

# Portuguese Pamphlets



16th century chart of the western Mediterranean Sea. Vault oversize Ayer MS map 8

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In the spring of 1954, the Newberry came into possession of a collection of a thousand leaflets, pamphlets, and booklets, dealing mostly with Portuguese affairs and written in Portuguese, Spanish, Latin, Italian or French. They had originally been assembled by Charles Chadenat, the antiquarian bookseller in Paris, with a patience that can only be surmised. Thanks to the acquisition of these perishable products of the press, the Greenlee Collection has taken another step toward becoming the foremost American repository of works on Portuguese and Brazilian history.

The pamphlets have been arranged chronologically by dates of publication. It turns out that the various centuries between the earliest imprint (1541) and the latest (1865) are unequally represented. The 16th century furnishes only three items [note 1], and the 19th no more than a dozen or two. The output of the 18th century is well represented and that of the 17th even better, affording a good idea of the state of affairs in Portugal shortly before the restoration of independence from Spain in 1640 and during the war years that followed. The pamphlets give the European background of Portuguese troubles as well, for many refer to Charles II of England's marriage to Princess Catherine of Portugal, the difficulties of King James II about 1687, the wars against the Turks in the same century and the next, the defense of the last Portuguese footholds in Morocco late in the 18th century, and the wars between the three ladies of Europe and Frederic II.

Once a precious collection such as this has been begun it seems as if it must be kept growing. Since the Chadenat purchase was made, a further lot of fifty pamphlets, also of the 17th century in the main, has found its way to the Greenlee Collection [note 2]. This supplement to the Chadenat pamphlets added several rarities, among them the only sermon by Father António Vieira now to be found in the collection and a detailed account in Spanish of the Portuguese victory at Montes Claros in 1665. Rich though the collection already is, it still offers an

opportunity for filling large gaps. Even a collection of a thousand pieces is a mere beginning for a country such as Portugal, where the printing presses have always produced large amounts of ephemeral, topical, and frequently polemical material, expressing the restless and touchy side of the national character. Could it be that Chadenat had collected more than here appears? Where are Vieira's other sermons? Where the descriptions of the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon and the reflections to which that notorious disaster gave rise? There is no more than token representation of the writings through which the party of the Marquis of Pombal made war on the Jesuit order or fomented the reform of higher education. Further accounts of shipwrecks could be collected and many more newsletters from the farflung mission fields of Africa, America and the Orient. One looks in vain for more than a couple of the innumerable pamphlets by means of which certain religious and political polemics were carried on for years during the 19th century. Such lacunae, however, throw into bolder relief the unusual strength of the collection in a variety of subjects.

## Newsletters

Among the hundreds of newsletters or *relações*, issued mainly in the 17th century, several shipwreck stories at once catch the eye, perhaps because these marine tragedies symbolize, in a way, the misfortunes that have befallen the overseas empires of the modern age. The earliest is an anonymous *Naufragio da nao Nossa Senhora de Bethlem, feito na terra do Natal no Cabo de Boa Esperança...o anno de 1635* (Lisbon, 1636). The account as well as those of the loss of the *Sacramento* and the *Nossa Senhora da Atalaya* (Lisbon, 1650), the *Nossa Senhora da Candelaria* (Lisbon, 1734) and the *Bom Jesus da Pedra e Santa Rita* (Lisbon, 1750) were re-edited for the first time in our country from copies of these very editions [note 3]. On the other hand, the printed account of the most famous of the shipwrecks, that of the great galleon *São João* in 1552, which is in the collection, does not really form a separate pamphlet but has been torn from Gomes de Brito's *Historia tragico-maritima*, an 18th-century compilation. The same holds for Manoel Rangel's moving eyewitness account of the wreck of the ship *Conceição* in 1555, on the shoals off Madagascar. In connection with the *São João*, a rare pamphlet of the 18th century, not mentioned in the standard bibliographies, is of the highest interest. It tells of the construction of this Portuguese man-of-war and of its glorious action in the naval battle of La Goleta, Tunis, in 1535. The editor, António da Costa Vale, asserts that his text was an unpublished manuscript left by the famous Latin scholar Jorge Coelho (d. 1563), the secretary of Cardinal Dom Henrique of Portugal [note 4].

Among the accounts of battles, the literature clustering around the battle of Montes Claros (1665) stands out both as to volume and variety, ranging all the way from sober communiqués to the grateful effusions of the celebrated poetessnun Sor Violante do Céu [note 5] and the jibes and boasts of an anonymous *sargento portuguez*, which must have confirmed the sullen Castilians in their idea of Portuguese braggadocio. He swore that if the Portuguese should by misfortune lose one battle and all perish in it save one man, that Lusitanian would proceed to wipe out the whole Castilian nation.

Montes Claros was merely the most glorious episode in the recovery of Portuguese independence from Spain, one of the blows added to the Thirty Years' War that broke Spain's power in

Europe. One of the by-products turned out to be the appearance of the first newspapers in Portugal, the *gazetas*, which were issued once a month, with fair regularity, from November 1641 on. A large number of these early periodicals are among the Chadenat pamphlets—seven issues of the *Gazeta*, beginning with January 1642, and many numbers of its successors, the *Mercurio Portuguez*, to which the Supplement has added a complete set of twelve issues for 1665, and the *Mercurio da Europa*, a weekly, which is represented by three numbers, of May 20, May 28, and June 7, 1689, respectively.

Other newsletters, and they are numerous, report solemnities at royal births, weddings and deaths, with appropriate congratulatory or elegiacal verse and oratory. Some relate the journeys of members of the royal family, as does the *Relaçam diaria, da jornada que...D. Catherina fez de Lisboa a Londres* (Lisbon, 1662), D. Catherina being the Portuguese bride of Charles II.

The news from overseas had to do not only with deeds of arms against the Dutch and the Mohammedan powers, but also with spiritual battles fought by the missionaries and their converts. A sample of the latter is the Jesuit António Francisco Cardim's account of the death of four Portuguese and their fifty-seven companions "for the sake of their faith" in Nagasaki, Japan [note 6]. Further proof, not so well known, is given by pamphlets which tell of the conversion of a chieftain in Guinea or of a mission that went out to the island of Borneo [note 7]. It is strange, however, that only one of the famous Jesuit mission letters, of which the Newberry Library possesses many, should be among the Chadenat pamphlets [note 8].

There is another large group of accounts, which like the shipwreck stories, deal with disasters, particularly earthquakes. Written in a popular vein, they appeal to the readers' imagination and sympathy. Thus we find a leaflet of 1614, in which Francisco de Segura, a Castilian ensign stationed on one of the Azores, published three awkward but moving ballads as his *Relacion del lastimoso sucesso que nuestro Señor fue servido sucediesse en la Isla de la Tercera...en veynte y quatro de Mayo Sabado...deste año de 1614, a las tres horas de la tarde, con tres temblores que duraron por espacio de dos Credos* (Saragossa, 1614). No one could foretell that Segura before coming to the pitiful scenes following the earthquake would give useful information about the cost of living in the city of Angra, where he was in garrison; rabbits and partridges cost half a *real* a dozen, mackerel practically nothing, beef was in abundance.

## Oratory

Most of the oratorical pamphlets, unlike the newsletters, are religious in character. The three 16th-century items in the collection were written by priests, and two of these were orations by outstanding dignitaries. Thus, Bishop António Pinheiro was one of the Catholic humanists whom the Peninsula produced plentifully in that age. The funeral sermon which he, the disciple of conservative Diogo de Gouveia, the bitter enemy of Erasmus, was called upon to give in memory of King Manuel and his wife, was his first printed work, set in German Galhard's black-letter type. The other early speech, expressing in polished Latin King Sebastian's obeisance to the Pope, was made by Aquiles Estaço, another of the Catholic humanists, a Ciceronian orator belonging to the Dominican order, schooled in Evora by André de Resende. He was a close

adviser to the Pope he addresses here in 1574, the year when King Sebastian undertook the first of his two hasty forays into Morocco.

Sacred oratory by men such as these teaches much about the preoccupations as well as the methods and commonplaces of Portuguese sermons. The pamphlets provide a good sampling of the different levels of the Catholic hierarchy. Besides parish priests, the orators include royal chaplains, professors of theology, heads of monastic orders, bishops and archbishops, described by the bibliographers as generally “noteworthy,” “famous,” “distinguished,” “eloquent,” “much appreciated in their time,” or at least “rather esteemed.” Naturally, many Dominicans are represented, among them Bento de Santo Tomás, whose sermon of Coimbra, March 12, 1673 was believed by some to exist only in manuscript, and Cristóvão do Rosário, who inaugurated the Portuguese ambassador’s chapel in London with his sermon of 1663. Among the many Franciscan preachers one notices João de São Bernardino, the first priest to have delivered a thanksgiving sermon for the restoration of Portugal in 1640—a sermon which is among the pamphlets—and the versatile cleric, teacher, poet and politician Francisco de Santo Agostinho de Macedo. There are a few Augustinians, Cistercians and Trinitarians, such as Bishop Cristóvão de Almedia, who left four volumes of printed sermons. But there is a host of Jesuits, whose active role in the restoration of national independence is thus well documented. António Vieira appears among them, outshining all the other Portuguese preachers put together.

The Vieira item in the collection is one of his great political sermons, which he preached in Bahia, Brazil. He made it in the presence of the first, newly arrived Viceroy of Brazil on July 2, 1640. At that time the Dutch were still in possession of Recife do Pernambuco, and from there they threatened to return at any moment to Bahia, the capital of the colony. In Bahia the people were disheartened as the war dragged on, with the soldiery growing more undisciplined and the bureaucrats becoming more rapacious. Vieira paints the situation in the darkest colors for the new Viceroy. His indignation waxes eloquent as he points his finger at the cause of the trouble, the “original sin” which he sees in the laziness and greed of the European officials, comparable in this to Adam: “Brazil is going to the dogs, Sir, because in one word, some of His Majesty’s servants do not come here to seek our good but to seek our goods.” Then comes a passage, famed in Brazil to this day, in which Vieira, having at heart the best interest of Portugal, takes the colonials’ side as he compares the swarms of bad officials to a sucking waterspout, which takes water from one part of the sea, and dumps it thirty of fifty leagues away. “Now then, ungrateful cloud, unjust cloud, if you took your water from Bahia, if in Bahia you got your fill, why don’t you rain down in Bahia as well?”

Biographical material is contained in the numerous funeral orations, such as the one for King John VI, made by his court preacher, the vehement José Agostinho de Macedo [note 9] or the somewhat bombastic panegyric of which a Spanish Franciscan, Bernardo Monterde, delivered himself on behalf of the Duchess of Aveiro, a Portuguese noblewoman of religious, literary and artistic reputation in her time [note 10].

The sacred oratory is supplemented by parliamentary speeches, many of which were also given by priests as representatives of the clergy in the Portuguese *cortes*. Here one finds the name of Archbishop Luís de Sousa (1637?-1690), one of the classics of the 17th century in Portugal, well known in modern times as the protagonist of a tragedy by Almeida Garrett.

# Poetry and Popular Literature

Since the mere thought of Portuguese literature conjures the names of Camoes and other poets, from the troubadours of King Denis' times on, no one should be surprised to discover poetry even in a predominantly historical pamphlet collection such as this is. In the first place there are poems of Christian inspiration, though few famous names appear among their authors. They include such gifted nuns as Violante do Céu and Cecília do Espírito Santo, as well as Friar António das Chagas, the fervent monk who in his youth had been a boisterous captain [note 11].

Of the many epics written in imitation of Camões, three minor ones are here in the form of pamphlets. Thus Manuel António de Meireles sings in 314 *octavas* the Marquis of Castelo Novo, who added the "New Conquests" to the territories of Goa, India. More succinctly, Vicente Carlos de Oliveira flatters King Joseph I in three *cantos* for rebuilding Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755, and João Peres de M. de S. Tavares, "the most canorous swan of Portuguese Parnassus," praises to the heavens the Count of Oeiras, better known by his later title of Marquis of Pombal.

Curiosity about the productions of the literary circles known as *academias* in the 17th century, will be satisfied by several pamphlets, beginning with the pieces which resulted from the lyric contests of the *Academia dos Generosos de Lisboa*, the oldest of its kind in Portugal, which had been founded in 1649. Likewise represented are the *Aplicados*, the *Escolhidos*, even the *Estultos de Azeitão*, of dubious existence, and the meritorious *Academia Real da Historia Portuguesa*, out of which came Francisco de Pina e Melo's amiable, neo-classic *Arte poetica* (Lisbon, 1765).

Our plebeian age prefers to such aristocratic pastimes the coarser ware which the blind men used to sell in the streets, in the form of booklets that could be slipped over a string and thus be displayed to prospective buyers. The Chadenat pamphlets comprise several good examples of this "string literature" (*literatura de cordel*). Some are edifying lives of saints—Saint Isabel and Friar Tomé de Jesus [note 12]. Another is the verse legend of "how King Almansur died in Portugal at the hands of King Ramiro, who killed his wife, Gaia by name, who was with this Moor". There is the "Book of Prince Peter of Portugal, who traveled the seven parts of the world," anticipating the later Portuguese voyages in the Orient. There are tender tales, such as "the new ill-fated love, between Constanza and Theodosius," and burlesque tomfooleries, like the "New letter sent by the Arch of Dispatches, with the reply of the Arch of Lies, on such and such a day of such and such a month of such and such a time, translated from Greek into the Portuguese idiom, by Friend Bautista, Master Catcher of Lice at the Tribunal of Poverty."

The accounts of all sorts of "tragic events," such as the shipwrecks, belong into the same category. But by far the most interesting branch of popular literature, as far as the reflection of manners is concerned, are stage plays. Among the Chadenat pamphlets is a fine illustrated copy of the most popular of all these plays, the Passion Play of Francisco Vaz, secular priest of Guimarães, which was reprinted some twenty times after its first publication in the 16th century and was still performed in our century in outlying districts. There are copies of two very rare plays, João de Escovar's *Auto de Florença*, written for the Christmas entertainment of the court of King Sebastian in 1561, when the King was a little boy of seven, and the anonymous *Auto das padeyras*, unknown to most bibliographers and historians [note 13]. Both appear in the usual

form of such plays, with four woodcuts representing characters on the title page of each. The other play, about baker-women, also called the “play of Hunger, or of Rye and Maize,” hits the popular vein even more fully, as it gives voice to the little man’s grumblings during a famine in Lisbon.

Rather pale in comparison are the Latin school comedies, one of which is in the collection. It concerns Cristóvão da Gama, Vasco da Gama’s brave son, who was martyred in Abyssinia. The Jesuits performed and published it in 1704 in Evora, Cristóvão’s native city.

## Miscellaneous Pamphlets

The variety of the pamphlets is heightened by writings on scientific subjects, such as eye-sight, the cause of the winds, or the improvement of medical training [note 14]. Polemical writings of several kinds are represented. A few of them are connected with big names; for example, there is a defense of António Vieira against the attribution of the careless *Arte de furtar* to him [note 15], a pamphlet in praise of Manuel Alvares’ Latin grammar, the young Teófilo Braga’s assault on Castilho in *As Theocracias litterarias* (Lisbon, 1865) and Júlio de Castilho’s reply to a similar attack on his father by Antero de Quental, “my oldest friend, through a noteworthy and painful coincidence”.

Philosophy has a share, in a few university theses on logic. Antiquarian matters are taken up in the descriptions given of Coimbra, Sintra, and other places by Dom Veríssimo in the 16th century, Francisco de Almeida Jordao in the 18th [note 16], and António Dámaso de Castro e Sousa in the 19th.

While these pamphlets provide material mainly for historians interested in the Restoration period of Portugal, the student of oratory will find in them a rich harvest, and here and there they offer choice items to those interested in Portuguese *belles lettres*, Portuguese education, and Portuguese antiquities.

## Notes

1. The three items are Veríssimo’s *Descripçam e debuxo do Moesteyro de Sancta Cruz de Coimbra* (Coimbra, 1541); Bishop António Pinheiro’s *Summario da pregação funebre...no dia da trasladação dos offos dos...principes el Rey dõ Manuel...& a rainha dona Maria...* (Lisbon, 1551); and Aquiles Estaço’s *Oratio oboedientialis ad Gregorium XIII, Pont. Max. Sebastiani I. regis Lusitaniae nomine habita..., together with his Monomachia navis Lusitaniae...and his Lusitanorum regum insignia* (Rome, 1574). The collection contains some other items of the 16th century, and even of the 15th, but in later editions.
2. Most of the Portuguese items in the supplement seem to have come from the archives of the Linhares family.
3. Gabriel Pereira included them in his edition of Gomes de Brito’s *Historia tragico-maritima*, Bibl. de Classicos Portuguezes, vols. X and XI, Lisbon 1905 and 1908. More recently, Damião Peres reedited them in his *Viagens e naufrágios célebres*, Oporto, 1938.

The collected shipwreck stories are to appear shortly in English translation as one of the volumes published by the Hakluyt Society.

4. *Memoria do celebrado Galeam São João chamado vulgarmente o Bota-Fogo, que rompeo a fortissima cadea, com que o renegado Barbarroixa Rey intruso de Tunes seguroou a garganta da Goleta, e foy o principal instrumento de sua expurção, no anno 1535...*(Lisbon, 1734).
5. *Oitavas a N.a S.a da Conceição, em aplauzo da victoria de Montes Claros em 17, de junho de 1665...*(Lisbon, 1665).
6. *Relação da gloriosa morte de quarto embaixadores Portuguezes, da cidade de Macao...a tres de Agosto de 1640...*(Lisbon, 1643).
7. *Compendio da relação, que veyo da India o anno de 1691 a el-rey N.S. Dom Pedro II da nova missã dos padres clerigos regulares da divina providencia na ilha de Borneo* (Lisbon, 1692) and António Rodrigues da Costa's *Conversam de el rei de Bissau...*(Lisbon, 1695).
8. *Relazione o sia lettera scritta da un Missionario abitante in Macao nella Cina...; Pekino nella Cina 24. Decembre 1767* (Rome, 1768). The letter does not follow the tradition of reporting on the progress of evangelisation, for it tells purely political news.
9. *Oração funebre que nas exequias do...Senhor Dom João Sexto,...no dia 10 de abril de 1826, pregou...*(Lisbon, 1826). Macedo, the author of three other pamphlets in the collection, had probably the most fertile pen of any Portuguese writer that ever lived.
10. *Estatua feneral de la Alexandra portuguese...oracion evangelica panegyrica: en las celebres exequias de la Excelentissima Señora Doña Maria de Guadalupe, Lancaster, y Cardenas, Duquesa de Aveyro, y Maqueda...*(Saragossa, 1718). For his biographical data the orator relied heavily on Tirso González' *Selectarum Disputationum* tom. 1, which tells of her knowledge of seven languages and of arts and sciences, including theology, as well as of her interest in Catholic mission work, especially in Japan and the Marianas.
11. *Panegyrico ao excellentissimo Senhor Dom António Luiz de Menezes...* (Lisbon, 1659).
12. M[anuel] F[erreira] L[eonardo], *Breve compendio da vida, morete, virtudes, e milagres de Santa Isable* (Lisbon, 1746) and Alexio de Meneses' *Vida do veneravel padre Fr. Thomé de Jesus* (n.p.n.d. [1753?]).
13. *Auto de Florença* (Lisbon, 1613). It was re-edited in facsimile by Carolina Michaelis de Vasconcelos in her *Autos portugueses de Gil Vicente y de la escuela Vincentina* (Madrid, 1922).
14. Manuel de Moraes Soares, *Memorial critico-medico-historico-fysico-mechanico...* (Lisbon, 1760). The author calls for a reform of medical training at the University of Coimbra in the sense of a more mechanistic and experimental system.
15. Anon., *Carta apologetica, em que se mostra, que não he Author do Livro, intitulado "Arte de Furtar" o insigne P. António Vieira, da Companhia de Jesus...*(Lisbon, 1744).
16. *Relação do castello, e serra de Cintra, e do que ha que ver raro em toda ella...*(Lisbon, 1748).

## Further Information

The Chadenat collection of some 3,000 Portuguese pamphlets are arranged by publication year in a set of 94 quarto boxes and one folio box. The call number for the set is [Greenlee 4504 .P855](#).

All of the pamphlets have been individually cataloged. Search by name, author or subject in our [online catalog](#).

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