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PLAT, Sir Hugh, 1552-1611?

The jewell house of art and nature. Containing divers rare and profitable inventions, together with sundry new experimentes in the art of husbandry, distillation, and moulding.

London, Peter Short, 1594.

STC 19991.

Three parts, with separate title pages. Illustrated.

The first edition. Sir Hugh Plat (Platt, or Platte) was a student of literature, then science, especially agriculture -- in which he made investigations "of genuine value" (DNB). Editions of his many interesting works kept on being printed well into the last quarter of the seventeenth century. He was a tireless experimenter and correspondent on the topics (from manuring to dyeing of the hair) which attracted him. The other parts of The jewell house having separate title pages illustrate his range: "Diverse new sorts of soyle not yet brought into any publique use, for manuring both of pasture and arable ground," and "Divers chimicall conclusions concerning the art of distillation. With many rare practises and uses therof, according to the authors own experience." That his experience need not be questioned seems to be suggested by the note in the Concise DNB: "... son of a London brewer; amply provided for by his father...." It means to suggest that Plat could easily pursue, being well-off, his chemical and agricultural experiments. Some of his other titles include: "The accomplit ladys delight in preserving, physick and cookery" (Published anonymously, n.d.), "Delights for ladies, to adorne their persons, tables, closets and distillatories" (1602, ten editions before 1640), and "Sundrie new and artificiall remedies against famine" (1596).

MICROFILM ARCHIVES FROM THE VATICAN IN TORONTO

by

Richard Landon

The Rare Book Room of the University of Toronto Library has recently received on microfilm an important collection of Archives from the Roman Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. They derive from a microfilming project by Professor Emmett Larkin of the University of Chicago, through funds provided by the American Committee for Irish Studies. Copies of the project are deposited in the Irish National Library and St. Louis University.

The materials chosen are drawn principally from the affairs of the Congregation dealing with England, Ireland and Scotland. The Congregatio de Propaganda Fide was formally constituted by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 and charged with responsibility for propagation of the Roman Catholic faith in countries without an established ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Congregation was administered by a group of cardinals under the direction of a Prefect, meeting monthly at the Congregazione Generale to consider important matters arising from the reports of officers of the areas under Congregational jurisdiction. England, Ireland and Scotland were under this jurisdiction until 1908.

Routine business was dealt with at a weekly meeting while matters which required special study were turned over to special committees meeting under the Congregazioni Particolari. Records of all materials submitted to and sent from the Congregation were placed in an archive, along with minutes of meetings, reports and decisions taken. This accumulation thus contains a wealth of primary source material for the historian of countries under the jurisdiction of the Congregation. The archive was divided into several series for administrative purposes and has been accessible to scholars for some time, subject to the general restriction of the "hundred year rule" common to all Vatican archives.

Foremost among the series in the present collection are the Actae consisting of volumes 1 to 226 for the years 1622 to 1862 (84 reels). These are the minutes of the meetings of the Congregazioni Generali, and the decisions there taken upon matter of general importance. These documents, in manuscript up to 1817 (volume 180) and in printed form thereafter, cover the whole spectrum of activities of the Congregation. The language employed until 1657 (volume 25) is Latin, and thereafter the records were kept in Italian. Of particular interest to Canadian historians are some reports in this series from Quebec, dated in the 1750's and 1760's. Some of the volumes are prefixed with short geographical indices which give an indication of the amount of material relating directly to a subject which is found in the volume.

Complementing the Actae is the series called Scritture originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali. This collection contains the papers to which references were made at the general meetings and consists of reports of bishops and other prelates, of prefects of missions, and of individual missionaries; correspondence of Nuncios and Internuncios and church officials, petitions of various kinds and a large collection of letters of a miscellaneous nature. The microfilm collection at the University of Toronto contains from this series volumes 101, 108, 131, 136, 138-139, 141-142, 205, 297, 308, 347, 354, 361-363, 365, 373, 377-379 and 381 covering the years 1622-1677 (10 reels). An example of the kind of material to be found in this series is provided by Benignus Millet¹. He sets out in detail the contents of a volume largely concerned with Ireland. Many other volumes are undoubtedly equally rewarding. For instance, volume 363 contains papers relating to a specific event, the appointment of P. Archer as Professor of Mathematics in Propaganda College in 1652.

The Congregazioni Particolari met once a week to consider special problems referred to it by the Congregazioni Generali. The members of this committee could take advantage of expert opinion pertaining to particular areas, such as Ireland. The Congregazioni Particolari is represented by a special series of which this collection contains volumes 11-13, 16, 18-19, 30, 32, 34A, 34B, 85, 88, 96, 110, 133, 137, 152 and 158 selected from the years 1668 to 1860 (20 reels). The series contains minutes and correspondence. Some volumes

1. Benignus Millet. Catalogue of volume 294 of the Scritture originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali in Propaganda Archives. Collectanea Hibernica: sources for Irish history. No. 8 (1965) pp. 7-37.

have short indexes at the end which only provide a minimum of help in locating material.

In the interests of efficiency the Congregation set up a number of sub-committees to deal with specific territorial areas. These sub-committees were called Congressi and each has a special series in the archives. The series best represented in the present collection is the Scritture riferite nei Congressi; Irlanda, of which volumes 1-34 covering the years 1625 to 1864 (56 reels) are present. These consist of letters, reports and miscellaneous documents which were referred to the sub-committee on Ireland for inspection and recommendations and which most clearly represent the scope of the Congregation's ordinary business in a specific area. Material concerning Ireland, however, will also be found among the papers of the other Congressi, as many Irish missionary priests worked in England, Scotland and continental Europe.

Of the Scritture riferite nei Congressi; Anglia, the present collection contains volumes 1 to 16 for the years 1627-1863 (37 reels). This series corresponds to the previous one except that its territorial sphere is England. There is also a small series called Scritture riferite nei Congressi; Anglia miscellanea which lacks volume numbers but covers the years 1637- to approximately 1850 (2 reels). It consists of miscellaneous letters and documents, including some printed reports.

Scotland is represented in this collection by the Scritture riferite nei Congressi; Scozia, volume 1, covering the years 1623-1700 (3 reels).

Another major series represented is called the Fondo di Vienna; the collection contains volumes 12-16, 28, 32, 37 and 72 selected from the years 1636-1797 (9 reels). The title gives no indication of the contents as these volumes originally formed part of one or more of the large collections in the Archives. During the Napoleonic Wars they, along with the rest of the Archives, were taken to France, but when the other materials were returned to Rome, after the fall of Napoleon, these volumes were sent by mistake to Vienna, not to be returned to Rome until after World War I. Thus this collection encompasses material from both the Congressi and Congregazioni Generali series, the present selection being material concerning Ireland, England and Scotland.

There is also one reel of microfilm called Miscellanea varie which contains two titles: "Relazione del viaggio di Dionisio Massari, per servizio della religione cattolica nell'anno 1645, 1646 et 1647 in Ibernica con Mons. Rinuccini" and "Varie, Irlanda ca. 1848."

This whole collection has been catalogued and is available for use in the Rare Books and Special Collections Division, and although there are various kinds of indexes for most of the materials, this library does not have them at the present time.

The Archives of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide are part of a working collection of materials still being maintained by the Congregation although its territorial jurisdiction is now much smaller than it was in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The selection of materials in the present collection will provide historical sources for the general as well as the church historian formerly available only in the Archive building in Rome.

Bibliographical Sources of information on the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide and its Archives.

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2. Millet, Rev. Benignus, O.F.M. "The Archives of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide." Proceedings of the Irish Catholic Historical Committee, 1956. pp. 20-27.
3. Fish, Carl Russell. Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and Other Italian Archives. Washington, Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1911. pp. 119-195.
4. Daly, Lowrie J. "Microfilmed materials from the Archive of the Sacred Congregation 'De Propaganda Fide'." Manuscripta. Vol. X, no. 3 (1966). pp. 139-144.
5. Weber, Rev. Francis J. "Roman Archives of Propaganda Fide." American Catholic Historical Society. Vol. LXXVI, no. 4 (1965) pp. 245-251.
6. Guilday, Peter K. "The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (1622-1922)." Catholic Historical Review VI (January 1921) pp. 478-494.
7. McGloin, John B. "The Roman Propaganda Fide Archives: an Overflow and Assessment." Church History XXXIII (March 1964) pp. 84-91.

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