
Professor Thomas F. Earle is a household name in the field of early-modern Portuguese studies with good reason. His research on poetry, drama and historiography of the Portuguese expansion is well-known, and we owe him excellent critical editions of key authors and monographs of reference on Sá de Miranda and António Ferreira to name but two examples. Professor Earle’s significant scholarly contribution to the field is furthermore confirmed by his collaboration as (co-)editor of volumes and the authorship of dozens of articles and chapters. Some of these can be easily accessed by the Portuguese-speaking audience in the collection entitled *Estudos sobre cultura e literatura portuguesa do Renascimento* published in 2013, edited by the Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra. The book under review reflects a different side to Professor Earle’s research interests: the history of the book.

*Escritores portugueses e leitores ingleses: livros de escritores portugueses, impressos antes de 1640, nas bibliotecas de Oxford e Cambridge* has been published by the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, in an excellent translation by Lia Raitt (with the specialist input of Pedro Falcão Azevedo). The original book was published by the Oxford Bibliographical Society six years ago under the title *Portuguese Writers and English Readers: Books by Portuguese Writers printed before 1640 in the Libraries of Oxford and Cambridge* (although, as the author notes, the Portuguese translation presents corrections – minor – to the first edition).

This monograph is a labour of love and patience, and the fruit of years of direct study of the special collections of Oxford and Cambridge libraries. The research for this book focused on the holdings of books by Portuguese writers printed before 1640 (regardless of place of publication), a task which required not only a great deal of expertise but was equally time-consuming and painstaking: today’s digital and integrated catalogues and databases were of less help than one would think (as Earle explains) in the creation of the short-title catalogue which forms the core of the book. A total of 906 titles, and 2,343 copies were identified (1426 in Oxford and 917 in Cambridge), figures which reveal the extent to which Portuguese intellectuals left their mark in these prestigious academic institutions in the early-modern period, across the confessional divide (and because of it). This is one of the most interesting aspects of Earle’s book: though clearly a bibliographical repository of inestimable value, it does not exhaust itself in the detailed description of the books and copies, as the five substantial introductory chapters present, contextualise and problematize Earle’s detailed catalogue. These make for a very enjoyable read, and are rich in suggestions for further research.

Chapter One “Livros portugueses em bibliotecas de Oxford e Cambridge” (pp. 37-64) provides a classification of the material found by Earle according to genre. English readers were first and foremost interested in theology, and the intellectual production of the theologians of Counter-Reformation Portugal is well-represented in the short-title catalogue. Rather than reading their work in the spirit of evangelical openness, English readers sought them for information on Papist arguments or, amongst the more avant-garde conformists, to emphasize the links between Catholicism and Anglicanism, whilst criticizing the excesses of popery. The
second most important group of works is composed of medical treatises (written mainly by New-Christians or Crypto-Jews), followed by the writings on the maritime voyages and missions overseas as these provided English readers with important geographical and ethnographical information on those territories that were increasingly attracting and captivating the European imagination and imperial aspirations – this also accounts for the success of the English translations by Richard Hakluyt and Richard Purchas (though also mediated by translations in Latin or Italian).

Chapter Two "De Coimbra a Oxford: Comentários de Aristóteles" (pp. 65-74) offers a case-study which illustrates the extent of the penetration of Portuguese intellectual thought in the field of philosophy among the elites of Cambridge and Oxford by looking at the institutional context that made possible such an enthusiastic reception and engagement with the work of the 'Conimbricenses' – commentators of Aristotle based in Coimbra (and Évora) – whose work was published anonymously between 1592-1606.

The third chapter "As velhas bibliotecas de Oxford e Cambridge" (pp. 75-86) focuses on the history of the bibliographical holdings of the college libraries and material aspects of the Portuguese books found there. Earle unearthed significant information on the history of the making of the college collections by researching their dates of acquisition or donation of copies and information about the books' readers themselves.

The next two chapters of this Introduction contextualize Earle's thesis of how Portuguese intellectual thought was integrated into the European Republic of Letters by looking, first, at the book trade as an important platform of dissemination and, secondly, to the very international character of European intellectual circles.

Printing in Portugal was far from being the dynamic trade that existed in Italy or France. In "Linhas de comunicação" (pp. 87-102), Earle highlights how crucial it was for Portuguese intellectuals to travel abroad and develop a network of international contacts in order to have their books published abroad and sold in the main centres of distribution of the European book market like Venice, Cologne, Antwerp and Frankfurt.

Earle then goes on to explore the issue of internationalization of Portuguese writers. The chapter "Nacionalismo e internacionalismo" (pp. 103-116) does so from various angles, the first of which is the important question of linguistic choice: the majority of the books written by Portuguese held in the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge were written in Latin (but not exclusively), and this prompts an analysis of the writers' attempts to present themselves as 'Lusitani' in a European environment where differentiation from Spanish authors was far from straightforward. Resuming a topic explored in the previous chapter, Earle explores how the professional, editorial and cultural milieu where the most successful Portuguese writers moved in were themselves very international, and how there were ties linking the cultures of England and Portugal in the early-modern period, despite the increasing imperial rivalries and the religious differences.

The Portuguese-speaking audience will undoubtedly benefit from the short-title catalogue presented ("Catálogo resumido", pp. 117-352), which includes a short biography of each author, the title of the book(s) found in the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, referencing of the copies with as accurate information on provenance and ownership as possible, and bibliographical references for further research. The monograph is complete with appendices (of Jesuit epistolarians and the names of the colleges), indices and bibliography. Escritores portugueses e leitores ingleses is, in summary, another example of excellent scholarship by Professor Earle.

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