

*D. Maria I 1717-1792 subsídios para a revisão da história do seu reinado* (Com quatro heliogravuras, e fac-similes de várias cartas). By CAETANO BEIRÃO. (Lisboa: Empresa Nacional de Publicidade, 1934. Pp. xii, 454. Second edition.)

The administration of the first reigning Queen of Portugal, who is especially remembered in Brazilian history as the mother of Dom João VI, is portrayed by the author in a thick volume of 417 pages of text. The book is divided into fourteen chapters: half of them are used to dispose of, and bury, the dictatorial regime of the Marquess of Pombal; the other half, to describe the achievements of, and life during, the new reign.

In his well-documented work, Snr. Beirão embodies much inedited material from Spanish and Portuguese archives, by means of which he is able not only to explain most of the course of contemporary Hispano-Portuguese relations but also to paint the queen as a lovable, kindly, essentially feminine woman whose abhorrence of extremes gave a new direction to national affairs. Needless to say, the author also relies on the standard published works in the field, including accounts of foreign travelers in Portugal. His critical apparatus is good; reference citations are adequate. There are two valuable appendices. In the first are published, among other correspondence, numerous letters of the Queen to her relatives in the Court of Madrid; the second is a list of the known iconography of Dona Maria. The book, finally, contains a useful onomastic index.

The sub-title of the work is significant: "materials for the revision of the history of her reign." Snr. Beirão has properly pointed out that the insanity which finally overcame the queen should not be used to condemn her administration; that she was not the superstitious religious fanatic some historians have pictured her to be; and that her reign was marked by remarkable achievement in many fields of Portuguese life. This study can hardly be called, in short, either a biography of Dona Maria or an exhaustive survey of her times; but it casts much light on an *intermezzo* period of Portuguese history which follows the harsh rule of Pombal and precedes the disasters of Constitutionalism.

Despite its many admirable qualities, the book sins from the tendency of the author to explain the queen's public life in the most favorable colors. If historians in the past have treated Dona Maria unkindly, Snr. Beirão has swung the pendulum in the opposite direction. His approach is undoubtedly closer to historical truth, as the reader may gather, but it might not have been at all out of place to stress the fact that she was human and, therefore, liable to err.

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