

# THE JUNTA DE EDUCAÇÃO NACIONAL, ARMANDO DE LACERDA AND THE EMERGENCE OF EXPERIMENTAL PHONETICS IN PORTUGAL

Quintino Lopes

*Institute of Contemporary History – NOVA University of Lisbon; University of Évora,  
Portugal  
quintinolopes1@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** The work of the Junta de Educação Nacional from its creation in 1929 and the continuation of its work from 1936 by the body which replaced it, the Instituto para a Alta Cultura, meant that during the interwar period Portugal benefited from the existence of an institution for the planning and funding of science, similar to circumstances in other countries in Europe and North America. A number of Portuguese scientists were able to take advantage of scholarships granted by these bodies to study experimental phonetics at some of the most advanced research centres in Europe during the era, among them Armando de Lacerda, who in 1936, with the support of the Instituto para a Alta Cultura, set up the first experimental phonetics laboratory in Portugal, at the University of Coimbra – the Coimbra Phonetics Laboratory. The laboratory's journal, the *Revista do Laboratório de Fonética Experimental da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra*, was published from 1952, and as its editor, Lacerda used it as a vehicle for disseminating the findings of the research carried out at the laboratory. The eight volumes of the *Revista* which were published contain works by several prominent 20<sup>th</sup>-century phoneticians, such as Peter Ladefoged, Göran Hammarström and Peter Strevens. Their articles appeared in the journal at an early stage in their careers, indicating that they sought the recognition that the journal, the mouthpiece of the laboratory and its head, both of worldwide renown in the field of phonetics, conferred on them.

## 1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the importance of the role of the Junta de Educação Nacional (JEN) – National Board of Education and the Instituto para a Alta Cultura (IAC) – the Institute for High Culture, the first bodies set up in Portugal to plan and fund work in the field of science, in the drive to establish experimental phonetics as a field of study and research in Portugal. We identify the first scientists to hold scholarships in the field of phonetics provided by the board and the laboratories abroad where they worked, and highlight the prominent role played by Armando de Lacerda in this process.

In the second part of the chapter we revive the memory of the *Revista do Laboratório de Fonética Experimental da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra* – Journal of the University of Coimbra Faculty of Letters Experimental Phonetics Laboratory, which Lacerda edited from 1952, by tracing its history. We examine the eight volumes of the journal which were published, and provide an insight into how it operated, identify authors and articles published, and gauge the importance of the journal for the work of the Coimbra Phonetics Laboratory and the impact it had on the academic careers of those who contributed articles. The importance of this is clear when we consider the international standing enjoyed during the era by Lacerda and the laboratory he headed, and at the same time the way in which the memory of the *Revista* was consigned to oblivion by historians.

## 4 Conclusion

The history of experimental phonetics in Portugal is closely bound up with the action of the first Portuguese institution for the planning and funding of science. Following in the footsteps of its Spanish and Belgian counterparts, the Junta de Educação Nacional was able to prioritise the granting of scholarships to scientists to study and work at some of the most advanced experimental phonetics centres of the time. Examples are the internships of Portuguese researchers between 1929 and 1936 at University College London (under the supervision of Daniel Jones) the University of Hamburg (under the supervision of Giulio Panconcelli-Calzia), at the Institute of Phonetics of the University of Bonn (under the supervision of Paul Menzerath), the Centro de Estudios Históricos of the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios y Investigaciones Científicas (under the supervision of Tomás Navarro Tomás) and the Institute of Phonetics of the University of Paris.

Among JEN scholarship fellows, Armando de Lacerda stands head and shoulders above the rest in this particular field of knowledge. The international recognition he gained in Germany from 1930 to 1933 as the inventor of the chromographic method and co-author of *Koartikulation, Steuerung und Lautabgrenzung* enabled him to benefit from funding provided by the Instituto para a Alta Cultura to set up the first experimental phonetics laboratory in Portugal and engage scientists from abroad as collaborators at the laboratory. These phoneticians had articles published in the *Revista do Laboratório de Fonética Experimental* from 1952, taking advantage of great international prestige enjoyed by Lacerda and the laboratory he headed to disseminate their work and further their academic careers. Following Lacerda's retirement in 1972 and the closure of the laboratory in 1979, the *Revista* and the work of the laboratory were consigned to oblivion. As we have argued in another paper, after the advent of democracy in Portugal in 1974, Portuguese historians mainly focused their attention on scientists who had been persecuted during the dictatorship from 1926 to 1974. As this was not the case with Armando de Lacerda, the tendency was for historiographers to ignore his work and for his legacy to be forgotten [7].

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