José Sebastião e Silva, Mathematician from Mértola to Lisboa, via Évora and Roma

José Francisco Rodrigues[1]

[1]*Faculdade de Ciências, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal*

Corresponding/Presenting author: jfrodrigues@ciencias.ulisboa.pt

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José Sebastião e Silva (1914-1972), the most original and influential Portuguese mathematician of the 20th century, was born in Mértola, in the South of Portugal, in 1914, where he attended primary school. After completing the secondary school in Évora, in 1933, he entered the Faculty of Sciences in Lisboa, with a fellowship, completed the course in mathematical Sciences in 1937 and started to do research in General Topology and Analysis, under the guidance of António Monteiro, at the new founded Centro de Estudos de Matemática de Lisboa, in 1940. From 1943 until 1947 he pursued his research in Roma, where he contacted L. Fantappiè, F. Enriques and M. Picone and prepared his PhD in Functional Analysis, which he presented at the University of Lisbon in 1949. He was Professor at the Technical University of Lisbon, from 1951 until 1960, when he became Professor of Mathematics at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon, until his death in 1972. Diretor of the Centro de Estudos de Matemática de Lisboa since 1952, his research led him to a new class of locally convex spaces, the (LN*) spaces, which were presented at the 1954 International Congress of Mathematicians in Amsterdam, and became subsequently known as "Silva spaces". Author of several books, he led, from 1963 onwards, a pioneer project for the modernisation of Mathematics teaching in the 3rd cycle of secondary education, with national and international impact, and he was also scientific advisor of the Laboratório de Física e Engenharias Nucleares, since 1961, and of the Instituto de Física e Matemática, in Lisbon, since 1966 until his death.