



# Medical translators and the idea of translation in Portugal in the late eighteenth century: the case of books on medicine

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## Abstract

This study demonstrates how translations into Portuguese influenced the publishing market in the late eighteenth century and sheds light on the establishment of standard Portuguese. Focusing specifically on medical texts translated into Portuguese from published works or manuscripts between 1770 and 1810, the translators' – and occasionally the editors' – paratexts in the translated books on medicine and pharmacy are investigated and cross-referenced against reports written by the censors on the same works, themselves physicians appointed by the censorship bodies or physicians/censors, in a bid to seek out answers, however incomplete they may be, to questions about the circulation of the printed word, the spread of scientific knowledge, and the debates concerning the definition of the Portuguese language.

Keywords: translation; medicine; eighteenth century; history of the written word; Portuguese empire.

In her study of medical knowledge and the development of vernacular languages in the Austro-Hungarian kingdom in the eighteenth century, Teodora Sechel (2012, p.721-722) proposes that “[t]he effort to build a centralised medical administration and a network of medical schools in all provinces of the Monarchy fuelled an initiative to assure a uniform medical education.” As part of the enterprise, a “program” was set up to incentivize the writing and translation of medical texts into the vernaculars spoken throughout the realm, designed for the training of the lower echelons of medical practice: surgeons, midwives, and apothecaries. According to Sechel, in the process, the authors and translators had to “build a vocabulary capable of conveying scientific meaning” in the vernacular, which meant they had “either to borrow new words, or to import a codified vocabulary from the vernacular language as spoken by peasants” (p.722), thereby establishing the vernacular as the “national” language (or in this case, the multinational language, since Romanian, Hungarian, and German were spoken by different ethnic groups in the empire).

Can parallels be drawn between this kind of initiative and what took place in the Portuguese empire in the same period (second half of the eighteenth century)? Was there an official program – or programs – to raise the profile of Portuguese to the detriment of Latin and French in scientific or, indeed, other types of texts? Or was it merely the same process of expanding the use of the vernacular seen in other nations during the late Enlightenment? And, in this respect, did translations actually contribute to establishing the use of the vernacular amongst the population, as Sechel (2012) claims took place amongst the Romanians? Here, we will analyze these questions, relating them to translations into Portuguese rendered between 1770 and 1810, focusing specifically, for analytical purposes, on medical books in general and also investigating what the Portuguese censors had to say about these translations.

The two cases are certainly not incomparable, despite the intrinsic differences between the two empires at the time. In Portugal and its possessions, there was no need for the educational system built up after the expulsion of the Jesuits to adopt a variety of vernaculars, since Portuguese was the incontestable *lingua franca* for administrative, legal, and literary purposes (Fonseca, 2011). Likewise, with the central role of the Portuguese monarchy and the way its centralizing power affected law enforcement in local settings (Rodrigues, 2006), concessions to different ethnic groups were all but non-existent, notwithstanding certain negotiations and compromises made between different hubs of power.

This study does not, it should be stressed, intend to analyze the way medical and scientific processes themselves changed over the eighteenth century, since this is something that has already been done to great effect elsewhere. For instance, Laurinda Abreu (2010, 2013) has researched the organization and regulation of medical professions in modern Portugal, and Jean Luiz Neves Abreu (2011) has classified medical texts in the eighteenth century into medical treatises, practical manuals, and Portuguese translations of works of medicine produced in other parts of Europe, analyzing the production of medical knowledge about “the body, health, and disease” in the period. The developments in different levels of medical knowledge, expressed in the differences between physicians, surgeons, barbers etc., is a subject that has also been covered in the specialized historiography (Furtado, jul.-dez. 2005; Figueiredo, 2005) and therefore was not sought in this study.

The same could be said of the historiography of translations into Portuguese, which has been consolidated around the central idea that the period under study witnessed a significant increase in translation, to the detriment of the publication or circulation of texts in Latin and French. This specific historiography shows that the number of translations published or texts written in “native” languages rose. The scholars who have investigated Portuguese translations in particular include Rodrigues (1992), Lisboa (1991), and Ramos (1986). According to João Paulo Silvestre (2007), translations were not produced in any great number in any field or genre in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and even though works in Spanish and Latin circulated widely in Portugal (as witnessed by Portuguese library and publishing house catalogues), “translations from French gained ground gradually as the eighteenth century progressed” (p.153). Rodrigues found that there were 442 translations published in Portugal in the first half of that century as against just 266 in the whole of the seventeenth century.

It is hard to tell for sure whether there was an official program or programs to boost the use of Portuguese, except perhaps insofar as there were specific translations commissioned, cases in point being the books on witchcraft translated as part of the disputes with Jesuit thinking, even after the Marquis of Pombal’s fall from power, or the publishing endeavors of Tipografia do Arco do Cego publishing house (see DeNipoti, Pereira, 2014; Curto et al., 1999). Nonetheless, Portuguese was certainly used more widely in writings in general, including science, as the eighteenth century progressed.

An initial indication of the importance of translations – here, focusing solely on medicine – can be gleaned from the fact that they supplemented Portuguese scientific output, operating as a “mechanism for the circulation and transmission of ideas” and “agents of cultural innovation and communicative practice” (Costa, 2011, p.4). It was common to offer annotated translations or compilations of shorter works on a theme, which served as reference literature for the specialized readership. We can see this in the “Tábua bibliográfica, cronológico-médica portuguesa, século XVIII [Chronological table of the Portuguese medical bibliography, eighteenth century]” (1815), which provides a list of 124 books on medicine or related topics published in Portugal or by Portuguese authors from 1700 to 1800, showing a significant rise in the number of publications in the last two decades after a mid-century decline. This source reproduces the publishers of the books and provides clues as to the importance translations started to acquire, since it was only as of the 1770s that information about whether a work was a translation started being provided.

**Table 1: Medical books published in Portugal or by Portuguese authors in the eighteenth century**

Period	Translations (indicated in the publication)	Total number of publications
1700-1709		8
1710-1719		14
1720-1729		15
1730-1739		16
1740-1749		15
1750-1759		10

Table 1 (cont.): Medical books published in Portugal or by Portuguese authors in the eighteenth century

Period	Translations (indicated in the publication)	Total number of publications
1760-1769		3
1770-1779	3	7
1780-1789	8	18
1790-1800	15	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>124</b>

Source: *Tábua...* (1815, p.166 e s.).

Likewise, an analysis of the languages and places of publication of the medical books listed in the *Tábua* shows a clear trend. While in the first decades of the century almost a third were written in Latin and 20% were published in cities outside the kingdom (Rome, Verona, Amsterdam, London, Paris etc.), by the final decades, over 90% were in Portuguese and, as of 1770, none were published outside the Portuguese empire.

### On the sources

This study, which is part of a larger ongoing research project on written culture and its agents in the Portuguese empire, focuses not only on medical publications, but also on identifying the voices of the translators and censors, two of the groups of agents involved in the dissemination of ideas and books, alongside authors, editors, and readers. The general approach is consistent with that adopted by Araújo (2003, p.9), seeking to understand “the mediations introduced to written culture, highlighting whenever possible the place and function of the books and other cultural products amongst the gestures and objects of social life.” Thus, within the broader realm of translations into Portuguese in the period, the translations of medical (and a few pharmaceutical) works of a general nature were selected, alongside paratexts by their translators (Genette, 2009), to be studied together with the reports on the medical books by the censors from the Real Mesa Censória [Royal Board of Censorship].

The first group of documents, comprising forewords, prologues, preliminary prefaces, reports, dissertations, notices, notes, and advice for readers that the translators included in the translated works has already been the target of systematic study, including one of the sets of documents analyzed here: the translations published by Tipografia do Arco do Cego. Alessandra Ramos de Oliveira Harden’s (2011) studies of Friar José Mariano Veloso and Manoel Jacinto Nogueira da Gama, based on paratexts included in the published translations, are prime examples of the way this kind of source can be exploited to great effect. Harden (2011, p.301) explains that the “paratexts [of the Arco do Cego translators] operated like instruments for the acceptance of Enlightenment scientific principles, for progressive ideas were presented to Portuguese readers using a discourse that adhered to the traditions of the Old Regime of Portugal and Scholastic rhetoric.” She also problematizes the sources, pointing out some limitations that equally apply to this study:

There is an apparent discursive contradiction in the relationship between paratext and main text, since the forewords, with their high degree of subjectivity, are employed to introduce translations of scientific works rooted in the principles of Enlightenment. The two sets of texts involved in this interplay – the translators' paratexts and the translated works – were written under contradictory textual traditions. While the scientists (or natural philosophers) who had penned the originals used language that was consistent with the paradigm of experimentalism, rationality, and objectivity characteristic of the Enlightenment, the Brazilian translators wrote their texts according to a model of eloquence derived from Scholastic rhetoric, which was criticized by Enlightenment thinkers for its reliance on *auctoritas* and its use of pompous, ornate language, supposedly to the detriment of rational argumentation (Harden, 2011, p.307).

The second group of documents has been the target of various studies, some wide-ranging, investigating the complex work of the censors in Portugal and Brazil (Martins, 2005; Villalta, 1999; Abreu, 2008), others dealing with specific subjects, such as the censors' intellectual strategies and the methods of persuasion and coercion they employed (Araújo, 2014; Tavares, 1999). It can be seen from these works that the censors' strategies (and ploys) revolved around upholding the principles established in the 1768 standing rules of the Royal Board of Censorship, which aimed, above all, to ensure the establishment "of an absolutist, providentialist theory and practice," acting against corporate theories of power, which "advocate popular sovereignty and [whose] main defenders [were] the Jesuits" (Villalta, 1999, p.203), and against millenarianist and radical Enlightenment ideas. Thus, in view of these two discursive groups – the translators' paratexts and the censors' reports on these translations – we can seek out some of the answers to the questions posed.

This research investigates 46 works of medicine translated into Portuguese in the period under study from source texts in French, English, and Latin or else from French translations. They were identified in a broad, albeit not exhaustive survey of published works or manuscripts submitted to the censors. The 46 works account for around 15% of the total of approximately 300 translations into Portuguese rendered in the period, which indicates how much of a priority medicine was – after religious and literary works – for translators and publishers.

## **Why translate?**

This investigation of discourses about translation is structured around some instrumental themes with the dual function of introducing the discussion and raising new questions. The first question is: Why translate? This puts the issue of the spread of knowledge – especially the new scientific knowledge of the eighteenth century – at the heart of the debate, since putting out works in the vernacular to the detriment of originals in different languages became increasingly common in a bid to divulge scientific knowledge. It follows that knowing what motivated the translators will lead us to the heart of the debate about the Enlightenment, with the State taking a pedagogic role (Boto, 1998). It is also worth noting that several of the translations mentioned here emerged with the quite clearly defined goal of reforming the field of public health in Portugal between 1780 and 1805 (Abreu, 2013). In a preliminary stage of the work, focusing solely on the translators' paratexts (on all subjects), looking into what their motivations were, it was found that the translations were primarily undertaken

in the name of their “utility,” insofar as this consideration permeated the justifications the translators gave for their translations.

Thus, for instance, the anonymous translator of the first volume of *Miscelânea curiosa e proveitosa* [*Curious and helpful miscellany*] (1782, preface) stated that he undertook the translation to “promote, in whatever way I can, everything that may assist in the edification, growth, and perfection of this Nation”, which would be of service to his country. Likewise, João Rosado de Villalobos e Vasconcelos, professor of rhetoric at Evora and a proficuous translator and author throughout the 1780s, translated *Elementos da polícia geral de um Estado* [*Elements of the general policy of a State*] (1786, dedication) (which he rather conveniently dedicated to the powerful head of the Court Police, Diogo Ignacio de Pina Manique), claiming to do so “in the service of utility, and honor of the Nation, and propagating the Enlightenment throughout every part” in order that such knowledge should nourish and produce “in many forms, and means the public felicity of a State”.

The second set of motivations and justifications lies at the heart of the history of the printed word: the renown of certain works. Renown imposes a typical set of demands from the complex interplay between the different agents involved in the creation, publication, and circulation of books and, thus, ideas (Darnton, 2007), which can be seen in the translators’ texts, insofar as they themselves were agents of the circuit of communication that is the object of study of those who would investigate historical books and publications. It was because of its reputation that Gaspar Pinheiro da Câmara Manuel, a Brazilian who signed his translation as “A man of the sea,” decided to translate *Elogio de Renato Duguay Trouin* [*Eulogy to Renato Duguay Trouin*] (Thomaz, 1774). In his “Advertência proemial” [“Initial notice”] he wrote that the “esteem, which in Europe the Eulogies by the celebrated Thomaz have earned, stimulated me to translate one of them into the language of my Country, it seeming to me that in the Portuguese language it would be no less distinguished.” The same rationale, together with the idea of utility, appears in the preface José Amaro da Silva wrote for his translation of *A morte de Abel* [*The death of Abel*] (Gessner, 1785, preface):

And observing the high opinion that two such erudite Nations [Germany and France] had of it, appreciating not just the style, but also the content, I resolved also to translate it into our Portuguese Language because of the utility I deem its reading would have to all people curious about similar works; and supposing that the French language, or idiom be today so widespread and known in almost every part of the world, it is not however very common, for all to easily appreciate it, especially those, who are not versed in Letters, for whom my intention is more directed.

The third set of justifications concerns the principles of patronage around which Portugal’s Old Regime was organized. It is worth recalling that at the time, Portuguese society was under the influence of the Enlightenment in diverse forms, especially the strata that circulated in the forums for scientific exchange created under such influences: the Royal Academy of Science, the Royal Academy of the Guards [Real Academia dos Guardas-Marinha], the University of Coimbra after its reform etc. (Pereira, Cruz, 2009). Meanwhile, society maintained the social, political, and cultural structures typical of the Old Regime. This created a particular territory where “clients” endeavored to offer gifts, in the form of the printed word, which their “patrons” (Mazlish, 2000) would recompense in the form of political, academic, or military

posts, which meant that science, literature, and the arts were not “just driven by the European vogue, by the spread of academies from France and the aristocratic custom of cultivating the letters and natural history. Science became a state instrument for consolidating its possessions, galvanizing trade between the kingdom and its colonies” (Raminelli, 2008, p.94). The same could be said of translating and offering a translation to a monarch or nobleman.

The abovementioned Villalobos e Vasconcelos demonstrated these relationships in his dedication to Friar José Mayne in his translation of *Os costumes dos israelitas* [*The manners of the Israelites*] (Fleury, 1778, dedication):

You offered me, and promptly did I beg to do the translation for the glory, honor, and utility of my Country, in particular to offer to You. Indeed, having the honor to serve my Nation I also offer You the Translation of the Illustrious Fleury to serve as a public record of my obedience and loyalty to Your wishes.

## Medical translations

What answers will we now obtain if we pose the following question to our sources: Why translate works of medicine? It should be borne in mind that at the time, the political dynamics of public health in Portugal were in a process of change, probably following the ideas of António Ribeiro Sanches, “a leading exponent of the Portuguese Enlightenment movement, a theorist of treatises on Medicine and Education ... often considered the theoretical backbone of Pombaline reforms” (Boto, 1998, p.108). This author believed that the sphere of medicine had to be under the aegis of the state, and the subject “is always tied to its core concerns, which he calls the conservation of the health of peoples” (p.112; see also Araújo, 2014, p.267; Abreu, 2013). Alongside Sanches, other writers engaged in spreading modern medical knowledge, predating the translators addressed here, were José Rodrigues Abreu, Jacob de Castro Sarmento, Luís António Verney, and Teodoro de Almeida, the last of whom wrote about anatomy in volume 4 of the *Recreação filosófica* [*Philosophical recreation*] (Abreu, 2011, p.32-38). Several translators of medicine followed the precepts established by these scholars, seeking to stress the “communicative potential” of works of medicine that fulfilled the requirement of being “useful” (Pita, 2009).

Generally speaking, the three types of justification analyzed hold true for the translators of works of medicine, and are echoed in the censors’ reports. The reputation of a work was an important factor in legitimizing its translation. For instance, the translator of *Treatise on the operations of surgery* (Sharp, 1773) claimed that the only justification required to prove the great service he was doing “to Portuguese Surgery in the Translation of this work” was the same as the one offered by a Paris-based physician, whose words he appropriated in his preface: “Mr. Sharp’s Treatise on the Operations of Surgery having met with such universal esteem in England, that in so few years three editions of this Work were made, it seemed to him that it would be of service to the public ... to translate it into his language [French].” The fact that the work was well known by Portuguese physicians was also stressed, as in the translation that the proficuous translator, writer, and censor Henriques de Paiva made of *Aviso ao povo acerca da sua saúde* [*Advice to the people in general with regard to their health*] (Tissot, 1786, p.XXIX):

The merit of Mr. Tissot's Advice to the People, whose translation I offer to the public, is so well known, that I deem it superfluous to go about showing it, and even should there be those who should doubt it, to convince them it would be enough to look not just at the repeated editions, which have been made of this Work in such a short time, and the elegant translations made in almost every language, but especially, the wise translators Mr. Tissot has been fortunate enough to have.

The editor Francisco Rolland contributed to this field of justifications in his preface to the translation of *Domestic medicine, or a treatise on the prevention and cure of diseases* (Buchan, 1788), rendered by Francisco Pujol de Padrell. In it, he stated that the work was held in such high regard that it “has been printed seven times in England, and the cultivated nations of Europe transposed it into their language, and have repeatedly brought it to out to universal acceptance, and public utility” (Buchan, 1788, editor's prologue). In his censor's report on the translation of the Scottish physician William Cullen's “treatise on fevers,” a copy of which we were unable to locate, and Belfor's (1790) *Tratado da influência da lua nas febres* [*Treatise on the influence of the moon in fevers*], Paiva approved the works because they had “been well received throughout Europe” (Paiva, 12 fev. 1789), reinforcing the idea that prior knowledge of works was also one of the drivers behind the production of translations for publishers, even when it came to medical works.

Justifying a translation for its potential utility is also a recurring theme in the prefaces to medical books and censors' reports on them. After censoring *Breves instruções sobre os partos* [*Brief instructions on childbirth*] (Raulin, 1772), the Irish physician Galter Wade declared that “as the book may be of great utility in the Provinces and the translation seems faithful, I deem it worthy of printing” (Wade, 23 set. 1772). Paiva (here in the role of translator) introduced his translation of *Doutrina das enfermidades venéreas* [*Treatise on venereal diseases*] (Plenck, 1786a, translator's foreword) in terms of the benefits to the state that fighting *morbus gallicus* would bring, as it would preserve many “vassals almost always in the flower of their youth, [who] when it least affects them, and impairs them for the most important actions.” In his introduction to *Resumo do sistema de medicina* [*Summary of the system of medicine*] (Darwin, 1806, prologue), Henrique Xavier Baeta claimed his translation was designed to “facilitate the knowledge of Medical Philosophy, so little understood before the publication of Darwin's system,” for Portuguese doctors and surgeons who did not master English and “at the same time to instruct other men, insofar as is necessary for them to prevent certain causes of disease, and make a more assured choice of Physician capable of guiding their health.” Meanwhile, the translation of *Vade Mecum*, which Rolland published in 1804, contained the following “advice:”

This small Compendium, already approved by a notable Practitioner, seems to me worthy of reaching the notice of French (and also Portuguese) Physicians. The concision with which the anonymous Author treats the principal maxims of Practical Medicine, makes it worthy of recommendation to those who occupied in caring for a great number of sick, do not have the leisure to seek them in lengthy Works (*Vade mecum...*, 1804, editor's advice).

Alongside the usefulness or reputation of the works, as preached by these agents, there were questions related to the social statute of the Old Regime that justified the translations.



Just as historiography already established a Pombaline practice related to the writing and publication of books aligned with State goals, as was the case of the *Relação abreviada* [Abridged list] or the *Estatutos* [Bylaws] of the reformed University of Coimbra (Pereira, Cruz, 2009), different personages throughout the late 1700s had the habit of commissioning writings or translations. This was certainly the case of the chief of police, Diogo Ignacio de Pina Manique, who commissioned Paiva to produce a “complete treatise on Asphyxia or apparent death, its causes, and the ways to remedy it,” which the doctor then expanded on with a translation of *Método de restituir a vida às pessoas aparentemente mortas por afogamento ou sufocação* [Method for restoring to life persons apparently dead by drowning or suffocation] (Paiva, 1790, advice), dedicated to Manique. The reason for the translation was therefore to attend to “the consideration of that sensible Magistrate as to the lack, that exists in our language of a brief and easy instruction, which in such events may serve to guide all persons even if they are not of the Medical Faculty.”

### The translator as an anthropologist and pedagogue

The second approach adopted in this study concerns the way the translations in the selected corpus were conceptualized by their translators and what they felt their role was, in a bid to define the ideal characteristics of a translator or translation. Covering a broader corpus of translations, Vasconcelos, in his “prefaceation” to the *Costumes dos cristãos* [Manners of the Christians] (Fleury, 1782, dedication), wrote that the translator should have “an exact knowledge of the two languages which is not common in many translators: great criticism, and a philosophical spirit to understand the nature of the Author, even after inventing the thoughts of the Book.” He should also have “great affinity with the Author being translated, great patience; and finally, a necessary humility of heart, and total disregard for self-love” so as not to modify “the method, the thoughts and the phrasing of the Book” with impositions, additions, or abridgements. Furthermore, “great knowledge of the matter to be translated [was required], which is certainly not easy to combine in a single subject.”

Relativizing Vasconcelos’s definition, Miguel Brandão Ivo wrote in the preface to his translation of Frederick II’s *Arte da guerra* [The art of war] (1792):

What does it matter if the Translator has a profound knowledge of both languages, that he knows the energy of his sentences, the grace, and the variety of their locution, if he does not have the rare talent of combining the spirit, and nature of two languages, in which ideas, and concepts are expressed differently, because the terms are different, the metaphors are different, and often what in one is simple in the other is sublime? The greatest difficulty, for me, consists in certain technical terms from the Arts and Sciences, which oftentimes one of the languages does not have, from which however is born elegance in a language, and in translation a flaw, which kills the original (preface).

This is a retrospective view: the idea of the translator as an anthropologist, who interprets the text in its multiple facets into a different culture, while at the same time being a man of letters. On translating *Descrição das enfermidades dos exércitos* [The diseases incident to armies] (Van Swieten, 1786, translator’s foreword), Antonio Martins Vidigal reaffirmed this idea, saying that “if a translator arrays himself with fidelity, and simplicity; if in his translation all

those precise circumstances, that may make it clear, and correct are shown, if he expresses faithfully all the thoughts, and even the same words as the Original," he will have fulfilled his duty. Offering a view with less concession to cultural differences (possibly preceding it, but reproduced in the different editions of the work), the translator of *Retiro espiritual para um dia de cada mês* [*A spiritual retreat for one day in every month*] (Croiset, 1783, translator's prologue) stated that it was "thus clear to me, that he who translates, is ... like a painter, who submits to copying, who has done everything, when he comes to compare his copy to the original, which is proposed, and who does nothing, when everything is done to his liking."

What did these translators take to be a perfect translation? The (inevitably incomplete) answer runs counter to the idea that each translator followed their own traditions, the most common (but not the only) one being *Observations sur l'art de traduire* [*Observations on the art of translation*] (D'Alembert, 1763). In Custódio José de Oliveira's foreword to his translation of *Tratado do sublime* [*Treatise on the sublime*] (Longino, 1771), he claimed to believe in a pedagogy of imitation that should permeate the translation of the "writers who may serve us as reliable Masters, in whose Works a solid craft may fill one's soul with virtue" to be imitated by the translator, "transporting him to produce adequately in his own language the thoughts, expressions, phrasing, and content of the foreign work," which should contain the same qualities of "naturalness, strength, vibrancy, grace, majesty, that is encountered in the language, being translated," striking a balance between faithfulness to the author's original style and independence relative to the native tongue, since the translator should avoid the original order of the text, "which shows servitude, sterility of spirit" (preface). Meanwhile, Vasconcelos argued against a "method of time" based on paraphrases and using a style "foreign to the Author, the Work, and the nature of our Language," claiming to have striven to follow the original author, "without ever altering the phrasing, figure, or even the punctuation; and for conserving its own style, its own spirit, and its own nature in everything" without Gallicisms, "sesquipedalian or outlandish" words. And he went on: "how painstaking this method of translating is, which I understand to be the best, only those, who have taken this exercise may know" (Fleury, 1782, translator's foreword).

While they do supply some vague notions about the demands imposed on translators, the paratexts reveal some areas of contention that have dogged the history of translation: fidelity to the original or adaptation to the "spirit" of the language; adoption of foreign terms (Gallicisms, Anglicisms, technicisms) or adaptation of terms existing in the target language; paraphrasing, adapting, or making literal translations. To offset this variety of ideas, let us now see what the censors had to say on the matter.

In his report on the translation by Captain Manoel de Sousa of *História de Theodozio, o grande* [*The history of Theodosius, the great*] (Fléchiér, 1786), which he read in 1776, Friar Mathias da Conceição (19 ago. 1776) wrote that although the work was complete, the translator was wanting in "that force, that spirit, or that elegance, which the original was given by its Author." According to this censor, the translator also lacked knowledge of the "proper and natural elegance of the Portuguese language." A few months later, Conceição also judged a translation of the "sermons, which Abbot Comandatário de la Fourdupin preached and printed in French," in the following terms:

not because any substantial part is missing; but rather because it lacks that spirit, that force and that unction which the original was given by its Author, and which the translator could very well render in our language, were he adequately instructed in the oratory of the pulpit, and the proper and natural elocution of the Portuguese Language, which is capable of all (Conceição, 20 abr. 1777).

Friar Luis do Monte Carmelo (15 abr. 1779) followed the same precepts in his appraisal of José da Silveira Lara's translation of Dupuy de la Chapelle's (1784) *Instruções de um pai a sua filha* [*Instructions from a father to his daughter*], stating that the translator was faithful "in terms of the concepts, but did not always follow the Literal sense; because many Gallicisms cannot be reduced Literally to our Phrasing." A final example shows what the censors hailed as a good translation: that of Milton's (1789) *Paradise lost*.

This is the work that is presented here translated into Portuguese, with great fidelity and precision, which shall not fail to be well accepted, useful, and pleasing to he who is not familiar with the French language in which it is translated, or the Translation in Latin verse, by William Hog, a Scotsman. Readers of good taste shall certainly have the advantage of understanding a Poem that encapsulates on its Plane the most vivid images and beauties of Poetry (Cunha, 5 maio 1787).

Here, we should make some considerations about the different types of sources, because the editorial paratexts, submitted to the censors for analysis together with the translations, are normally only accessible in works duly reviewed for publication, while many of the censors' reports on translations considered under-par never received official approval. However, while the translators sought to offer finished works within their intellectual capacity that could – or should – contribute to a general improvement of the state-of-the-art in their respective fields or disciplines, the censors, whose texts were to remain confidential (Tavares, 2014), focused on Standard Portuguese, alongside the traditional concerns about the law, faith, and the monarch. This becomes clear in the specific case of Vasconcelos, whose translations sparked differing reactions from the censors. Lobo da Cunha's censorship of his translation of a previously unpublished work by an unknown author, *Seis orações de ouro* [*Six prayers of gold*], is almost officious, saying that "the Translator in this work fulfills the obligations of his Profession, offering the nature of the best orator, and the arguments that formed the most eminent orations of Roman eloquence" (Cunha, 21 out. 1777). However, in his appraisal of *Plano de uma obra pia, geralmente útil no Reino de Portugal* [*Plan for a work of charity, generally useful in the Kingdom of Portugal*] (Ward, 1782), rendered by the same translator, Francisco Xavier de Santana e Fonseca remarked that Vasconcelos "does not forget self-praise, reminding one often of the great work of his compositions, and promoting his service in this and other similar matters" (Fonseca, 19 abr. 1782). Even so, he granted the work authorization to be published, "paying little heed to this boasting" (Fonseca, 19 abr. 1782).

## Medical translators

Paiva appraised several translations of medical texts, taking into account the rules of Standard Portuguese. The translation by Antonio Rodrigues Portugal of *Novo sistema de tumores* [*New system of tumors*] (Plenck, 1786b) from Latin was censored for the adulteration

and distortion by the author of the original, lacking “clarity, and the selective adoption of new terms, as required in such works” (Paiva, 6 dez. 1784). On the translation of Cullen’s (1791) *Elementos de medicina prática* [*Elements of practical medicine*], the same censor wrote:

Thus, to subject any foreign language to his laconic style, it would be necessary to have not just a perfect knowledge of the language of this writer, the equivalent words to the [illeg.] and the selective adoption of optional and didactic terms, and above all possess and understand completely his teachings, so as to express them with like clarity, and represent said style with the same concision.

Yet this translator rather than satisfying the important requirements recalled above, lacks the conditions required in translations of elementary Works [illeg.] sometimes adopting many unnecessary terms, even when there are others, which correspond well, other times Legitimizing some Latin and French terms without observing the inflections in them, or the general nature of the alterations or analogical modifications, with which our good authors have turned other expressions into Portuguese, of which he could make use: for this, and for the lack of observance of the correct use of Portuguese, which in his translation is sometimes not absolutely flowing or free of that barbarous and horribly affected air, which sullies the didactic books of the faculty, and in whose sway Physicians in general are held (Paiva, 25 fev. 1788).

It is worth focusing particularly on the opinions and ideas of Paiva, as his is such a recurrent name as both a translator and a censor, and also as a member of the Academy of Science and the academies of medicine of Madrid and Stockholm, and as a professor at Coimbra and Lisbon (exiled to Brazil in 1808 after being accused of Freemasonry and Jacobitism) (Silva, 1862, p.12-18). His editorial and professional work was marked by “the communication of science, and particularly of medicine,” which led him to write and publish, in 1801, the *Preservativo das bexigas* the first book to defend and divulge Jenner’s vaccination method in Portugal (Pita, 2009, p.94-98). Although his forewords do not shed any light on what he regarded a good translation to be, in his translation of Tissot’s *Advice* (1786), he did stress that his translation was superior to that “Portuguese translation which is already in print, full of infinite errors” (p.XXIX). In his censorship of the ensuing volumes of Cullen’s (1791) *Elementos de medicina prática*, he insisted on the poor quality of the translations, which had the “same flaws and error, which concerning the first volume of the same work I expressed to Your Majesty in the Notice of last February 26th, for which reason I do not judge it worthy of a License” (Paiva, 12 abr. 1788). As a translator, Paiva’s work was also subject to review. In the same year of 1788, the censor in question was the physician Manoel de Moraes Soares, a very active censor who, in 1760, had published a study that “proposed ... a conciliation between the mechanism and the principles of creation” (Abreu, 2011, p.66) and who had translated and published *Fábulas de Fedro* [*Fables of Phaedrus*] (1785). Soares (3 ago. 1788) found that Paiva’s translation of the third volume of Buchan’s *Domestic medicine* “satisf[ie]d all the precepts of good Translation,” from which we may suppose he referred to those virtues expressed by other contemporary translators, like Vasconcelos. One of these precepts seems to have been the idea of a translation’s fidelity to the original text. Even while accepting the need for linguistic transposition, translators and censors alike stressed the importance of a translation being faithful. This was the case of Paiva’s translation of Tissot’s (1786) work, in

which he confessed that “the ... translation is not elegant, [illeg.] sufficiently polished, but it is faithful, and in a style suited to the capacity of those to whom it is addressed” (p.XXIX). Likewise, the unacknowledged translator of the *Arte de tratar a si mesmo nas enfermidades venéreas* [The art of treating one's own venereal ailments] stated that

I do not have anything to say of the Translation, it was done faithfully, which is what is most required of works of Medicine; I did not overlook the other qualities that it should have to be good, but if it nonetheless suffers any flaws, my good intention shall serve as an apology, and public humanity shall never cease to be served (Bourru, 1777, p.XXXVIII).

The censors also valued fidelity above all other virtues in the translations they read. Gualter Wade (23 set. 1772) prized this quality in the translation of Raulin's (1772) *Breves instruções sobre os partos* [Brief Instructions on Childbirth], “for the original is excellent and the translation is faithful and precise.” Antonio Martins Vidigal (5 fev. 1787), who translated Van Swieten's work, also appraised the translations of José Plenck (1786a, 1786b), praising them for having been done “so faithfully [illeg.] to the originals of these excellent works, as the compositions and translations are necessary and the [illeg.] to the surgeons of Portugal, in the absence of national authors who can instruct them, with method in the subject of their profession.” The omnipresent Paiva (19 dez. 1789) recommended that a license be granted for the printing of the “faithful and literal translations of the Elements of Physiology by Dr. William Cullen and those of Medicine by Dr. Francis Stone”, but he was critical of the translation of Baumé's *Elementos de farmácia* [Elements of pharmacy] because:

as it is, unfaithful and adulterated with infinite barbaric words that warp the meaning of the original, if at least in the prescriptions he maintained the precision and fidelity required in works of this nature, and put the Portuguese names with the French names of the remedies [illeg.]. And yet in these works the lack of these [?] important requirements, and the carelessness, are always flaws, and pernicious to the Public, I believe they do not deserve the License they request (Paiva, 27 set. 1790).

Domingues de Paiva (25 fev. 1788) approved the same translation in 1788 (from which we deduce that the texts were resubmitted to the censors after correction), writing that “it is true that I encountered in its reading many foreign and unsuitable terms in the Portuguese Language.” Paiva, like his medical colleagues who were censors, was very mindful in his criticisms of the translations, pointing out whatever he took as a defect or error. On Plenck's translation of *Novo sistema de tumores* [New System of Tumors] three years before the translation was approved by Vidigal, Paiva accused the translator of “adulterating and distorting in many places the original meaning,” lack of clarity, the “selective adoption of new terms,” and a stylistic inconsistency that would be a burden on the target readership, even if the translation had been approved by the Faculty of Medicine of Coimbra (Soares, 24 out. 1788). We have seen how Paiva (25 fev. 1788) described the translator's role in his report on *Elementos de medicina prática* (Cullen, 1791), mentioned above.

The recurring complaints of Gallicisms and barbarisms are clearly indicative of the source of information for the Portuguese physicians. Works written or translated in French constituted the majority of the source material for the translations – often without the skill appreciated

by Paiva, who echoed the criticisms made by Vasconcelos, cited earlier. Soares was also little inclined towards Pujol de Padrell's translation of Buchan's (1788) *Domestic medicine*, which he claimed was "faithfully [conceived] and ... does not differ in any substantial point," but "has some solecisms and barbarisms caused by the mutation or [illeg.] of words which it seems should be brought to Your Majesty's attention," annexing to his report a table of errors and suggested corrections, so that the translator could review his work (Soares, 10 jul. 1788). The same censor criticized Antonio Felix Xavier de Paula's translation of Belfor's (1790) *Tratado da influência das luas nas febres* in terms of both the content of the work (which he deemed inadequate) and the translation per se: "And so that none of our less enlightened Nationals should blindly adopt these harmful chimeras, not to mention the abstruse and unintelligible style of the Translation, I am of the opinion that this should not be brought to the Public" (Soares, 30 jun. 1788).

### Final considerations

The analysis of the writings of editors and censors about translations gives us a general notion of what a translation "should be" without any of them going into any more detail than is contained in the examples cited here. Generally speaking, the most widespread criticism is of the importing of foreign terms (almost always French) into the composition of the works on medicine in Portuguese. Barbarisms, Gallicisms, Latinisms, or archaisms are repudiated in favor of a standard vernacular – molded by debates within the censorship bureau, especially in the analysis and censorship of grammar, spelling, and style (Carvalho, 2009; Leite, 2011; Moura, 2012).

Did the translations effectively contribute to cementing the use of the vernacular, at least amongst the lettered elites, in eighteenth century Portugal? This is a question that can scarcely be answered by consulting these sources alone, but in them it can be seen that the agents in question believed it could be so, insofar as they observed and reinforced established ideas on the use of Portuguese and the different "virtues" of good translations.

Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the relationships between literature in general and medical texts in particular, since medical discussions in the eighteenth century often served as literary motifs. For instance, the debates about smallpox in specialized treatises also crop up in the works of Rousseau and Sade (Wenger, 2014, p.327). However, this cross-fertilization went beyond the supply of medical or disease-related subject matter, touching on the "production [and] diffusion of knowledge" (p.324). Essentially, the medical debates in the eighteenth century extrapolated the exclusive domain of medicine to infiltrate literature, thanks to the way the physicians controlled their identity representation, which should alert historians to pay "redoubled attention ... to the forms, rhetoric, and genres of medical writings in the construction of knowledge about health and the relationships between this knowledge and others," like literature and even history (p.325).

It would appear that herein resides a key to understanding the medical – and, indeed, scientific – texts from the period in question. The boundaries between different areas of knowledge were very fluid. At a time when scientific language was making its mark, literature seems to have provided the foundational identities, which would certainly explain the

demand for the “national” use of translations into Portuguese, alongside the criticisms of “foreignizations,” Gallicisms etc. It is also important to understand the restrictions imposed by the agents of the publications under analysis here. When medical translators and censors sought to set and fulfill the requirements of a “good translation,” they were also setting the rules for writing and medical science.

Another important consideration is that the medical books translated and published in the period are part of a broader effort linked to a kind of Portuguese “Enlightenment sanitarianism,” which can be seen in public works like the Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro aqueducts, and the draining of mangroves and swamps in Brazil and India to “build capitals or improve cities” (Pereira, 2005, p.126). In other words, this is a literature that focused on the “conservation of health and lengthening of natural life,” while also propagating rules of behavior and civility (Barreiro, 2014, p.67). The translated works, alongside works written by the translators themselves, censors, and other physicians (being explored by the specialized historiography), had the primary goal of popularizing medical ideas and the secondary goal of instructing political and medical agents. We deduce from this that the popularization of medicine using a “national” language must have solidified the use of the vernacular, as called for by the censors and translators.

The translations, their paratexts and metatexts are part of a corpus that is immensely important and valuable for understanding the pedagogic interests behind the publishing drive they represent (Barreiro, 2014, p.52-75). The translators, for their part, were intrinsically linked to diachronic networks that involved political processes of change and creation in the field of public health. Yet they were also part of synchronic networks engaged in promoting the spread of science, also operating as authors in their own right or as censors of translations and other works.

Finally, although some projects that involved medicine indirectly were conducted from the centers of power – the Pombaline reforms and later (Abreu, 2010) –, they were not designed to cement the use of a standardized vernacular. However, the meanings and definitions of the rules of Standard Portuguese can be inferred from the actions of the censors and the different translation and publication drives pursued in the period in question. It is in this complex interplay of projects, efforts, censorship, and reward, with translation taking on the same function as the heroic deed or the scientific discovery (Raminelli, 2008), that the agents of the written word can be seen in action, taking a pivotal role in developing the Portuguese Enlightenment in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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