional circumstances after leaving the Faculty of Letters at the University of Lisbon in 1964.

The periodical's evolution can be divided into three phases: The initial phase (1935–1948), marked by the influence of Leite de Vasconcelos (the 1948 issue even includes a photograph of a sculpture of the archaeologist by Raúl Xavier, dated 1934). The resurgence phase (1965–1970), under the leadership of Manuel Heleno. The epilogue (1979), characterised by the journal's loss of purpose.

While the majority of contributors were Portuguese-speaking (mainly Portuguese, with some Brazilians), the



journal also featured work by English-, Spanish-, German-, French-, and Polish-speaking authors. Notably, the Polish author wrote in Portuguese, as he was based in Portugal. The first (1935) and last (1979) issues showcased the most international contributions, whereas the intermediate editions predominantly featured Spanish- and French-speaking authors. Foreign contributors included Georges Zbyszewski, Thomas Bubner, Charles Boxer, Georg Otto Schurhammer, Juan Llabrés Bernal, Georg Leisner, A. R. Nykl, Gastão Bettencourt, and Jean Ollivier. Prominent Portuguese authors included Serafim Leite, Rocha Madahil, Silva Marques, José Hermano Saraiva, Hernâni Barcos, Saavedra Machado, João Afonso Corte-Real, Fernando Castelo Branco, Margarida Ribeiro, Eduardo Prescott Vicente, Vítor Serrão, Jorge de Alarcão, and Eduíno Borges Garcia.

The eight issues collectively contained 147 articles, distributed across the following themes: Archaeology: 59 articles; History: 43 articles; Ethnography: 28 articles; Philology: 6 articles; Art History: 5 articles; Memorials: 4 articles; Literature: 1 article; Historical Methodology: 1 article. In terms of thematic evolution, History dominated the inaugural issue in 1935 and remained consistently represented with at least five articles per issue, except for 1966, 1970, and 1979, which featured only one. Archaeology, after a modest start with two articles, eventually surpassed History in prominence, except in 1965 and 1969. The 1979 issue saw the most significant disparity, with seven articles on Archaeology compared to one on History. Ethnography followed a similar trajectory to Archaeology, growing substantially after its modest debut in the inaugural issue. Memorials were occasional, focusing on figures significant to the journal's scientific domains and often intended to consolidate resources for academic work. Literature and Historical Methodology each appeared only once, while Philology featured six articles (three in 1935, with the last in 1969). Art History maintained a modest but consistent presence throughout the periodical's run. As a result, approximately 88 percent of the journal's total scientific output was dedicated to Archaeology, History, and Ethnography, with the remaining 12 percent focused on Philology, Art History, Literature, Historical Methodology, and Memorials. This distribution aligns closely with the core thematic areas of the institute from which the journal emerged.

Noteworthy among the articles are those addressing archaeological, historical, and ethnographic themes. Predominantly aligned with the cultural-historical archaeological school, most of the content focuses on systematically cataloguing finds from expeditions, primarily conducted under the auspices of the *Museu Etnológico*. These studies aimed to define the ethnic and cultural identities of the populations associated with the analysed material culture. This approach reflected Manuel Heleno's belief that Portuguese nationality had been definitively established "since the time of the polished stone" (Carlos Valentim, *Idem*). Even when discussing specific subjects such as megalithism or the Roman period, the methodology was rigorously detailed, with precise descriptions of excavated artefacts. However, a nationalist narrative underpinning the origins of Portuguese identity was consistently present. This school of thought also drew on the legacy of Leite de Vasconcelos, particularly his work *Religiões da Lusitânia* [Religions of Lusitania], which sought to establish the worldview of the Lusitanians as a cornerstone of Portuguese identity (João Afonso Corte-Real, "Lusitanidade de Évora", *Ethnos*, vol. 7, 1970, pp. 215-244). This perspective reflects a distinctly 19th-century legacy, influenced by social Darwinism and the quest for a "pure" national authenticity, powerful tools for legitimising emerging nation-states. Within the historical context of the



*Estado Novo* regime, which prioritised glorifying the nation's achievements, the exploration of the nation's supposed roots—presented through technically impeccable and scientifically credible analyses—served the political goals of the journal's principal promoter and his associates, many of whom were members of the IAHE. The final issue, published in 1979 (after the 25 April Revolution), marked a departure from the nationalist framework. It included articles on Bell Beaker culture, imported ceramics, and a typological essay with a distinct anthropological foundation. These contributions broke away from the ethnic narratives of earlier editions, offering instead straightforward interpretations of past societies based on material culture. This shift reflected an epistemological grounding in cultural evolutionism and anthropology, signalling a processualist approach.

Throughout its eight issues, ethnographic articles followed a similar pattern, focusing on topics such as folk songs, the gastronomy of the Beiras region, regional sweets, and religious traditions, particularly from Alentejo. These articles highlighted regional peculiarities while emphasising the deep-rooted essence of Portuguese identity. Historical articles, though less frequent within the journal's overall content, rarely ventured outside the 15th to 18th centuries, with a strong emphasis on the 16th century. These contributions were almost invariably consistent with the ideology of the *Estado Novo* regime. Although a distinct endeavour, the subject matter and treatment of information in the journal align with works such as the *Monumenta Henricina*, edited by Manuel Lopes de Almeida, Idalino Ferreira da Costa Brochado, and António Joaquim Dias Dinis O.F.M., and *Descobrimentos Portugueses* [The Portuguese Discoveries] by Silva Marques, a former contributor to *Ethnos*, as previously mentioned.

From the fortress of Malacca to the (symptomatically chosen) defeat of Nassau in the Bay of All Saints, from accounts of unpublished journeys across various parts of the Empire to the chancellery of King Manuel, from the cartography of the Discoveries to Gil Vicente, Prince Henry the Navigator, and even the hotly debated *leitmotiv* of the causes of Portuguese expansion into the Maghreb—the journal presented a wide array of themes. Discussions often centred on revisiting the Serbian theses regarding tensions between the bourgeoisie and nobility, alongside the revival of the Crusade ideal as the driving force behind the Ceuta enterprise. Throughout these explorations, the Portuguese Expansion emerges as a dominant theme, consolidating the narrative that the Empire was Portugal's historical destiny. Prince Henry is consistently depicted as the guiding figure—visionary, transcendental, and the first to fulfil this grand and patriotic design. This was achieved without neglecting historiographical rigour, particularly in the transcription and analysis of primary documents.

In essence, rooted in an ideology that sought to preserve the archaeological, historical, and ethnographic heritage of the "Portuguese nation," *Ethnos*—despite its sporadic publication—served as a platform for affirming a particular vision of Portuguese national identity. This perspective extended the concept of Portuguese heritage back to the Neolithic period, deliberately integrating the Lusitanians, and resonated deeply with the *Zeitgeist* of cultural nationalism. Institutionally rooted in the *Museu Etnológico*, the *Faculdade de Letras* of Lisbon, and its affiliate, the IAHE, the journal was part of Manuel Heleno's efforts to reinvent and perpetuate the scientific legacy of his mentor, Leite de Vasconcelos.





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