

OBRA CONVIDADA

Portrait of João José Sá Machado, future 1st Count of Carvalhal

National Museum of Antique Art Collection



Domenico Pellegrini (1759-1840)
**Portrait of João José Sá Machado,
future 1st Count of Carvalhal**

1800

Signed (PELEGRINI FT) and dated (1800)

Oil on Canvas

Height 90,5 x 71 Width

National Museum of Antique Art (MNA Inv.: 1234 Pint)



Domenico Pellegrini (1759-1840) was an Italian painter (Venice) having been tutored in close proximity with Domenico Corvi (1721-1803). He was a disciple of Lodovico Gallina (1752-1787) and his works show the influence of the portrait works of Alessandro Longhi (1733-1813), also of George Romney (1734-1802), of Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), as well as the classicist style of Anton Raphael Mengs (1728-1779). He relied on the favour of the sculptor António Canova (1733-1813) as well as that of the engraver Francesco Bartolozzi (1725-1815), who recommended his move to Portugal (1803 e 1810). He travelled throughout Europe, having settled and worked in Venice, Rome, Naples, Paris, London and Lisbon.

João José Xavier do Carvalhal Esmeraldo Vasconcelos de Atouguia Bettencourt Sá Machado, 1st Count of Carvalhal, having been invested as such on the 5th of September of the year 1835, following his return from being exiled in London, was a very prominent personality in the madeiran society, revealing himself as an entrepreneur, philanthropist and defending very much the principles that ruled the liberal ideology. He was born in Funchal on the 7th of March 1778 and died on the 11th of November 1837, having been buried in the Chapel of Quinta do Palheiro Ferreiro, his residence, built in 1801, where he had welcomed and paid homage to Maria Leopoldina da Áustria, on 12th December 1817, when she was passing through, on her way to Brasil, where she would marry D. Pedro I. By order of the 2nd Count of Carvalhal, forty years later, the remains of the 1st Count were exhumed and placed in the family vault, in the old Cemetery of Angústias.

He was the son of João do Carvalho Esmeraldo de Atouguia Albuquerque e Câmara (1733-1790) and Isabel Maria de Sá Acciaolly da Câmara Leme (1741-c.1820), part of one of the richest and more influential madeiran families. Owner of one of the biggest fortunes in Portugal, englobing a vast amount of land, both in the mainland and the Azores Islands, he owned and administrated quite a few manors that he had inherited in Madeira, the most important of these being the manors of Espírito Santo (Lombada dos Esmeraldos, Ponta do Sol), of Carvalho (Ponta Delgada), of Água de Mel (Machico), of Paul do Mar (Calheta) and of Neves (Funchal). He was invested as Knight of the Royal House as well as being sworn as Knight of the Order of Christ. He also played various military and political leadership roles in Madeira, having taken up the post of colonel in the Militia regiment of both Calheta and Funchal, a councillor and also the Mayor of the capital city (Funchal), as well as being the Civil governor for the main district of Funchal.

Although he was privileged, concerning family status, wealth and political lead roles, it is said he lead a very simple life, with no ostentation, leaving behind a vast heritage, that was not well managed by his inheritor, who was his great nephew, António Leandro da Câmara Carvalho Esmeraldo Atouguia Bettencourt de Sá Machado (1831-1888), 2nd Count of Carvalho.

The portrait of João José Sá Machado, future 1st Count of Carvalho, consists of a painting of oil on canvas, being 90,5 cm in height by 71 cm in width, having been acquired to be part of the collection of The National Museum of Antique Art (Lisbon).

This portrait of João José Sá Machado, future 1st Count of Carvalho was painted in 1800, by Domenico Pellegrini, as certified by the signature. It is a Court portrait, as were many of the various portraits of the European aristocracy, painted by Pellegrini.

The 1st Count of Carvalho is represented $\frac{3}{4}$ to the right, looking directly towards the observer. His left hand is shown slowly turning the page of a book, whilst the other hand rests on the chair. The Count is wearing a dark green velvet coat, with gold buttons, two of them buttoned up, yellow trousers, white silk shirt and waistcoat, with a wide white silk cravat around his neck.

The figure takes over the centre part of the composition, with a noticeable Venetian pallet of influence, such as both the intensity and chromatic brightness. On the young face, being just 22 years of age, we observe the look of serenity, the aristocratic stance as well as the nobility of its expression, having been represented over a black background, still transmitting the penumbra matrix, with the exception of the bottom left corner, where we can observe a gleam of yellow light that harmonizes with the colour of the trousers, showing a purpose in the improving of the visuality level. The treatment given to the dark background or its chromatic neutrality, provides the observer with a well centred reading of the portrayed subject, guided by its luminosity (face, hand, book, trousers).

The face is marked by a good and delicate drawing, an evidence of the painter's training alongside the schools of classic aesthetic, proof of it being the technical skills in shaping of the volume as well as the agility of the brush in marking the luminosities.

The portrait of João José Sá Machado, future 1st Count of Carvalho was part of the temporary exhibitions Empire Attire and its epoch, 1792-1826 (The National Museum of Costume, Lisbon, 1992-1994) and The Game of the Portrait (National Museum of Antique Art, Lisbon, 2002-2003).