

PROJECTOS

GIL VICENTE IN U.S. PUBLICATIONS (1818-1991)

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Do you know Russian? I am terribly impressed—my languages are so bad—and Portuguese has nothing to offer like Chekhov, alas—although I do like some of the very old poets, the *Kings*—and Gil Vicente is nice, too. Imagine the strange days when the kings wrote the best lyrics of all—

Elizabeth Bishop (1965)¹

Before looking for references to the great Portuguese dramatist Gil Vicente in United States periodicals and books, one might have guessed them to be few and far between. Although my search has not turned up anything like the hundreds of reference to Camões, it has resulted in the location of fifty-one references, a surprisingly substantial number in this case.

Included in this chronological compilation of items culled from U. S. journals, periodicals and books, mainly from the nineteenth century, are works of scholarship and reference, poetry and even fiction, a few of them with prior publication in England. The online data bases searched include “American Historical Newspapers 1690-1922,” “American Periodical Series 1740-1900,” “Making of America,” “New York Times Historical” and “Hartford Courant Historical.”

1. “Fragments on Portuguese Literature, from the French of Sismondi,” *Analectic Magazine* (Philadelphia) (Oct. 1818), 12: 304-11.

¹ Elizabeth Bishop to Randall Jarrell, Feb. 25, 1965, in *Poems, Prose, and Letters*, ed. Robert Giroux and Lloyd Schwartz (New York: Library of America, 2008), 867.

Portugal's "dramatic literature is very poor. They have but one popular poet who has written in the spirit of the nation, Gil Vicente."

2. "Portuguese Mysteries," *New England Galaxy and United States Literary Advertiser* (Boston) (Oct. 5, 1827), p. 3.
Summarizes the plots of two of Gil Vicente's dramas.
3. "Literary Chronology: List of the Principal Writers Mentioned in Sacred and Profane History," *American Quarterly* (Boston) (Nov. 1832), 5: 132-47.
The list includes "Gil Vicente; Comedy."
4. "The Blind Artist," *Western Monthly Magazine* (Cincinnati) (May 1834), 3: 237-47; *The Knickerbocker; or New York Monthly Magazine* (June 1848), 31: 495-503.
"Gil Vicente was indeed no ordinary foe. Whether he was, as his name might imply, a descendant of the great dramatist, history has not seen fit to inform us."
5. "Memoirs of the Marquis de Pombal," *North American Review* (Boston) (Apr. 1845), 60: 478-88.
The sixteenth century is "illustrated by the names of Caminha, Gil Vicente, Diogo Bernardes, and, above all, by the mighty genius of Camoens."
6. "Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature," *Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany* (New York) (Jan. 1850), 48: 121-45.
"Gil Vicente, a native of Portugal, wrote plays both in Spanish and Portuguese."
7. [William Hickling Prescott], "History of Spanish Literature," *North American Review* (Boston) (Jan. 1850), 70: 28; *The Living Age* (Boston) (Feb. 2, 1850), 24: 213; and reprinted in William Hickling Prescott. *Biographical and Critical Miscellanies*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1865. 683.
"[George Ticknor] accompanies his analysis with occasional translations of the best passages from the ancient masters. From one of them—a sort of dramatic eclogue, by Gil Vicente—we extract the following spirited verses. The scene represents Cassandra, the heroine of the piece, as refusing all the solicitations of her family to change her state of maiden freedom for married life." [Quotes twenty-eight lines, beginning with "They say, "T is time, go, marry! go!""]
8. Lieber, Franz, E. Wigglesworth and T. G. Bradford. (Eds.). *Encyclopedia Americana* (Boston: Mussey and Company, 1851), X, 285.
Calderon and Lope de Vega "formed themselves" on "the model of Gil Vicente."

9. Southey, Charles Cuthbert. (Ed.). *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851). 238.
Robert Southey writes, in a letter, "The title of the Portuguese Plautus" is "generally applied to Gil Vicente."
10. "Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature [from the *Quarterly Review*]," *Eclectic Magazine* (New York) (Jan. 1851), 22: 1-24.
Gil Vicente is "the first, best, and last dramatist of Portugal, to read whose works Erasmus is said to have learnt Portuguese."
11. Godwin, Parke. (Ed.). *Hand-Book of Universal Biography (Putnam's Home Cyclopeda)* (New York: George A. Putnam, 1852). 442.
Identifies Gil Vicente as "a Portuguese dramatist of the 16th century, who wrote nearly fifty plays, and excelled all the dramatic writers of that period in elegance of style and fertility of invention."
12. Ripley, George and Bayard Taylor. (Eds.). *Hand-Book of Literature and the Fine Arts (Putnam's Home Cyclopeda)* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1852). 368.
Gil Vicente is "supposed to have served as a model to Lope de Vega and Calderon."
13. Putnam, George P. (Ed.). *Hand-Book of Chronology (Putnam's Home Cyclopeda)* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1853), 636.
On the list is Gil Vicente "d. 1567, comedy."
14. Goodrich, Samuel G. (Ed.). *A History of All Nations from the Earliest Periods to the Present Time* (New York: J. C. Derby & N. C. Miller, 1854). 851.
Portugal has produced "an eminent dramatist, Gil Vicente."
15. Godwin, Parke. (Ed.). *Cyclopedia of Universal Biography* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1856). 442.
"Gil Vicente, a Portuguese dramatist of the 16th century, who wrote nearly fifty plays, and excelled all the dramatic writers of that period in elegance of style and fertility of invention."
16. [Thomas Wentworth Higginson]. "Portugal's Glory and Decay." *North American Review* (Boston) (Oct. 1856), 83: 474.
"Among the earlier names least thoroughly forgotten" is that of Gil Vicente, "to read whose comedies Erasmus studied the language."
17. "Mind Your P's and Q's," *Oliver Optic's Magazine* (Boston) (Apr. 4, 1868), 3: 219.

- Erasmus is “said to have learned the Portuguese language in order to be able to read the comedies of Gil Vicente, the only celebrated dramatist whom Portugal can boast.”
18. Thomas, Joseph. (Ed.). *Universal Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography and Mythology* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1870), 1035.
 Gil Vicente “did more than any other to build up the modern drama.”
19. Andersen, Hans Christian. *In Spain and a Visit to Portugal*. New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1870.
 When Gil Vicente drew on folk literature for his comedies, he was opposed for eschewing the “classical.”
20. *Chambers’s Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1872), I, 183.
 Gil Vicente “extracted” from the Amadis de Gaul romance “the materials for two Spanish comedies.”
21. *Chambers’s Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott/Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, 1873), I, 181, 702, 751.
 “With Camoens and his contemporary, Gil Vicente, the language and poetry of Portugal reached the culminating point of their development.”
22. Holland, J. G. (Ed.). *Illustrated Library of Favorite Song*. New York: Scribner, Armstrong and Company / Chicago: Hadley Brothers & Kane, 1873. 287.
 This anthology includes Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s translation of Gil Vicente’s poem, “She is a Maid of Artless Grace.”
23. Ripley, George and Charles H. Dana. (Eds.). *The American Cyclopedia* (New York: D. Appleton, 1875). XIII, 743.
 Gil Vicente’s “comedies, tragic-comedies, farces, and pantomimes, published collectively in 1563, derive their merit rather from truthfulness of character and vivacity of dialogue than from fertility of invention.”
24. “Calderon’s Autos Sacramentales,” *Catholic World* (New York) (Apr. 1875), 21: 33.
 “We can form some idea of the early *autos sacramentales* from the production of Juan de la Encina and Gil Vicente,” the latter the author of an “*auto* for Christmas, and one on the subject of St. Martin.”
25. Bryant, William Cullen. (Ed.). *A New Library of Poetry and Song* (New York: J. B. Ford, 1876). 443; *The Family Library of Poetry and Song* (New York: Fords, Howard and Hulbert, 1880). 479.

- John Bowring's translation of Gil Vicente's poem, "The Nightingale," is included.
26. Ross, John M. (Ed.). *The Globe Encyclopedia of Universal Information* (Boston: Estes & Lauriat, 1877), II, 439.
 Gil Vicente—"the greatest dramatist of Portugal"—"founded a Romantic school."
 27. Barnard, Frederick A. P., and Arnold Guyot. (Eds.). *Johnson's New Universal Cyclopedia* (New York: A. J. Johnson & Son, 1878), III, 406, 1150, 1348.
 Gil Vicente endowed Portugal "with the best dramatic works produced in Portuguese literature, though they were written in Spanish."
 28. "The Ticknor Spanish Library," *New Englander* (New Haven, Connecticut) (May 1880), 3: 385-97.
 There is a reference to "the lighter lyrics of the Gil Vicente school."
 29. *Appletons' Annual Cyclopedia and Register of Important Events* (New York) (Jan. 1, 1881), 21: 509.
 "The artistic style of Gil Vicente, founder of the Portuguese theatre" is treated in the recently published *Questões de Litteratura e Arte Portugueza*.
 30. "Women as Actresses [from *Notes and Queries*]," *New York Times* (Oct. 18, 1885), p. 11; "Appearance of Women as Actresses," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Dec. 9, 1885), p. 7.
 "Instances of women acting in plays and of royal personages taking their parts in them are afforded in Portugal by Gil Vicente, who, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, wrote dramas in the Castilian language, which gave rise to the Spanish theatres and anticipated Lope de Vega and Shakespeare by nearly a century."
 31. A. M. Elliott, "Corso de Historia da Litteratura Portuguesa, por Theophilo Braga," *American Journal of Philology* (Baltimore) (Jan. 1, 1887), 8: 93.
 "Gil Vicente founded the national theatre."
 32. "Romance Philology: An Able Paper Read Before the Academy of Sciences by Prof. Alcee Fortier," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans) (July 11, 1887), p. 4.
 "Gil Vicente and Camoens gave great splendor to Portuguese literature, but after the battle of Alcasar in 1578 and the fall of Sebastian, Portugal never recovered its glory."
 33. "The Renaissance in Portugal," *American Architect and Building News* (Boston) (June 6, 1891), 32: 144.
 There is a reference to Gil Vicente.
 34. Smith, Benjamin E. (Ed.). *The Century Cyclopedia of Names*. New York: Century Co., 1894. 1035.

- Gil Vicente "wrote pastorals and plays for the Portuguese court after 1502. His works in Portuguese and Spanish include comedies, farces, autos, and tragicomedies."
35. "Puer Parvulus," *The Living Age* (Boston) (Feb. 3, 1900), 224: 299.
 "A Portuguese named Gil Vicente, who often wrote in Spanish, also produced some realistic idylls in which people talk of friars, hermits, breviaries, calendars, and papal bulls."
36. Isabel Moore, "The Literature of Portugal," *Poet Lore* (Boston) (Autumn 1907), 18: 357.
 "Gil Vicente is really the Portuguese author most closely concerned with the establishment of the national theater. He was born, probably, twenty years before the close of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Emmanuel; but Emmanuel's son and successor, Dom John III, was the acknowledged patron of Gil Vicente and he was a contemporary of Torres Naharro in Spain, who did practically the same for the Spanish drama as Vicente did for the Portuguese. Like Montemayor and Miranda, he is to be numbered among the Spanish writers as well as among those of his native land for, of all his plays, ten are in the Castilian language and fifteen partly so, while seventeen are entirely Portuguese. In the judgment of Bouterwek, the farces of Gil Vicente are the best of his productions; and he certainly is the representative of the Portuguese classic humor."
37. Wilfred P. Mustard, "Later Echoes of the Greek Bucolic Poets," *American Journal of Philology* (Baltimore) (July 1, 1909), 33.
 Gil Vicente's "Fragoa de Amor" echoes Moschus.
38. Frederic J. Haskin, "Lisbon is One of the Most Beautiful of European Cities" *Lexington Herald* (Kentucky) (July 21, 1911), Sec. 2, p. 5.
 Before Lisbon's Teatro Dona Maria Segunda stands the "statue of Gil Vicente, father of the drama in Portugal."
39. J. P. Wickersham Crawford. *Spanish Drama Before Lope de Vega*. Publications of the University of Pennsylvania Extra Series in Romanic Languages and Literatures, no. 7. Philadelphia, 1922.
 There are several references to Gil Vicente's Castilian plays.
40. "Modern Spain," *The Independent* (New York) (Jan. 28, 1922), 108: 86-87.
 In *A Picture of Modern Spain*, J. B. Trend shows that he is

“familiar with the intricacies of dramatic history,” beginning with Ercina and Gil Vicente.

41. Joseph A. Meredith. *Intoito and Loa in the Spanish Drama of the Sixteenth Century*. Philadelphia: [University of Pennsylvania], 1928.

There are references to Gil Vicente throughout.

42. Maxmillian Rudwin, “The Organization of Pandemonium,” *The Open Court* (Chicago) (Aug. 1929), 43: 465.

There is a reference to Gil Vicente’s play, *Historia de Deos*.

43. Lawton Mackall. *Portugal for Two*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1931. 159.

“The artist who executed this gleaming steeple-on-chalice base [of the *Custodia dos Jerónimos* in Lisbon’s Museum of Ancient Art] was named Gil Vicente, which happens to be the name also of Portugal’s first and perhaps greatest dramatist, who was living at that time; but whether the two Gils were the same person or not, is a matter for speculation. One notices, though, that the figures on this *Custodia* have the individuality and ‘effectiveness’ of *dramatis personae*.”

44. “Stamps Honor Notables,” *New York Times* (Sept. 19, 1937), p. 192.

Portugal has issued a stamp with “a likeness of Gil Vicente, the ‘Portuguese Shakespeare.’”

45. “Plan Floating Post Office for Canal Zone Stamp,” *Hartford Courant* (Connecticut) (June 25, 1939), p. SM10.

In 1938, Portugal put a portrait of Gil Vicente on a stamp.

46. Charles David Ley. Introduction. *Portuguese Voyages 1498-1663*. Ed. Charles David Ley. New York: E. P. Dutton / London: J. M. Dent, 1947. ix.

“Gil Vicente’s plays, written at the beginning of the sixteenth century, are so satirical that even to-day some of them are not allowed to be acted in Portugal.”

47. William Barrett, “Voice of the Gods and the Unconscious,” *New York Times* (Aug. 14, 1955), p. BR4.

Gil Vicente is one of C. M. Bowra’s subjects in *Inspiration and Poetry*.

48. David Lidman, “Productivity in Crescendo,” *New York Times* (Dec. 5, 1965), p. X33.

Portugal has issued four stamps honoring Gil Vicente in commemoration of the fifth centenary of his birth.

49. John Dos Passos. *The Portugal Story: Three Centuries of Exploration and Discovery*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1969. 263-65.

Gil Vicente’s “forty or so eclogues, religious mysteries,

farces and comedies which have come down constitute—a generation before the Spanish dramatists and two generations before the Elizabethans—the earliest flowering of the Renaissance theater.”

50. “A Portuguese Ensemble with Period Instruments,” *New York Times* (June 11, 1990), p. C13.

The Théâtre Varia in Brussels will present Gil Vicente’s *Comédia de Rubena*.

51. Eric Siogren, “Portugal is the centerpiece in Brussels and beyond,” *New York Times* (Sept. 29, 1991), p. XX15.

The Théâtre Varia season includes “Comédia de Rubena by the 16th-century playwright Gil Vicente.”