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## The Graiño Collection

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ence on God, and a great sensitivity to the tragedy of human life. Here, surely, is a point of departure for giving to Filipino letters something of the sweep and grandeur of Exodus.

Of course, the Bible was not composed to supply plots for authors. As a matter of fact, however, it does—or it can. It was written as revelation, and it should be read as such. But it can also be read as literature. And as literature, it can serve both as a model and as an inspiration for great writing.

JAMES BURKE, O.M.I.

### *The Graiño Collection*

Soon after the creation of a Spanish-American Section in the Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid, the necessity became apparent of a subsection devoted to materials relative to former Spanish possessions overseas which also played an important role in Spanish history. This need was accentuated when the Library acquired the collection of the defunct Biblioteca de Ultramar. Because this collection consisted largely of Philippine items, the name of the Spanish-American Section was changed to "Spanish-American and Philippine Section". Recently, the Section was further enriched by the purchase of an extremely valuable collection consisting chiefly of works either about the Philippines or printed in that country.

It had not been easy for the Biblioteca Nacional to acquire this collection, as it was also sought after by the Philippine Government. Hence, although the heirs of the founder of the collection, Don Antonio Graiño, had offered it to the Spanish Government as early as 1951, the sale was not consummated until recently. Although the collection is at present temporarily housed in the Rare Books Section pending the construction of permanent quarters suited to its value and significance, it is already available for consultation by scholars.

Most of the items of the collection are extremely rare. Of many of the titles only a handful of copies exist, and some are unique copies. The fact that the collector took great care to preserve the original bindings to the rest, adds considerably to the value of the collection.

A brief biographical notice will be appropriate. Don Antonio Graiño Martínez was born in 1870 in the town of Santiago de Villapedre near Lueca, in the fertile region that was once the Kingdom of Asturias. A lover of books since childhood, he grew up to be a man of strong character and intellect, and eventually joined in the

management of the bookstore which his brother-in-law, Victoriano Suárez, had founded in 1858. This line of business focused his interest on bibliography and the history of the Spanish empire, with particular reference to the Philippines. He began methodically to acquire the works relative to this country which were from time to time offered for sale.

His scholarly interest bore fruit in a number of monographs, of which the following may be mentioned: "Gramáticos y lexicógrafos de la lengua tagala"; "Tres joyas de la bibliografía lingüística filipina": "La imprenta y el libro en Ultramar durante la tutela española"; "Documentos referentes a los indios xicaques"; "Un capítulo de una carta de Cartagena de las Indias referente a Doña Catalina de Erauso, la monja alférez"; "La industria del libro en España y la codicia del libro español en los mercados extranjeros". These and other studies were published in various journals and periodicals during the course of a long and laborious life.

Owing to his familiarity with Spanish-American affairs, the Spanish Government appointed him consul-general in Honduras, a position which he held until 1931, when he was relieved at his own request. He enjoyed the company of scholars and spent the happiest moments of his life in converse with them. At first Don Antonio and his friends used to foregather at the rear of the Suárez bookstore: later they transferred their meeting place to the Café Varela and later still to the Granja Florida. These informal gatherings were attended by men of the intellectual stature of Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, the historian of Spanish heterodoxy; Armando Palacio Valdés, the panegyrist of the hill country of Santander; Pereda, the chronicler of Spanish arms in Africa; Alarcón, the novelist; men of letters such as Francisco Vera, Giner de los Ríos, Américo Castro, and bibliographers such as Vindel and Beltrán.

The Spanish Civil War broke up the congenial company; when the *soirées* were resumed after the war, many failed to show up, having either died in the interval or gone into exile. However, the survivors continued to meet, first at the Hotel Florida and then at the Café Alicante. Don Antonio was among the last to disappear, and then only because an affliction in his foot made walking difficult. In 1945, he joined his friends in a better world.

Don Antonio was normally affable, but could meet haughtiness with equal arrogance. He had a keen sense of the ridiculous, which showed itself when the prospective purchaser of a rare book offered him a price which he considered absurd. He loved books; but had enough love to spare, first for his friends, and then for the land of his birth. He never missed the fiesta of St. James the Apostle in his

native town of Santiago de Villapedre, and he divided between this town and Lueca his annual excursions to his native soil.

The Filipiniana collection put together by Don Antonio Graiño was appraised by Don Carlos Sanz, the well known bibliographer, at three million pesetas. It consists of 862 items. Of these, 72 are seventeenth-century imprints, and 27 of these 72 are, in the judgment of the appraiser, the only copies extant. Eighteenth-century titles total 171; nineteenth-century, 390; twentieth-century, 37. 330 titles are in Philippine native languages.

The collection includes works printed not only in Manila but Binondo, Dilao, Sampaloc, Cavite, Guadalupe, Tambobong, Malabon, Iloilo and others. The printers whose names appear in the imprint include Tomás Pinpin, the first Filipino typographer, his son Simón, Jacinto Magarilau, Raymundo Magisa, Luís Beltrán, Gaspar de los Reyes, Santiago de Dinalanges, Carlos Borge Santos y Bernal and José María Álvarez. Sometimes the imprint carries the name of the printing establishment rather than the printer. These include those of the University of Santo Tomás, of the Colegio de San Francisco, of the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles, of the Colegio de Loreto, of the Amigos del País, etc.

Although, as mentioned above, the appraiser had set the value of the collection at three million pesetas, the Graiño heirs very generously offered it to the Spanish Government at half that price, with the proviso that if the Spanish Government did not want it, it would be offered to the Philippine Government at two million. The Spanish Government took up the offer, with the result that the Graiño Collection now forms part of the more than 4,000 titles of the Philippine Section of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid.

MARIA CUESTA