

Abstract: Francisco José Tenreiro and the Independence of São Tomé and Príncipe

The aim of this thesis is to explore the multifaceted figure of the poet, geographer, university professor, co-founder of the Centre of African Studies in Lisbon and deputy in the National Assembly of Portugal, Francisco José Tenreiro (1921-1963). In this case, the research is not focused only on the aspect of literature but also on the historical and cultural context, including the era of Harlem Negro Renaissance in the United States, the dawn of the Negritude movement in France and, above all, the problematic period of Salazar's dictatorship (The New State) in Portugal. As F. J. Tenreiro is considered one of the most significant figures originating in São Tomé and Príncipe, special attention is paid to one of the most tragic moments in the modern history of Portugal, known as the Massacre in Batepá, which occurred on the island of São Tomé in February 1953 during the administration of the governor Carlos de Sousa Gorgulho, causing hundreds of deaths and prefiguring the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire. While the other prominent Portuguese-speaking African intellectuals and nationalists of that period, such as Alda Graça do Espírito Santo, Agostinho Neto and Mário Pinto de Andrade, criticised the act of violence and became strong opponents of Salazar's authoritarian regime, struggling for the independence of São Tomé and Príncipe and the whole Lusophone Africa, F. J. Tenreiro surprisingly kept himself reserved and remained loyal to the old regime. Analysing F. J. Tenreiro's poems and his scientific study, as well as various secondary sources, including documents deposited in the National Archive of Torre do Tombo, this thesis aims to explain F. J. Tenreiro's ambivalent position and personality, opening the timeless theme of the ethical code facing the basic human instinct of self-preservation.

Keywords: Lusophone Africa, Colonialism, Negritude, Salazar's Regime, Batepá Massacre, African Literature, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe