

João Rodrigues de Sá de Meneses. *Paisagem e erudição no humanismo português João Rodrigues de Sá de Meneses — De Platano (1527–1537)*. Ed. Ana María S. Tarrío. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2009. 340 pp. index. bibl. €20. ISBN: 978-972-31-1293-1.

Ana María S. Tarrío's critical edition of João Rodrigues de Sá de Meneses's Neoplatonic treatise on the plane tree — the tree under which Socrates and Phaedrus, for example, stage their dialogue on love and rhetoric — is a welcome contribution, not only to scholarship on Iberian humanism, but also to work more broadly concerned with the shifting connections between politics, empire, language, and philosophy during the Renaissance. Beyond presenting an edition, with a Portuguese translation, of one of Sá de Meneses's least known Latin works, Tarrío also presents an informative and deeply contextualized introductory study,

spanning 200 pages, that focuses on issues that range from *translatio studii* and natural history to nationalism and court culture in mid-sixteenth-century Portugal.

A powerful political and cultural figure throughout nearly the whole of the sixteenth century, Sá de Meneses (1486?–1579) represents one of the most important figures of Portuguese humanism. In her introductory chapter, Tarrío expertly narrates the details of Sá de Meneses's eventful life, which included military and diplomatic service as well as no fewer than four run-ins with the Portuguese Inquisition (he was charged with heresy and sodomy). In starting this way, Tarrío helps even those readers with prior knowledge of Sá de Meneses and his work to understand more fully his place within the workings both of empire and the republic of letters in the Iberian sixteenth century.

After her biographical sketch of Sá de Meneses, Tarrío examines the links between classical texts of natural philosophy and their Neo-Latin successors in the Iberian Peninsula. Her account of Pliny's central role in this current of scholarship and, more proximally, the work of Italian humanists such as Lorenzo de Valla will be of much value to scholars. Also very suggestive is Tarrío's analysis of the notion of experience in works of Portuguese humanism, as well as her account of the extent to which works of "geography, political history, epigraphy or botany (precisely the central bibliography of the present treatise) seem to have had increasing urgency for the most astute courtiers" (135) during the reigns of Manuel I and João III. This last point is central to understanding the links between Portuguese humanism and empire, as evidenced by Sá de Meneses's letter to Manuel I in which he describes his interview with Castilian cardinal (and founder of the university at Alcalá de Henares) Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros in the following way: "while we discussed the affairs of India, he began to give me much advice . . . which I let go in one ear and out the other . . . because everything he said was in support of his idea that pepper be transported up through the Red Sea and from there carried overland to Portugal. . . . Although he seemed to me a very weak cosmographer, this didn't seem to be the time to demonstrate to him how much more I knew about these things than he did" (124).

Turning to issues of more overt nationalism, Tarrío offers an excellent and nuanced account of how Portuguese humanists such as Sá de Meneses understood themselves and their work vis-à-vis the central figures of the Italian Renaissance and authors of classical Greek and Latin literature. Her description of the factors that led Portuguese humanists to write in Latin or Portuguese (most, such as Sá de Meneses, wrote in both at different times) is of particular interest, as is her description of the extant manuscript copies of the *De platano* (including the copy recently discovered in the Real Biblioteca in Madrid).

Tarrío's edition of Sá de Meneses's *De platano* is well organized and complemented throughout by extensive and useful footnotes. Her translation of the Latin text (on facing pages) is clear and precise, making this important text available to students and scholars without reading knowledge of Latin. Perhaps most impressive is the extensive bibliography that Tarrío provides at the end of the edition, which will help many readers to comprehend the parameters and major

works of Portuguese and (more broadly) Iberian humanism. This edition will no doubt stand as an important work of scholarship for years to come.

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