

## Fado: the Soul of A Nation. Debunking Its Origin(S)

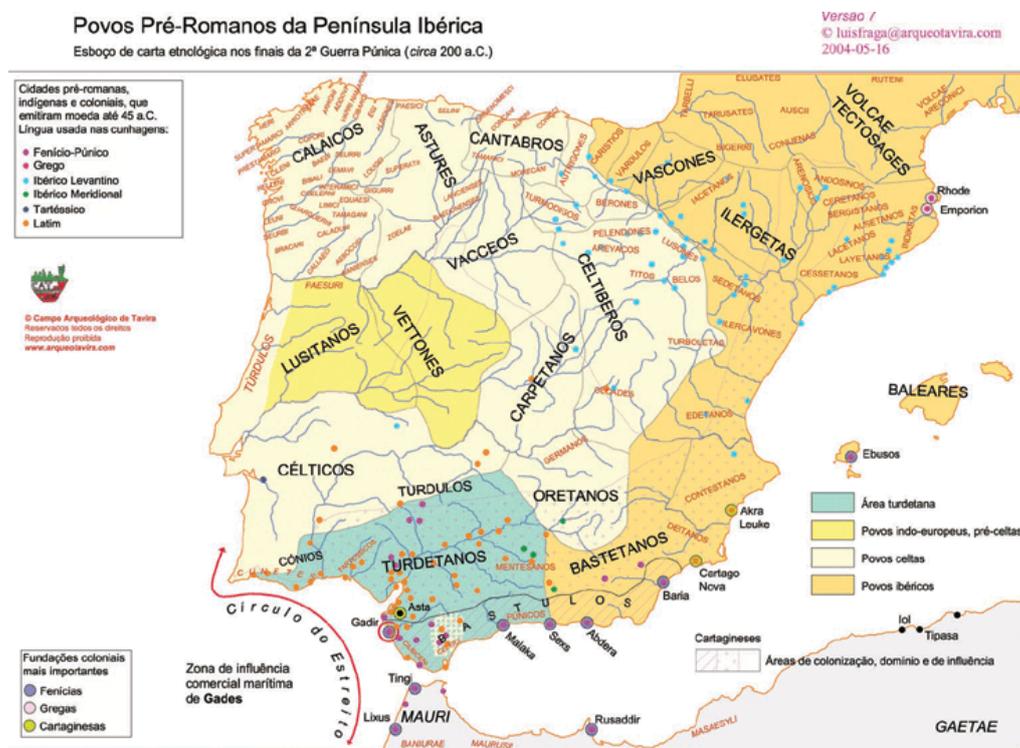
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**Abstract:** Following a brief introduction to the peoples of pre-Roman-contact Iberia, and using as a springboard some of the myths on the origins of fado, in this work I demonstrate that indeed this kind of dance, music, and song is far older than what previously thought. Undeniably, fado traces its origins to pre-Roman Iberia, when different Indo-European and non-Indo-European peoples roamed Iberian lands trading with the tribes situated in parts of present-day Portugal and some areas along its border with Spain. Indeed, the Lusitanians performed a dance while singing at the sound of music. This musical, dance performance was the fado.

**Keywords:** dance, fado, Lusitanians, music, Portugal, Portuguese, saudade

### I. Introduction



Ethnographic Map of Pre-Roman Iberia (circa 200 B.C.)<sup>1</sup>

Before the arrival of the Romans in 218 BCE, the Iberian Peninsula was inhabited by a variety of Indo-European and non-Indo-European peoples hailing from different parts of the then-known world—namely, Eurasia and North Africa—as well as local Iberian tribes whose origins are yet to be determined with certainty.

<sup>1</sup> Luís Fraga da Silva. “Ethnological Map of Pre-Roman Iberia (circa 200 B.C.)” [www.arqueotavira.com](http://www.arqueotavira.com). <<https://web.archive.org/web/20040611215344/http://www.arqueotavira.com/Mapas/Iberia/Populi.htm>>.

According to some scholars, Indo-European presence in Iberia must have occurred “before the Urnfield culture,” or rather, “between 1600 and 1300 BCE.”<sup>2</sup>

As of the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Greek colonies of traders were stationed in key places of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>3</sup>

Upon arriving in Iberia—a Greek word based on the Ebro, a river situated in the north and northeast of the Iberian Peninsula—Celtic tribes settled in most parts of the Iberian Peninsula (ca. 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE), oftentimes intermarrying with local, Iberian tribes, as the Lusitanians, or with the Ligurians, the latter either pre-Indo-European or Indo-European peoples that had a strong presence along the East Coast of Iberia.<sup>4</sup> There were also Carthaginian and Phoenician colonies interested in pursuing local and overseas trade with the rest of the then-known world.

In his *Historia Romana*,<sup>5</sup> Roman historian Marcus Velleius Paterculus (19 BCE-31 CE) wrote that the first Phoenician presence in the Iberian Peninsula occurred around the year 1100 BCE. Upon their arrival, the Phoenicians “founded trading posts at Cádiz, Málaga, and Seville.”<sup>6</sup> Yet, there is no archeological evidence to substantiate this claim since, to-date, the first attested records of Phoenician presence in Hispania are of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>7</sup>

In 575 BCE, Greek colonists founded Ἐμπορίον (*Emporion*, Market) in present-day Alt Empordà, Catalonia. According to Herodotus (484-425 BCE), in circa 640 BCE a Greek sea captain Kolaios hailing from Samos was shipwrecked and landed in Tartessos, at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, there were Sephardic Jewish communities dispersed throughout the Iberian Peninsula. The first record of Jewish presence in what is today Portugal is of 482 BCE.<sup>9</sup> A signet ring with a Phoenician, paleo-Hebraic inscription (ca. 700 BCE), found at Cadiz, and Tartessian texts (ca. 700 BCE), discovered in Southern Portugal in 1922—documented by German historian and archeologist Adolf Schulten (1870-1960)—are among the earlier records that attest to Jewish presence in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wandering Lusitanian. “Who Were the Lusitanians?” *Herminius Mons* May 15 2018. <<https://herminiusmons.wordpress.com/2018/05/15/who-were-the-lusitanians/>>; John M. Coles, and Anthony F. Harding. *The Bronze Age in Europe: An Introduction to the Prehistory of Europe C. 2000-700 BC*. London: Methuen, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Ippokratis Kantzios. “Herodotus and the Ends of the World.” *Stockton University*. December 1, 1996. 1-5. 3. <<https://stockton.edu/hellenic-studies/documents/chs-summaries/kantzios96.pdf>>.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Wellington Husband. “Kelts and Ligurians.” 6.4 *Classical Philology* (October 1911): 385-401.

<sup>5</sup> Beatus Rhenanus. *C. Vellei Paterculi Historiae Romanae ad M. Vinicium Cos.* 1520.

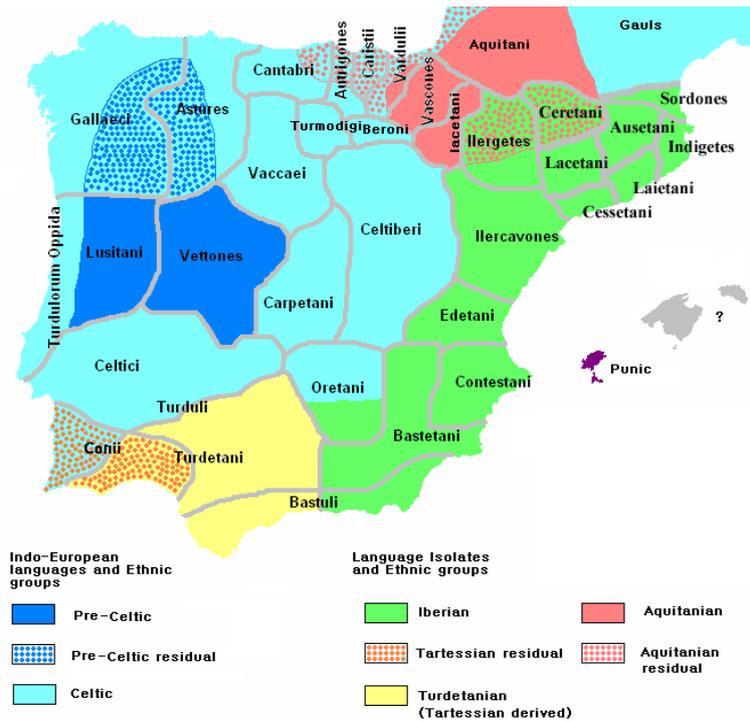
<sup>6</sup> “Phoenicians, Greeks, and Carthaginians.” *Country Studies*. <<http://countrystudies.us/portugal/4.htm>>.

<sup>7</sup> “Excavaciones en Los Castillos de Alcorrín (Manilva, Málaga).” *Web del Centro de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos (CEFyP)*. <<http://cefyp.blogspot.com/2008/05/excavaciones-en-los-castillejos-de.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> José Miguel Alonso-Núñez. “Herodotus on the Far West.” *L'Antiquité Classique* 56 (1987): 243-249.

<sup>9</sup> Jorge Martins. *Portugal e os Judeus*. 3 vols. Lisbon: Vega, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Adolf Schulten. *Fontes Hispaniae antiquae, publicadas bajo los auspicios y a expensas de la Universidad de Barcelona*. Barcelona: A. Bosch, 1922; Adolf Schulten. *Tartessos*. 1924. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1979.



**Ethnographic Iberia 200 BCE<sup>11</sup>**

The word HISPANIA is a calque from the Phoenician quadrilateral root HSPM (*Hispania*), which meant “land of hyraxes (rabbits).” Thus, borrowing from their predecessors, the Romans referred to the newly-conquered Iberian Peninsula (206 BCE-27 BCE, annexed 10 BCE) as HISPANIA and called its inhabitants HISPANI, or rather, “people from the Iberian Peninsula.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> “Ethnographic and Linguistic Map of the Iberian Peninsula at about 200 BCE (at the end of the Second Punic War). Based on the map done by Portuguese Archeologist Luis Fraga (luisfraga@arqueotavira.com), from the “Campo Arqueológico de Tavira” (Tavira Archeological Camp, in Tavira, Algarve Portugal.” <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnographic\\_Iberia\\_200\\_BCE.PNG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnographic_Iberia_200_BCE.PNG)>.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Abraham Levi. “The Many Identity Markers of Luso-Americans: Linguistic and Psychological Identities among First-, Second-, and Third-Generation Portuguese-Americans.” *International Journal of Arts and Social Science* 3 3 (May-June 2020): 277-301. 281. <<http://www.ijassjournal.com/2020/V3I3/41465751966.pdf>>.



Iberia before Phoenician Occupation ca. 300 BCE<sup>13</sup>

[The] Indo-Europeans established in some places in Iberia, namely the Western part of the Peninsula. The mix between the Indo-Europeans and the native peoples here formed the first Lusitanians. One of the main arguments to support this claim is the fact that the Lusitanian language, while belonging to the Indo-European family, is of Pre-Celtic origin, and thus the Lusitanians would be among the earliest Indo-European Iberian peoples, along with the Vettonians.<sup>14</sup>

The map herewith reproduced highlights the main ethno-linguistic areas of the Iberian Peninsula in circa 300 before the Common Era. The green area represents the proto-Basque, Aquitanian area; the dark orange area denotes tribes of Iberian origin, whereas white, pink, and azure show Celtic and Proto-Celtic areas. Finally, blue and red depict Carthaginian and Greek presence respectively.<sup>15</sup> As we can see, there were many tribes and most of them interacted and/or intermarried with the Celts. The Lusitanians, “a collective term that

<sup>13</sup> Alcides Pinto. “Ibéria ca. 300 a.C.” <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iberia\\_300BC-pt.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iberia_300BC-pt.svg)>.

<sup>14</sup> Wandering Lusitanian. “Who Were the Lusitanians?” *Herminius Mons* May 15 2018. <<https://herminiusmons.wordpress.com/2018/05/15/who-were-the-lusitanians/>>.

<sup>15</sup> Alcides Pinto. “Principais áreas linguísticas da Península Ibérica c. 300 a.C.: aquitânica (verde), ibérica (laranja), celta e proto-celta (branco, rosa e azul claro), colónias cartaginesas (azul) e gregas (vermelho).” <[https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Povos\\_ib%C3%A9ricos\\_pr%C3%A9-romanos#/media/Ficheiro:Iberia\\_300BC-pt.svg](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Povos_ib%C3%A9ricos_pr%C3%A9-romanos#/media/Ficheiro:Iberia_300BC-pt.svg)>.

included diverse *populi*,”<sup>16</sup> for example, were Celtic-Iberians; whoever, it is “uncertain to what extent” the Lusitanians “were Celticized, though they may have been related to the Celtic Lusones of northeastern Iberia.”<sup>17</sup>



**Roman Conquest of the Iberian Peninsula<sup>18</sup>**

The Romans divided the Iberian Peninsula into two provinces: *Hispania Citerior* and *Hispania Ulterior* (197-133 BCE). Yet, as Roman presence became more prominent in the Iberian Peninsula, also these provinces grew in size. Indeed, between 27 BCE and 300 CE, the Romans reorganized the entire division of the Iberian Peninsula and created a third province, specifically: *Tarraconensis*, *Lusitania*, and *Baetica*. Finally, between ca. 300 and 410 CE, five diocese provinces were created, all administered by a bishop, namely: *Tarraconensis*, *Cartaginensis*, *Gallaecia*, *Lusitania*, and *Baetica*.

<sup>16</sup> Jorge de Alarcão. “Novas perspectivas sobre os Lusitanos (e outros mundos).” *Revista Portuguesa de Arqueologia* 4.2 (2001): 293-349. 293.

<sup>17</sup> “Lusitani.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lusitani>>; Alejandro G. Sinner, and Javier Velaza. *Palaeohispanic Languages and Epigraphies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019; Eugenio Luján. “Language and Writing among the Lusitanians,” in *Palaeographic Languages and Epigraphies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 304-334.

<sup>18</sup> Saxum Left. “Mapa simplificado da conquista romana da Hispânia.” <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conquista\\_Hispania\\_Simplificado-pt.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Conquista_Hispania_Simplificado-pt.svg)>.



Diocese Provinces of Roman Hispania<sup>19</sup>

## II. Fado

Despite the common belief that *fado* derives from Latin *FATUM* (destiny), *fado* (music/song) is a pre-Roman word of Lusitanian origin, meaning “father” or “creator.” *Fado* was also the name of a deity, the “God of Heavens”. In *Lusitania* and *Baetica*, during wedding ceremonies some Lusitanian tribesmen would stomp their feet as they were playing a musical instrument in honor of one of their many gods, the deity *Fado*, while others would dance as a way of simulating or symbolically performing the sexual union between newlyweds.

Indeed, in his *Geographica* (Γεωγραφικά, Geography) Greek geographer, philosopher, and historian Strabo (Στράβων Strábōn, c. 64 BCE.—24 CE) described this special dance, *fado*, performed by the Lusitanians. According to Strabo, the Lusitanian *fado* resembled the Persian dance reported by Xenophon (c. 430-354 BCE) in his seven-book opus *Anabasis* (Ἀνάβασις c. 370 BCE) whereby Greek mercenaries (οἱ Μύριοι, The Ten Thousand) assisted Cyrus the Younger (r. 408-401 BCE) in defeating his elder brother Artaxerxes II (r. 404-358 BCE) thus taking control of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BCE):

The supper is carried round, and whilst drinking they [i.e., the Lusitanians] dance to the sound of the flute and trumpet, springing up and sinking upon the knees.

Xenophon describes this, or one very similar, as the Persian dance: τέλος δὲ τὸ περσικὸν ὠχεῖτο, κορτῶν τὰς πέλτας καὶ ὄκλαζε, καὶ ἐξανίατατο. ‘Last of all he danced the Persian dance, clashing his bucklers, and in dancing fell on his knees, then sprang up again.’ Xen. Anab. b. vi. c. 1, 10.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Rastrojo. “Provincias de la Hispania Romana (Diocleciano).” <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Provincias\\_de\\_la\\_Hispania\\_Romana\\_\(Diocleciano\)-pt.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Provincias_de_la_Hispania_Romana_(Diocleciano)-pt.svg)>.

<sup>20</sup> H. C. Hamilton, W. Falconer, ed. *Strabo. Geography*. Perseus Digital Library. Gregory R. Crane, ed. TUFTS University. Strab. 3.3.7. <<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0239%3Abook%3D3%3Achapter%3D3%3Asection%3D7>>; J. K. Anderson. *Xenophon*. London: Duckworth, 2001; Albert T. Olmstead. *History of the Persian Empire*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1948; Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo*. Trans. Horace Leonard Jones. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1923.

In fact, in Book VI, part I, of his *Geographica*, Xenophon describes this “Persian dance” performed by a Mysian. Between circa 1180 and 547 BCE, Greek colonies were established along the Anatolian coasts. Mysians were the aboriginal, non-Greek people that inhabited the valley of the Kaikos or Astraeus River (today Bakırçay River), in present-day Turkey, and the mountains to the north.<sup>21</sup> According to Homer, the Mysians were “primitive allies of the Trojans.”<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Xenophon mentions other individuals, the Mantineans, or rather, people from a municipality in present-day Arcadia, in the Peloponnese, Greece:

After this a Mysian came in with a light shield in either hand and danced, at one time going through a pantomime, as if he were dealing with two assailants at once; at another plying his shields as if to face a single foe, and then again he would whirl about and throw somersaults, keeping the shields in his hands, so that it was a beautiful spectacle. Last of all he danced the Persian dance, clashing the shields together, crouching down on one knee and springing up again from earth; and all this he did in measured time to the sound of the flute. After him the Mantineans stepped upon the stage, and some other Arcadians also stood up; they had accoutred themselves in all their warlike finery. They marched with measured tread, pipes playing, to the tune of the 'warrior's march (3)'; the notes of the paean rose, lightly their limbs moved in dance, as in solemn procession to the holy gods.<sup>23</sup>

According to Xenophon then, the instruments, folk songs, and dances of the Mantineans,<sup>24</sup> which he called collectively “Persian dance,” resembled those of the Lusitanians, or rather, the *fado*.

The Latin word *FATUM*, destiny, became *fado* in Portuguese and kept the same meaning, “destiny.” Hence, as result of Roman domination of the Iberian Peninsula, in the geographical area that corresponds to present-day Portugal and southwest Spain, there have been two homophones, with distinct origins, *fado*, that in time were attributed to only one origin, the Latin word *FATUM*, “destiny.”

### III. Myths

In 1994, acclaimed Brazilian journalist and music critic José Ramos Tinhorão (1928- ), published a study on *fado*,<sup>25</sup> asserting that the traditional Portuguese music/song *fado* has origins in the *landu*,<sup>26</sup> or rather, Brazilian dance and music that, in their turn, trace their origins to Bantu (hailing from West and northern Southwest Africa) and Portuguese traditions.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, Portuguese presence along the west and northern southwestern African coasts—from present-day Senegal down to Angola—was a constant from the first days of the Portuguese Age of Exploration and Discoveries (1415-1543) to the Berlin Conference (1884-1885). For over four centuries Portuguese factories<sup>28</sup> along West Africa were the entry ways for the Portuguese, and other Europeans, to trade with the Africans all sorts of goods, alas including slaves.

<sup>21</sup> “Greek Colonies on the Anatolian Coasts, c. 1180-547 BCE.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Anatolia/Greek-colonies-on-the-Anatolian-coasts-c-1180-547-bce#ref481818>>.

<sup>22</sup> “Mysia.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Mysia>>.

<sup>23</sup> Xenophon. “Anabasis.” Trans. H. G. Dakyns. *The Project Gutenberg EBook of Anabasis, by Xenophon*. 2008-2013. Book VI, part I. <[https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1170/1170-h/1170-h.htm#link2H\\_4\\_0045](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1170/1170-h/1170-h.htm#link2H_4_0045)>.

<sup>24</sup> Sam Sotirios Chianis. *Folksongs of Matineia: Greece*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965.

<sup>25</sup> José Ramos Tinhorão. *Fado: dança do Brasil, cantar de Lisboa. O fim de um mito*. Lisbon: Editorial Caminho, 1994.

<sup>26</sup> Also spelled *landu*, *landum* and/or *lundum*.

<sup>27</sup> Rogério Budasz. “Black Guitar-Players and Early African-Iberian Music in Portugal and Brazil.” *Early Music* 35.1 (February 2007): 3-21. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Factory: a settlement along a coast for traders to carry on business. Portuguese factories belonged to the Portuguese Crown.

It is thus understandable that traditional music and dance hailing from West and northern Southwest Africa made their way to the Americas and Europe during the Atlantic Slave Trade (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries), in this case Brazil and Portugal. Since the Portuguese had possessions all along West and northern Southwest Africa (and adjacent parts inland), it is therefore natural that there were also contacts between Brazil and the African continent. This would explain the cultural exchange between Brazil and present-day Angola and West Africa, from Mauritania and Senegal to Benin and southern Nigeria.<sup>29</sup>

It is also true that there were instances in which there was miscegenation of dance and musical styles between the two sides of the Atlantic: Brazil and West/northern Southwest Africa. This is the historical and socioeconomic background to the birth of the *lundu*. It is also true that colonists in Brazil and, of course, the Church, considered *lundu*—as well as other forms of dance and musical expressions performed by the Afro-Brazilian population—dangerous and evil; hence, they had to be eradicated.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, despite the negative connotations associated with the *lundu*, this combination of dance and music became very popular in Brazil. Eventually, it ended up captivating members of the Portuguese middle and upper class, in Brazil as well as in the Metropolis. Indeed, there is evidence that the *lundu* and the *modinha*<sup>31</sup> were also appreciated in Lisbon.<sup>32</sup>

The *modinha* is a traditional dance and song ballroom performance executed in Portugal and Brazil. The *modinha* was very famous in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was usually accompanied by a *cavaquinho* (small guitar), flute, and/or guitar. In Brazil, the *modinha* was more sentimental<sup>33</sup> and melancholic than in Portugal. Additionally, the *modinha* is considered by many as the foundation of most Brazilian music.

José Ramos Tinhorão claimed that the Portuguese Crown, upon returning from a 13-year (self-imposed) exile in Brazil (1808-1821), introduced the *lundu* to the Metropolis, thus giving birth to present-day *fado*. According to Tinhorão, the «Brazilian dance» became «song in Portugal», or rather, the *lundu* became *fado* in Portuguese soil and it was adopted by the Portuguese elite.<sup>34</sup>

In 2004, acclaimed Portuguese musicologist Rui Vieira Nery (1957- ) suggested that present-day Portuguese *fado* could have roots in Brazil since, in his opinion, the erotic and sensual dance performance known as the *lundu*—whereby the “navels” of the dancers touched each other, hence the dance was called in Portuguese *umbigada* (activity where navels touch)—arrived in Portugal in 1821 when the Portuguese Crown finally returned to Lisbon and it then transformed itself into a melancholic song, namely, the *fado*. Yet, Nery did not provide any evidence to substantiate his claim. Even though modern *fado* performances in Lisbon occurred during the first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this does not mean that *fado* has its roots in Brazil and that it arrived in Lisbon with the Portuguese Crown after their 13-year stay in Rio de Janeiro.

#### IV. Facts

Acclaimed Portuguese composer and musicologist José Alberto Sardinha is the only present-day scholar, on both sides of the Atlantic, who has done extensive research on the origins of *fado*. In a 2010 interview to the *Lusa News Agency*,<sup>35</sup> Sardinha stated that:

O fado nasceu em Portugal a partir de um substrato comum a todo o território nacional que é o romanceiro tradicional. É este canto narrativo que dá origem ao fado.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Richard D. Ralston. “The Return of Brazilian Freedmen to West Africa in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 3.3 (Autumn 1969): 577-593.

<sup>30</sup> Rogério Budasz. “Black Guitar-Players and Early African-Iberian Music in Portugal and Brazil.” *Early Music* 35.1 (February 2007): 3-21. 12-13.

<sup>31</sup> *Modinha*: diminutive of “moda,” fashion.

<sup>32</sup> Rogério Budasz. “Black Guitar-Players and Early African-Iberian Music in Portugal and Brazil.” *Early Music* 35.1 (February 2007): 3-21. 19-20.

<sup>33</sup> Rui Vieira Nery. *Para uma história do fado*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lisbon: Imprensa-Casa da Moeda, 2012. 31.

<sup>34</sup> “José Alberto Sardinha. Fado, o orgulho português.” *Tempo Livre* 233 (Jan. 2012): 16-22. 16. <[https://issuu.com/fundacao\\_inatel/docs/233](https://issuu.com/fundacao_inatel/docs/233)>.

<sup>35</sup> The *Lusa News Agency* is the “largest news agency in Portugal, as well as the largest news agency in Portuguese.” <[www.lusa.pt](http://www.lusa.pt)>.

Indeed, over twenty years of rigorous and painstaking research throughout Portugal, consulting the national archives and, moreover, talking to and interviewing people from different walks of life, in the countryside as well as within an urban environment, gave José Alberto Sardinha the necessary tools to substantiate his theory: the Portuguese origin of present-day *fado*. In fact, even before it became a popular music genre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *fado* was “poetry, a narrative poetry”<sup>37</sup> all over Portugal, from north to south.

Indeed, according to José Alberto Sardinha, present-day *fadistas* (*fado* singers) affirm that *fado* has “contar uma história, e essa é origem nacional do fado: contar uma história que emocionasse primeiro o fadista e, através deste, a audiência.”<sup>38</sup>

In his two-decade long research on the origins of *fado*, José Alberto Sardinha was able to (re)discover a known, yet forgotten or perhaps conveniently not very publicly discussed fact among the Portuguese, namely, the existence of itinerant “blind men and women” (*os ceguinhos*, literally, the blind) and musicians who would travel throughout the country and perform at markets, local/regional fairs, and along pilgrimage routes to holy sites, as in the case of Santiago de Compostela. José Alberto Sardinha refers to these *ceguinhos*, and rightly so, as the heirs of the medieval Iberian troubadours<sup>39</sup> that roamed the streets of present-day Portugal and parts of present-day Spain (ca. 1000-1500), reciting poems, singing, dancing, and interacting with the local population. These itinerant performers provided much-needed entertainment in exchange for food, shelter, and/or monetary remuneration. The music and the lyrics of the poems/songs were improvised. There was no script. Everything was based on oral tradition and local/regional folklore. In other words, the “Iberian Peninsula during the period ca. 1000-1500 was home to a poetic culture that was not defined by a national agenda.”<sup>40</sup> The poems and songs sung at the Iberian courts were eventually collected, under the auspices of the local crown, into an anthology, the abovementioned *romanceiro* and *romancero*, Portuguese and Spanish for “collection of songs/poems,” usually around the themes of love, love loss, and betrayal. The poems, songs, and dances that were performed in the streets, though, continued uninterrupted throughout the centuries, down to the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, during a conversation, acclaimed Portuguese *fadista* (*fado* singer) Amália Rodrigues (1920-1999) told José Alberto Sardinha that she learned how to sing and “feel” the *fado* from the *ceguinhos*.<sup>41</sup>

According to José Alberto Sardinha, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, present-day *fado* became more popular in Lisbon and Coimbra because these are larger centers than small towns. Indeed, both cities had taverns where people (in Coimbra, students) would meet and listen to these itinerant musicians and improvised storytellers.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> “José Alberto Sardinha defende a origem portuguesa do fado.” *Diário de Notícias* May 10, 2010. <<https://www.dn.pt/cartaz/livros/jose-alberto-sardinha-defende-a-origem-portuguesa-do-fado--1565960.html>>; Vítor Duarte Marceneiro. “As origens do fado – José Alberto Sardinha.” *Lisboa no Guinness: A Cidade mais cantada no mundo. Capital do Fado*. May 15, 2010. <<https://lisboanoguinness.blogs.sapo.pt/tag/origens+do+fado>>. [“*Fado* was born in Portugal from a common substratum, found all over the country, namely, the traditional *romanceiro* [collection of poems/stories]. This narrative song gave birth to *fado*.”]. [translated by the author].

<sup>37</sup> Vítor Duarte Marceneiro. “As origens do fado – José Alberto Sardinha.” *Lisboa no Guinness: A Cidade mais cantada no mundo. Capital do Fado*. May 15, 2010. <<https://lisboanoguinness.blogs.sapo.pt/tag/origens+do+fado>>.

<sup>38</sup> Vítor Duarte Marceneiro. “As origens do fado – José Alberto Sardinha.” *Lisboa no Guinness: A Cidade mais cantada no mundo. Capital do Fado*. May 15, 2010. <<https://lisboanoguinness.blogs.sapo.pt/tag/origens+do+fado>>. [“*fado* has to tell a story, and this is the national origin of *fado*: tell a story that should first move the *fadista* and, then through the latter, the audience.”]. [translated by the author].

<sup>39</sup> “José Alberto Sardinha.” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwjD7FKpw6o>>.

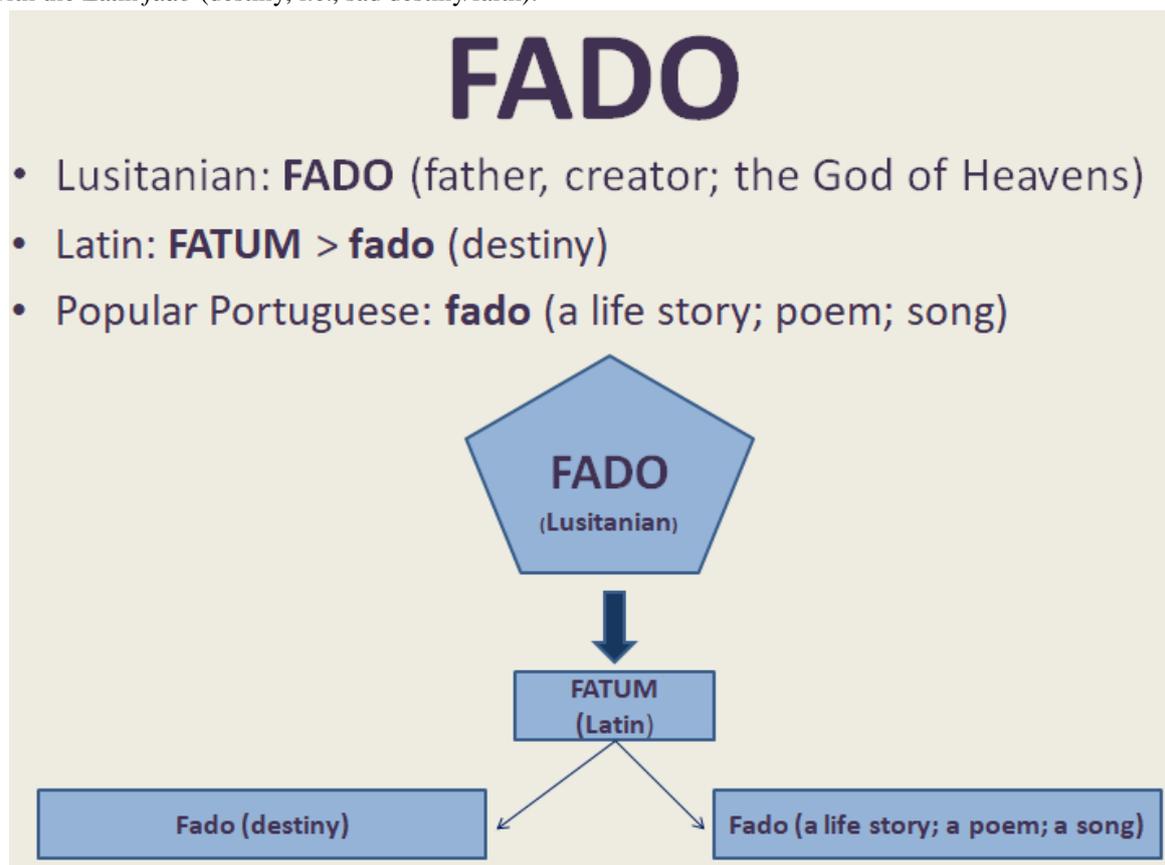
<sup>40</sup> David A. Wacks. “An Interstitial of Medieval Iberian Poetry,” in *The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies*. Ed. Javier Muñoz-Basols, Laura Lonsdale, and Manuel Delgado. London: Routledge, 2017. 79-92. 79.

<sup>41</sup> José Alberto Sardinha.” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwjD7FKpw6o>>.

<sup>42</sup> Vítor Duarte Marceneiro. “As origens do fado – José Alberto Sardinha.” *Lisboa no Guinness: A Cidade mais cantada no mundo. Capital do Fado*. May 15, 2010. <<https://lisboanoguinness.blogs.sapo.pt/tag/origens+do+fado>>.

The narrative poems of the *ceguinhos* and the music performed by their itinerant, musician colleagues thus followed this ancient tradition bestowed upon them by the troubadours and the minstrels of medieval Iberia, similar to the French *chanson de geste*, the medieval epic, heroic poems, at times based on real events, that were sung and/or recited by jongleurs and minstrels (ca. late 11<sup>th</sup> century-15<sup>th</sup> century). As José Alberto Sardinha pointed out, and rightly so, the *ceguinhos*, as their European counterparts of times gone, brought/bring the latest news and love/life stories to all, thus providing entertainment.

As mentioned above, the Lusitanian word *fado* (father, creator, and the God of Heavens), associated with popular songs and dances, lingered in the Iberian Peninsula despite the conflation with its homonym *fado* (from Latin *FATUM*, destiny). Throughout the centuries, the Lusitanian word *fado* thus kept the original meaning of popular poem, song, and/or life story of everyday people as they were dancing. Usually, these stories were sad and mourned the tragic loss of a loved one. Yet, there were also stories of betrayal, crime, and punishment. Because of its mournful nature, whereby the story inevitably ended on a sad note, the idea that “destiny” (Latin *FATUM*, destiny) was indeed responsible for this tragedy, gradually entered into the equation: the Lusitanian *fado* (father, creator, the god of Heavens, and, by extension, popular music and song) conflated with the Latin *fado* (destiny, i.e., sad destiny/faith).



*Fado*. Joseph Abraham Levi. © 2021

#### V. Saudade

Agora a saudade do passado  
tormento, puro, doce e magoado,  
que fazia converter estes furores  
em magoadas lágrimas de amores?

Luís de Camões *Canção XI*<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> José Vitorino Barreto Feito, and José Gomes Monteiro. *Obras de Luís de Camões. Correctas e Emendadas*. 2 vols. Lisbon and Paris: Officina Typographica de Fain e Thunot, 1843. 2: *Canção XI*.

*Fado* is usually associated with *saudade*, a word difficult to translate. Indeed, it conveys the idea of loss, longing, the bittersweet memory of days gone by, and missing something or someone that holds or held a special place in our hearts. Tears, the sea, betrayal, and an overall feeling of melancholy usually accompany a *fado* song. This longing for a past that is forever gone is the driving force of *saudade*; hence, it is natural that it is found in many *fado* songs:

A saudade nasce a partir de uma mudança ocorrida na vida da pessoa que a sente, normalmente associada à perda ou afastamento de um espaço ou de uma pessoa, e cresce em função de determinadas vivências, num tempo presente, em relação a um tempo passado. Normalmente, vivencia-se um presente menos feliz que outro tempo anterior, quando a existência era mais aprazível e deleitosa.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, *saudade* can also cover anticipatory longing for something or someone that, even though is here with us now, we know we will (soon) miss. Hence, we are sad and mourn (anticipatorily) the loss by feeling *saudade*.<sup>45</sup>

As of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there are two types of *fado*: the Lisbon *Fado* and the Coimbra *Fado*. The Lisbon *Fado* is mournful and it reflects the typical *fado* characteristics mentioned above. *Fadistas* (*fado* singers) who sing the Lisbon *Fado* can be women or men, though the stereotype of the *fadista* is a middle-aged woman wrapped in a black shawl mourning the loss of a lover, complaining about the betrayal of her loved one, or missing the good old days of their love affair/love life; hence, the *saudade* mentioned above.

The Coimbra *Fado* is the *fado* of the *Repúblicas estudantis* (fraternities); hence, it is “happier” since it aims at conquering the heart of the beloved. Of course, there are exceptions, whereby there are cases in which the *fadista* lover (or would-be-lover) mourns the loss/disdain of the loved one. Therefore, the Coimbra *Fado* is (almost) exclusively sung by men.

The Lisbon *Fado* is accompanied by one or two Portuguese guitars and the classic, six-string Spanish guitar (in Portuguese: *Viola Portuguesa*). The Coimbra *Fado* is accompanied by either a Portuguese guitar or a classical guitar.

## VI. Conclusions

*Fados* and *fandanguillos*, as well as *fandango* performances (accompanied by *fado* music), have been popular forms of music/dance sung in the Iberian Peninsula for over two millennia, since pre-Roman times. Indeed, *fandangos* are still performed in the Ribatejo region of Portugal whereby, at the sound of a concertina and no lyrics, two men dance stomping their feet in an alternating rhythm. *Fandanguillos* (small *fandangos*) instead, are found in present-day Spain. They resemble the *fandango*; yet, the music of this dance is in compass three by eight.

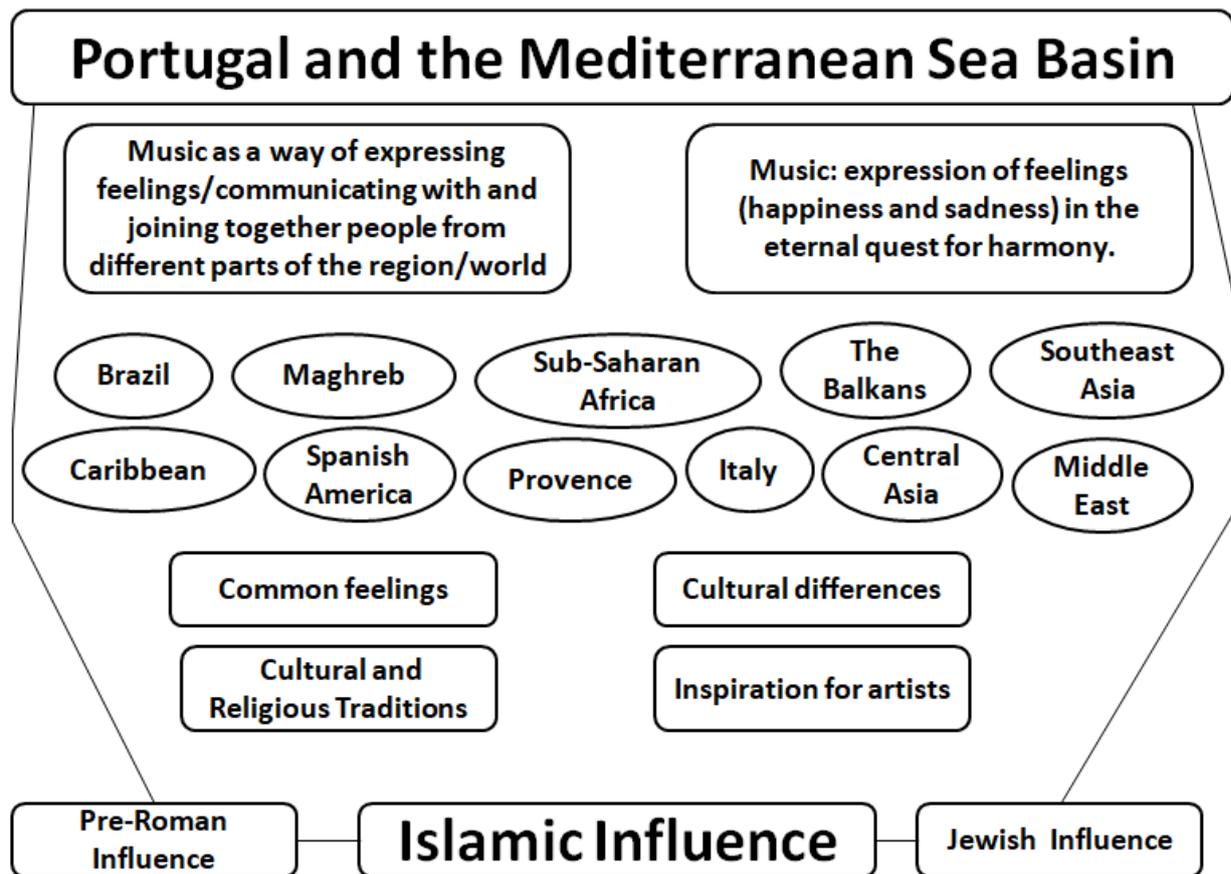
The pre-Roman substratum was per force influenced by Mediterranean—including Arabic and Jewish<sup>46</sup>—Roman, Germanic, and Islamic traditions, the latter hailing from the Maghreb, the Middle East, Central Asia (as in the case of Turkic peoples), and Sub-Saharan Africa.

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<<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/31509/31509-h/31509-h.htm>>. [“Now the nostalgia of the past torment, pure, sweet and wounded, that saw that these furors transformed into sad tears of love?”] [translated by the author].

<sup>44</sup> Vilma Fernanda Séves de Albuquerque Silvestre. “O Fado e a Questão da Identidade.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Universidade Aberta, 2015. 130. <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/303043225.pdf>>. [“*Saudade* is born from a change that has occurred in the life of the person who is feeling it; usually it is tied to the loss or the physical distance from a place or person; it grows according to specific life events, in the present, yet it is related to a time that is now gone. Usually, the person who has *saudade* feels less happy than when he/she was feeling before, a time when life was more pleasant and delightful [because we were there in this place or with the person we now miss].” [translated by the author].

<sup>45</sup> Vilma Fernanda Séves de Albuquerque Silvestre. “O Fado e a Questão da Identidade.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Universidade Aberta, 2015. 130. <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/303043225.pdf>>.



*Portugal and the Mediterranean Sea Basin. Joseph Abraham Levi. © 2021*

*Fado* is of Lusitanian origin, part of the Portuguese/Mediterranean Basin Area cultural tradition. *Fado* is not of African and/or Brazilian origin.

Indeed, if *fado* has “Brazilian” and/or “African” traces, or better yet, if *fado* resembles some forms of “Brazilian” and/or “African” music, this is due to the fact that it shares with Brazil and Africa a common denominator and a common past. In other words, the pre-Roman Iberian, Mediterranean, Islamic, Middle Eastern, and African mores that have influenced and shaped the cultures and society of the Portuguese.

As it can be seen from the timeline chart below, the Portuguese Empire spanned across the entire globe and lasted from 1415 to 2002. More than five centuries of Portuguese presence around the world—albeit in some areas nominal and only along the coastlines—have left undeniable marks in the language and mores of the Portuguese. This can be seen in the many words and concepts that have entered the Portuguese language and culture that have origins in pre-European contact Americas, Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. Conversely, the Portuguese language and mores have also left a mark in the languages and cultures with which they had contact, as in the case of Arabic, Cantonese, Farsi, Gujarati, Hawaiian, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Javanese, Kimbundu, Malay, Maratha, Sinhalese, Swahili, Tamil, Turkish, Umbundu, Xichangana, and many Amerindian languages of present-day Brazil.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Not only Sephardic (from the Iberian Peninsula) but also from other Jewish ethnic groups that had interaction with the Mediterranean Sea basin, as in the case of the איטלקים *Italkim* (Jews from present-day Italy), *Shuaditim* (Jews from Provence), צרפתים *Zarphatim* (Jews from northern France), ים נָוִי *Yevanim* (Jews from present-day Greece), and מזרחים *Mizrahim* (Jews from the Middle East, particularly Egypt).

<sup>47</sup> Hugo C. Cardoso. “O português em contacto na Ásia e no Pacífico.” *Repositório da Universidade de Lisboa* (2016): 68-97; Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado. *Introdução à Influência do Vocabulário Português em Línguas Asiáticas*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1913. 15; Alexandre António Timbane, and Rosane de Andrade

## Timeline of the Portuguese Empire

### 1<sup>st</sup> Empire (1415-1580)

African Coast (1415-1497)

Atlantic/Asian/Oceanic Period (1497-1580)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Empire (1580-1822)

1<sup>st</sup> Phase (1580-1640)

2<sup>nd</sup> Phase (1640-1822)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Empire (1822-1975; 1999)

Brazil (1500-1822)

Portuguese India (1498-1961)

Portuguese Africa (1415-1975)

East Timor (1556-1999; occupied by Indonesia:  
1975-1999; independence: 2002)

Macau (1557-1999)

*Timeline of the Portuguese Empire. Joseph Abraham Levi. © 2021*

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