New Selection 1
Pinheiro Chagas, Manuel

Cultural Current: Publishing, periodicals
Cultural Community: Portuguese
Author: Martins Gomes, António

Chagas, Manuel Pinheiro

Intended for a military career, Pinheiro Chagas (Lisbon 1842 – Lisbon 1895) took an early interest in literature. His first book was a collection of poems entitled Anjo do lar (“Home angel”, 1863). Poema da mocidade (“Youth poem”, 1865) triggered the “Coimbra Controversy” as a result of Castilho’s controversial foreword, which criticized young writers for lacking “common sense and good taste”.

Pinheiro Chagas became one of the most popular Portuguese writers with his romans-feuilleton, chronicles, and art criticism in different periodicals, some of which he directed. His journalism in the newspaper A Revolução de Setembro involved social and political criticism. His call for a public spanking of Louise Michel, in a response to the events of the Parisian Commune, gained notoriety. That same year, he was elected into parliament where he became an advocate of colonialism. Between October 1883 and February 1886, he was Minister of Navy and Overseas, during “Scramble for Africa” when the Portuguese government claimed a swathe of land between Angola and Mozambique – a claim which was scuppered by the British Ultimatum of 1890.

Next to his journalism and politics, it was his productivity as a historical novelist and playwright that established the reputation of Pinheiro Chagas; some of his plays have stayed on the repertoire of Portuguese and Brazilian theatres for more than a century. In 1866, Pinheiro Chagas published his first novel, Tristezas à beira-mar (“Sadness by the seaside”). Although his historical novels lacked historical accuracy, he achieved great success with A corte de D. João V (“The court of King John V”, 1867), Os guerrilheiros da morte (“The death partisans”, 1872), A máscara vermelha (“The red mask”, 1873), or O juramento da Duquesa (“The Duchess’ oath”, 1873). He also supervised a popularizing 8-volume history of Portugal, Historia de Portugal, desde os tempos mais remotos ate a actualidade (1867-74).

In 1869, Pinheiro Chagas made his theatrical debut with A Morgadinha de Valflor, a five-act drama about a tragic love affair between a young noblewoman and a humble painter in the late 18th century; it was a resounding
success, with translations into Spanish and Italian. Other theatrical works include A Judia (“The Jewess”, 1869), Madalena e Helena (1875), and O drama do povo (“The people’s drama”, 1876), set during the first French invasion. Conservative in his literary outlook and his politics, Pinheiro Chagas opposed the ideas of the 1870 generation (Oliveira Martins, Eça de Queirós and Quental). He contributed to the growing popularity of the adventure novel in Portugal by translating French authors such as Alexandre Dumas and Jules Verne.

1.1.1.2/a


Paxeco, Óscar; 1948. Pinheiro Chagas: Ministro da Marinha e Ultramar (Lisbon: Agência geral das colónias) [“P.C.: Minister of Navy and Overseas”]