Song of Exile
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About the Book

*Song of Exile: A Cultural History of Brazil’s Most Popular Poem (1846–2018)* (with an afterword by Manuel Portela) is the first comprehensive study of the influence of Antônio Gonçalves Dias’s “Canção do exílio” (or “Song of Exile”), one of the most imitated poems in the world. Written in Coimbra, Portugal in 1843 by the Brazilian poet and published three years later in the state of Rio de Janeiro, “Song of Exile” has inspired thousands of parodies and pastiches over the last almost 200 years with new variations appearing all the time. In every Brazilian generation, writers, canonical and otherwise, have adapted the poem’s verses, glorifying the wonders of the nation, its culture and geography, or written parodies of it to criticize Brazil, exposing a litany of the nation’s issues. Yet, only in recent times, with the availability of digital archives, such as the Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira and Google Books, has it become possible to take a comprehensive view of the poem’s influence. Based on a core of 500 texts, this book catalogues the networks of the poem’s re-invention as pastiche and parody in Brazilian print culture from nineteenth-century periodicals to new media. With chapters dedicated to the early reception of the poem among Portuguese immigrants in nineteenth-century Rio, its proliferation in the First Republic (1889-1930) through the Vargas Era (1930-1945), its re-invention during the military regime (1964-1985), its continued adaptation to Brazil’s most recent crises in new media, and another to the specific contributions of female authors, this study maps the re-occurrences of the original’s keywords and phrases through both distant and close readings, uncovering how the poem has become a palimpsest upon which successive generations write and re-write the nation’s history and culture within the context of their own time. This process of reinvention has guaranteed the permanency of “Song of Exile” in Brazilian culture, making it not only the nation’s most popular poem, but one of the most imitated in the world.