



Carnival in the Northeast of Portugal

The example in Ousilhão - locality of Trás-os-Montes region

The “masked” come out on Sunday and Shrove Tuesday, in other words Carnival.

During the afternoon, the Saint Stephen’s table was organized outdoors. Each neighbor took their gifts and products from the land for the community come together. During this ritual the priest realizes the handing over of the powers of the retiring authorities to those who are going to start their functions. The “masked” or “caretos” had a more rebelled role, covering the entire village’s street and carrying out their usual malice. “Masked” is a man who wears a mask with a protruding nose made of wood and wide cheeks. The color is also one of the most visible attributes of their garments: facts of fringed wool quilts red (or similar) with strings of cowbells at the waist and bandoliers with cowbells. From their clothing, is also part a stick that supports the raids and jumps. The environmental hardiness is inseparable from this mysterious figure.

The day ended with “virtual fights” and a traditional ball in order to approach friends and neighbors.

Their rituals are the same as those done before. The “masked” or “caretos” continue to cover the whole village tormenting the roamers, with the intention to punish them with their walking sticks and cowbells, realizing all types of animosities, according to each ones will and imagination. Normally, they perform in small groups, dispersed in various areas searching young people, old ladies and single women.

In conclusion, this is a ritual that brings the people together and causes fun and jocosity. The feast of “caretos” is part of an ancient tradition that is celebrated in Portugal at Carnival.

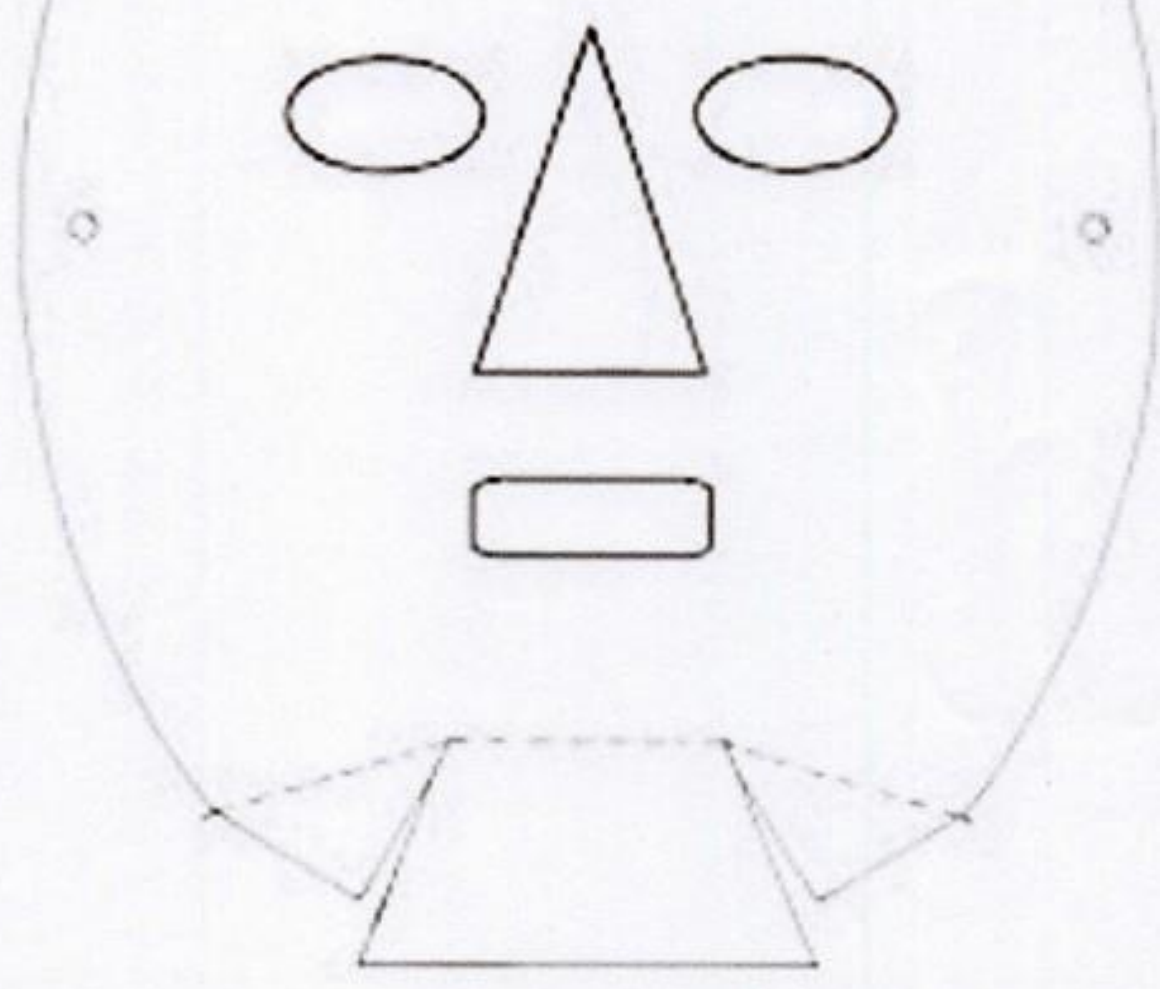


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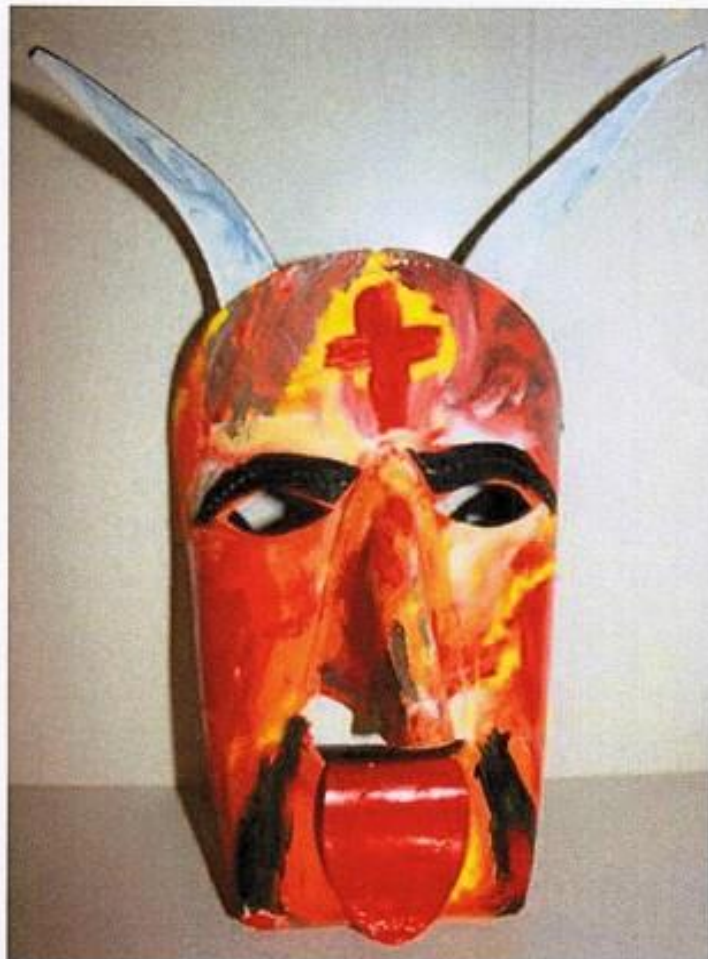
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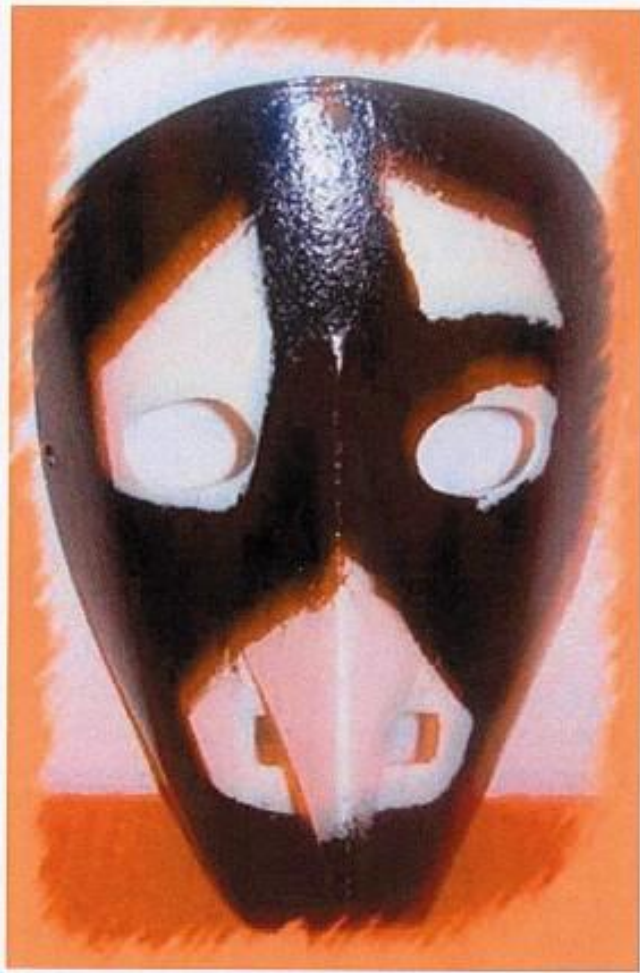
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Máscara
"Caretto de Podence"













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