

LETTER / CARTA AO EDITOR

Júlio de Matos (1856-1922): One Hundred Years After his Death Júlio de Matos (1856-1922): Cem Anos Após a sua Morte

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Júlio Xavier de Matos was born in Oporto, Portugal, in January 26th, 1856, the same year than Emil Kraepelin and Sigmund Freud. In 1883, after finishing Medicine school, he started working with António Maria de Sena, and in 1890 he was appointed his successor as director at Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira, the first Portuguese governmental psychiatric institution (built in Oporto in 1883). In 1911, Júlio de Matos was called to Lisbon, to replace Miguel Bombarda, republican hero, recently murdered, as alienist director of the Hospital de Alienados de Rilhafoles (adapted to become an asylum in Lisbon in 1848).¹ Interested by science, Júlio de Matos was influenced by the evolutionism of Charles Darwin and the positivism of Augusto Comte.² He believed in the degeneration theory of Valentin Magnan and defended that hallucinations were secondary to delusion and originated in the cerebral cortex, as proposed by Augusto Tamburini. Interested in criminology he translated books by Herbert Spencer and Raffaele Garofalo,³ while his own works were translated by Cesare Lombroso.⁴ A man of arts he received compliment from contemporaneous writers, such as Teófilo Braga or Camilo Castelo Branco.⁵ Among his manuscripts we would like to highlight the 1896 book “*A Paranóia, ensaio patogénico*

sobre os delírios sistematizados” (“Paranoia, a pathogenic essay on systematized delusions”) which would deserve, decades later on its most recent edition, a especial foreword by António Lobo Antunes. There we find psychopathological descriptions defending that in paranoia grandiose delusions are secondary to persecutory delusions, as described by Louis Delasiauve. Júlio de Matos considered paranoia a degenerative process, like Valentin Magnan did, but also regressive, anticipating the neo-Jacksonian ideas by Henri Ey. Although Júlio de Matos was not wealthy as Henry Maudsley he was indirectly responsible for the generous donation made by a millionaire patient, Salgado D’Araújo, for the construction of a completely new psychiatric hospital. Júlio de Matos died in Lisbon, victim of chronic lung tuberculosis, in April 12th, 1922. Twenty years later his name would be given to our institution here in Lisbon, Hospital de Júlio de Matos.

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