

CARTOGRAFIA E CARTÓGRAFOS PORTUGUESES DOS SÉCULOS XV E XVI

(CONTRIBUIÇÃO PARA UM ESTUDO COMPLETO)

PORTUGUESE CARTOGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHERS OF THE XVTH AND XVITH CENTURIES

(Contribution to a complete Study) by ARMANDO CORTESAO

2 volumes - published by Seara Nova - Lisbon, 1935.

In the July-August number of the *Anais do Club Militar Naval*, Lisbon, 1935, Commander FONTOURA DA COSTA reviews Armando CORTESAO's publication on Portuguese cartography and cartographers of the XVth and XVIth centuries.

The following notes are extracted from his article, the reader being referred to the book itself for the summarized list of 180 charts or atlases cited and the 52 names of authors mentioned in this work of highest importance in the history of ancient cartography.

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First to interest himself in the written history of Portuguese cartography was the illustrious Visconde de SANTEREM. His meticulous studies of historical cartography, the results of which were published during the first half of last century, have remained classics.

During the subsequent eighty years, Portuguese savants devoting themselves to this subject were rare; their works were limited to a few articles, some of which are very interesting. On the contrary, outside Portugal and particularly in those countries which preserve a few of our ancient and valuable charts, the work of savants who, apart from general cartography, made important studies relating to Portugal, is comparatively vast.

Collecting what has been published on this arduous question, Dr. Armando CORTESAO has at the same time procured many absolutely new, hitherto unpublished data. All this he has studied patiently and efficaciously and, being gifted with vast erudition and great powers of observation, he has succeeded in producing this excellent work which will take its place as a most valuable monument in Portuguese Cartographic History.

The author has not been content merely to enumerate Portuguese Charts and Cartographers; he gives an authoritative description of most of the known existing charts, mentioning also the places where they were constructed and in which publications they appeared. For this purpose he has either made a direct study of the document or, in cases where this was impossible, has made an indirect study by means of photographs or engravings; where it was found impossible to procure reprints, the author has examined all the published notices and trustworthy information which he was able to collect. In several cases, by methodical comparison he has succeeded in solving important cartographic problems, many of which were considered absolutely enigmatical; on other occasions he has contributed towards a new interpretation which, on account of the scarcity and uncertainty of data available, had until then appeared doubtful. His *Cartografia e Cartógrafos Portugueses* is illustrated by 56 fine photo-engravings of the most important charts described: the latter form one of the most representative features of lusitanian cartography from the XVth until the beginning of the XVIIth century, and the whole constitutes an admirable collection absolutely unknown to the greater number of students in this branch.

The vast bibliography consulted, quoted throughout the pages of Dr. CORTESAO's book and from which he extracts a few passages of the most interesting works, is in itself remarkable; it represents an excellent *vade-mecum* for the historian.

The indexes of his erudite volume, particularly the general Table placed at the beginning of Vol. I and the systematic and analytical Table which terminates Vol. II, are valuable aids in consulting the work.

It is impossible to reproduce the general table here, although the enumeration of the subjects dealt with would give readers a clear idea of the monumental work accomplished by Dr. CORTESAO.

The publication also contains a Summary of Portuguese charts and cartographers of the XVth and XVIth centuries (including the beginning of the XVIIth century) which will be of great service to those interested in this subject.