

Greenlee Collection – Newberry Library. The William B. Greenlee Collection. The Newberry Library Bulletin 6 (1951): 167-178.



Map of Mexico, from "A Complete historical, chronological, and geographical American atlas," 1822. Greenlee 4891 C27 1822.

Newberry Library Bulletin, May 1951

I. The Collector

In 1893 a remarkable teacher, Henry Morse Stephens, was brought over from England to begin at Cornell a meteor-like career which can still start arguments in historical circles. He had written *The Story of Portugal* a few years before, and for his first American class he dramatized the magic of that tremendous century when Portuguese sailors felt their way around Africa to India and across the Atlantic.

In that class sat a young man who had chosen a major in geology because it gave him more electives than any other major at Cornell. William Brooks Greenlee had taken courses in philosophy, in history, in this and that, getting the kind of education he thought would stand him in best stead when he went back to Chicago to enter business. After he had listened to Stephens and had spent many hours in Stephens' study talking Portugal and India, he was so far enraptured that for a time he thought of giving up business at once for a scholarly career. Instead, leaving Cornell in March of 1895, he went around the world, seeing actual evidences of the marks left by Portuguese traders and seafarers, and he brought back to Chicago with him his first books, purchased here and there from Macao to Lisbon. During the next thirty-five years his career paralleled that of many men who have family businesses to enter and in time to control. But always there was this difference: the shelves in his study slowly became filled, and the number of bookcases increased after each trip abroad. Finally, not yet sixty, he took the step with which Stephens had tempted him. He retired from business.

Many businessmen, though not as many as the excitement of the pursuit ought to lure, become book collectors. Few become scholars. Mr. Greenlee, bringing to the analysis of historical documents the same acumen he brought to a balance sheet, began to get some ideas of his own about Portuguese discoveries. They were such good ideas that when he submitted them, in highly detailed outline form, to the Hakluyt Society of London, he was asked to prepare a book. If it is unusual for a scholarly publishing society to authorize the writing of a book by some one who had yet to see his name on a title page, it was doubly unusual for the Hakluyt Society. Only two American contributions had been included before in their magnificent series. In 1938 appeared *The Voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral to Brazil and India* (Hakluyt Society, Second Series, No. LXXXI, London, 1938). in which Mr. Greenlee brought together for the first time all of the widely scattered published and unpublished documents relating to the discovery of Brazil by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. He translated them into English, edited them, and wrote a long introduction and full and informative notes. There followed a number of articles on sixteenth century Brazilian history.

Meanwhile Mr. Greenlee's library, which he had presented in, 1937 to The Newberry Library as The William B. Greenlee Collection, continued to grow at a vastly increased rate. Today it is probably the best library in the United States on Portuguese history and literature before 1820, and at least one leading Portuguese historian has described it, probably too glowingly as the finest single collection on the subject in or out of Portugal. As could be inferred from the nature of Mr. Greenlee's interest in the subject, the books he has brought together form, not a book-collector's library, but one for working scholars.

To Mr. Greenlee have come, naturally enough, many invitations to scholarly societies. He is a Fellow of the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, of the Royal Geographical Society, of the American Geographical Society, an Honorary Fellow of Instituto Historico e Geographico de Sao Paulo, a member of the Royal Institute of Philosophy and of the Hakluyt Society. In 1950 the Portuguese government bestowed upon him the rank of Commander of the Order of St. Iago, an ancient order founded in the thirteenth century, and a decoration for the highest merit and services in the fields of science, arts, and literature.

Mr. Greenlee has one word of advice for young and old men alike. "Cultivate a hobby," he says. "It is as true a key to happiness as any which this world affords. What it is does not much matter, though a hobby which engages the mind, such as book collecting, is more absorbing and is longer lived than a manual hobby, but whatever it is, choose and cultivate it."

II. The Collection

By C. R. Boxer

Portugal's position in the history of the world rests mainly on four remarkable achievements: the Ocean voyages in which Portuguese mariners, in less than one hundred and fifty years, discovered for Europe the coasts of almost half of the globe; her domination of the maritime trade of most of Asia in the sixteenth century; her missionary enterprise in three continents, over three hundred years; and, last but not least, her colonization of Brazil. Each of these achievements is remarkable in itself. Their long-term effects are with us to this day.

The Portuguese voyages of discovery, together with the parallel exploits of the Spaniards, mark off the modern from the medieval world. As regards the Asian enterprise, G. B. Sansom justly observes that "apart from being a picturesque story in itself, it has bearing upon later history because, the Portuguese being the first in the field, the problems that they encountered and the way in which they solved them did in a very large measure fix the pattern of subsequent European commercial enterprise and colonial expansion in Asia...." Portugal's missionary activities, although immense at the time, cannot be said in the long run to have been crowned with success, in Africa or in Asia. But they make a fascinating story, and the importance of the still existing Christian communities that owe their existence to Portuguese enterprise should not be over-looked.

Portugal's most enduring monument remains the colonization of Brazil. The present position of that great country can hardly be understood without some knowledge of its colonial past when, as one Portuguese king crudely if accurately put it, Brazil was the milch-cow of her mother country.

The study of Portuguese history, then, particularly from the beginning of the fifteenth century onward, is not only of high intrinsic interest but also of considerable importance. It is therefore perhaps rather surprising that in the Anglo-Saxon world so little had been done in the field, especially by comparison with the extensive interest shown in Spanish and Spanish-American history.

No man has done more to foster the study of Portuguese history, and especially Portuguese colonial history, than William B. Greenlee did by founding the collection at the Newberry Library which bears his name.

Mr. Greenlee selected the Newberry Library because there the well-known Ayer collection has brought together a great deal of Spanish, Dutch, French, and English material-but Portugal, although possessing the oldest of all existing colonial empires, was not well represented. This choice was a happy one, all the more so since the Ayer collection subsequently acquired a vast Brazilian collection which rounds out the representation of the Portuguese-speaking world in the most satisfactory manner.

At the time of my first visit to the Greenlee collection in October, 1948, it contained about 1,700 volumes on the history and literature of Portugal. When I revisited Chicago two years later, the number of volumes in the collection had increased to about 4,300. It is still increasing daily. At the time of writing, over six thousand volumes on Portuguese and Brazilian history and literature are at the student's disposal (including books on Portuguese history in the main library and in the Ayer collection). Cross reference cards are being added to the Greenlee collection catalog for the works already in the main library which Mr. Greenlee would otherwise have bought for his collection. The proximity of the Ayer collection makes it unnecessary to provide cards for the many such volumes in the Ayer.

Quantity is not necessarily a guide to quality. The mere fact that the Newberry Library possess over six thousand works on Portuguese and Brazilian subjects does not of itself mean that the collection is of great value to the serious student. An astonishingly high proportion of books

published in any country is not of lasting value; and Portugal has her full share of works written by those authors whom Lord Curzon one denounced as “either not having read what has been written by better men before, or reading it only in order to plagiarize and reproduce it as their own, . . . misunderstand, misspell and misinterpret, everywhere they go.” Fortunately for the Newberry Library, Mr. Greenlee is not only a generous donor, but a discriminating buyer. His knowledge of Portuguese history is both wide and deep, dating from the time during his student days at Cornell when Morse Stephens first interested him in the subject. In the course of a busy and active life, Mr. Greenlee has never forgotten his first love; and the mature scholarship evinced in his edition of Cabral’s voyage for the Hakluyt Society is sufficient guarantee that in purchasing books for the collection he is fully able to distinguish between those which merit Lord Cunon’s condemnation and those which do not.

The Greenlee collection, of set purpose, is not particularly strong on first editions of old and rare books. It aims to be a working library for the serious student and for that elusive creature, the general reader, rather than a browsing-patch for the bibliophile and collector. In a collection of this sort, however, the absence of *rariora* does not matter a great deal. Nearly all of the most valuable and important works on Portuguese history have been reprinted at one time or another, and it suffices the average scholar to have the best printed text that is available. Besides, the Palha Library at Harvard has a magnificent collection of rare books and manuscripts, so that their absence in the Greenlee Collection does not mean they are not available for consultation in the United States. Nevertheless, it is true that some valuable old Portuguese works either never have been reprinted at all (for example, the *Cartas que os Padres e Irmãos da Companhia de Jesus escreverão dos Reynos de Iaplio I. China aos da mesma Companhia da India, & Europa*, Evora, 1598) or else have been reprinted only in defective and inferior editions (for example, the *Cultura e opulencia do Brazil por sum drogas e minas*, Lisboa, 1711), so that the lack of an original first edition is at times regrettable. It is to the absence of a few works in this latter category that is due such weakness as the Greenlee collection still has. With this (very minor) reservation, it may be claimed that the Greenlee collection is probably the finest and most comprehensive collection on Portuguese history in any United States library, not excepting the Library of Congress itself. For that matter, I doubt if it has many rivals in Portugal and Brazil. For libraries in those countries are apt to be sadly deficient in foreign books concerned with Portuguese history, of which there are many (particularly in Spanish, Dutch, and English), and which are well represented in the Greenlee and Ayer collections.

The books in the Greenlee collection are classified in accordance with the following system: Section I, Periodicals, gazetteers, bibliographies, and collections of documents; Section II, Books of travel, and of special subjects relating to social life and customs; Section III, Biography; Sections IV and V, Special fields of Portuguese history and general histories of Portuguese dynasties; Section VI, Local history and description; Section VII, Portuguese colonial expansion; Section VIII, Literature.

The present state of the collection may best be realized by taking the following four bibliographical guides to works on Portuguese history and comparing their contents with the books actually on the shelves: (1) William B. Greenlee, “A descriptive bibliography of the history of Portugal,” reprinted from *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, XX, 1940, 492-516; (2) Hedwig M. A. Kommerling-Fitzler, “Funf Jahr- hunderte portugiesische

Kolonialgeschichtsschreibung,” published serially in *Die Welt als Geschichte*, Heft 1/2, 1941, 101-129, 1/2 1942, 97-121, 5/6, 1943, 331-358; (3) *Catálogo Bibliográfico da Agência Geral das Colónias*, Lisboa, 1943; (4) *Exposiçao de Livros Portugueses, Catálogo*, “Colloquium” Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros, Washington, 1950, Lisboa, 1950.

The first two of these guides are especially important because they are compiled on selective principles and include foreign works. The last two are confined to official government-sponsored publications and include some items which can only be described as “trash.” Comparison of the many hundreds of titles listed in these works with those listed in the card-index catalog of the Greenlee collection shows that the latter possesses about ninety per cent of all the books which a discriminating student would wish to find. This is, of course, quite apart from the historical works listed in the older standard Portuguese bibliographies, such as Diogo Barbosa Machado, *Biblioteca Lusitana* (Lisboa, 1741-1759); Jorge Cesar de Figanikre, *Bibliographia historica Portugueza* (Lisboa, 1850); and Ricardo Pinto de Mattos, *Manual Bibliographico Portuguez* (Porto, 1878). A very high proportion of the relevant works listed in these bibliographies can be found on the shelves of the Greenlee collection—in the case of works printed prior to 1800, not so much in original editions as in the form of subsequent editions and reprints.

It would be simpler to describe the richness of the Greenlee collection by specifying the relatively few important books printed since 1800 which are *not* in the Greenlee collection, than by giving an inevitably hopelessly incomplete selection of those which are there. For the benefit of those who have no access to the bibliographical guides named, however, I will give a few items from each section of the collection in order to illustrate the varied richness of the whole. I would remind the reader again that nine-tenths of the important works bearing on Portuguese history and published in recent years are on the shelves, and that the additions which are continually being made to the collection are steadily closing the few remaining gaps. The emphasis in my selection, necessarily a personal one, is largely placed on Sections I and VII, but it should not be thought that the others are less equally well represented.

Section I (periodicals, gazetteers, bibliographies, and collections of documents): *Portugaliae monumenta historica*, edited by A. Herculano and J. J. da Silva Mendes Leal (Lisboa, 1856-1897); *Alguns documentos do Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo acerca das navegacões e conquistas Portuguezas*, covering the years 1416-1554 (Lisboa, 1892); *Quadro Elementar das relacões politicas e diplomaticas de Portugal com as diversas potencias do mundo, desde o principio da Monarchia portugueza at aos nossos dias*, by the Visconde de Santarem (Paris, 1843-1876, in 18 volumes); the *Corpo diplomatico portuguez contendo os actos e relacões politicas e diplomaticas de Portugal com as diversas potencias do mundo desde o seculo XVI ate os nossos dias*, edited in 15 volumes by Rebello da Silva and others (Lisboa, 1863-1936); the *Colleccao dos tratados, conuentias, contratos, e actos publicos celebrados entre a coroa de Portugal e as mais potenn'as desde 1640 ate ao presmte*, edited by Borges de Castro... Judice Biker etc., in 45 volumes (Lisboa and Coimbra, 1856-1921); *Arquivo historico de Portugal*, 1932 to date; *Revista de Historia*, edited by Fidelino de Figueiredo in 6 vols. (Lisboa, 1912-1928); Jose de Almada, *Tratados applicaveis ao Ultramar*, 6 vols. and 2 vols. of maps (Lisboa, 1942-1944); complete (or nearly complete) files of such reviews as *O Instituto* (Coimbra, 1853 to date), *Ocidente* (Lisboa, 1938 to date), *Olisipo* (1938 to date), *Boletim de Agência Geral das Colónias* (Lisboa, 1932 to date), a complete file of the *Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de*

Lisboa, and other more specialized serial publications such as the *Boletim da Direcção Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais* (Porto, 1935 to date) and the *Bibliografia filológica portuguesa* (Lisboa, 1935-1945). Archival publications are well represented by series such as the *Arquivo de Beja*, 5 vols., (Beja, 1944-1949); the *Arquivo Coimbrão*, 10 vols. (Coimbra, 1923-1947); the *Arquivo do distrito de Aveiro*, 15 vols. (Aveiro, 1935-1949) the *Archivos dos Apres*, 24 vols. (Ponta Delgada, 1878-1901). and many others.

The bibliographical section is virtually complete; every bibliography obtainable, new or old, on Portugal and her colonies, is in the collection, as well as Barbosa Machado, Inocencio, and all the old standard bibliographical authorities.

Section II (books of travel, social life, customs): The new edition of Antonio Caetano de Sousa's monumental *Historia Genealogica da casa real portuguesa desde a sua origem ate o presente* (originally published at Lisboa in 20 vols., 1735-1749) of which 7 volumes have so far appeared, is cataloged in this section, presumably on account of the genealogical implications of the title. For most people, the real value of the book lies in the mass of state papers contained in it, particularly in the six volumes of the *Provas*.

All the standard works on Portuguese art are included in this section. Some fine work is being done in this field, represented by Luis Reis Santos, *Vasco Fernandes e os pintores de Viseu do shdo XVI* (Lisboa, 1946); Americo Cortez Pinto, *Du Furnosa Arte da Imprimisslro* (Lisboa, 1948); Joaquim de Sousa LeZo, filho, *Frans Post* (Rio de Janeiro, 1948), and the works of Reynaldo dos Santos and others, apart from the re- printing of older books in this field such as Ramalho Ortigo's *Arte Portuguesa*, reprinted in 3 vols. (1943-1947). One gets the impression that Brazil is ahead in publications in the field of "Belas Artes."

Section III (biography): Every good recent biography of prominent Portuguese historical personages seems to have been acquired by the Greenlee collection. Of recent works in this field I would single out D. Virginia Rau, *D. Catarina de Braganca, Rainha de Inglaterra* (Lisboa, 1943); H. Raposo, *D. Luisa de Gusmrio, Duquesa e Rainha* (Lisboa, 1947); and J. E. Amaro, *Francisco de Lucena* (Lisboa, 1945).

Sections IV, V and VI (histories etc.): Sections IV and VII are those which, with Section I, are likely to interest the majority of students who wish to consult works in the Greenlee collection, since they comprise the books on the history of Portugal proper and of its overseas dominions. All the standard Portuguese histories, such as those by Fortunato de Almeida, *Historia da Igreja em Portugal*, 8 vols. (Coimbra, 1910- 1924) and *Historia de Portugal*, 6 vols. (Coimbra, 1922-1929), and the *Historia de Portugal. Edicio Monumental*, edited by Damiao Peres, 8 vols. (Barcelos, 1928-1938) are available in the Greenlee collection. In military history, attention may be drawn to the *Historia do exercito Portuguez* by C. Ayes de Magalhks, 23 vols. (Coimbra, 1902-1932), and to some of the more recent studies by Snr. Gastio de Mello de Matos, such as his *Merndria sobre o alcance das armas usadas nos seculos XV a XVIII* (Lisboa, 1944); there is a complete set of the numerous publications of the Academia Portuguesa da Hidria, of which the volumes dealing with the Restoration wars and diplomacy of the years 1640-1668 are particularly valuable. Mention may be made of the *Elementos para a historia do Municipio de Lisboa*, by Eduardo Freire de Oliveira, which, with two recently published index volumes

(194--3), totals 19 volumes (1882-1911). This work contains much more than its title promises, and includes numerous documents referring to the trade and navigation with the colonies. Other important items include A. Loureiro, *Os portos maritimos de Portugal*, 8 vols. and atlas (Lisboa, 1904-1910), complete sets of the reprints of all the old chronicles of the Houses of Burgundy and Aviz, and many of the publications of the eighteenth-century Academia Real da Historia Portugueza, founded with the patronage of Dom Joao V.

It goes without saying that the collection includes the complete works of all the leading Portuguese historians, such as Alexandre Herculano, Rebello da Silva, Visconde de Santarem, Joao Lucio de Azevedo, Damiao Peres, Caetano Beirio, and others whose names will occur to anyone familiar with Portuguese historiography. Foreign scholars in the same field, of whom the doyen is Edgar Prestage, are equally well represented. The ecclesiastical history subsection is by far the richest in old books (17th and 18th centuries), all the standard histories of the Monastic Orders and of the Church being on the shelves. There are also about forty of the Jesuit Relations and letters dealing with their missions in the East, 1559-1677, mostly in French, Latin, and Italian sixteenth and seventeenth century editions. Among modern works in this field, particular attention should be paid to Francisco Rodrigues, S.J., *Historia da Companhia de Jesus na Assisttencia de Portugal*, of which six volumes have been published to date (Porto, 1931- 1944) and the recently completed work of Padre Serafim Leite, S.J., *Historia da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, 10 vols. (Rio de Janeiro, 1938-1950). That Jesuits do not have a monopoly of tireless industry in this field is proved by Padre Antonio de Silva Rego's *Documentacio para a historia dos missoes do Padroado Portuguts do Oriente, India, 1499-1542*, 3 vols. (Lisboa, 1947). and his *Historia das missoes do Padroado Portuguts do Oriente, India (1500-1542)* (Lisboa, 1949). Both of which series are being continued.

Section VII (colonial expansion) is extraordinarily rich in modern works on the colonies and overseas expansion, and must be very nearly complete as regards all recent works of permanent value on this subject. The collection possesses the great bulk of the historical publications of the Agencia Geral das Colonias at Lisboa, the scope and type of which can be seen from the *Catdlogo Bibliografico* previously mentioned. All the publications of the colonial governments and archives in this line (*Archiuo Portugues Oriental*, *Boletim do Instituto Vatco do Gama at Goa*; *Archiuos de Angola, at Luanda*, *Arquivos de Macau and Boletim do Instituto Portuguis de Hong-kong*, at Macau) are represented by complete series, together with other similar publications. The student's task is further lightened by the inclusion of numerous foreign publications, such as the *French Archives Marocaines*, and the *English Factories in India, 1618-1670*, which supplement the Portuguese records for the seventeenth century. Mention may also be made of Francois Valentyn's invaluable *Beschryuinge van Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, 8 vols. (Amsterdam, 1734-1726), C. W. Walckenaer's *Histoire Gennerale des voyages*, 21 vols. (Paris, 1826-1859), and C. Beccari's magnificent *Rerum Aethiopicarum scriplores*, 15 vols. (Rome, 1903-1917), as illustrative of foreign works, new and old, represented in the Greenlee collection.

Section VIII (literature): Mr. Greenlee has not fallen into the common error of separating history and literature in watertight compartments. Portuguese sixteenth and seventeenth century literature cannot be properly appreciated or even, in many instances, understood without a good knowledge of Portuguese history in those centuries. Conversely, knowledge of a literary work like, say, Garcia de Resende's *Miscellanea* is of inestimable value for an understanding of the

Portuguese historical background in the sixteenth century, because it paints the contemporary social scene in vivid colours. Accordingly, Portuguese literature is well represented in the Greenlee collection. Particular attention has been paid to the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, which from the outsider's point of view are the most interesting and important periods of Portuguese history. Luis de Camões is well represented, including the latest edition of his *Obras Completas*, edited by Hernani Cidade, 5 vols. (Lisboa, 1946-1947). Of that other giant of classical Portuguese literature, Padre Antonio Vieira, S.J., the collection has recently acquired the complete edition of *Sermoens*, 15 vols. (Lisboa, 1945-1948). The main library also has a fair collection in this field.

At the risk of instituting invidious comparisons with other libraries that collect works in this field, I venture to suggest that the Greenlee collection is, by and large, probably the best and most complete of its kind in existence.